

AFRICAN HISTORY TO 1800

Associate Professor Timothy Cleaveland
Spring 2008

HIST 2501
LeConte 323
T/R. 9:30- 10:45

Office: 340 LeConte Hall
Hours: T/R. 11:00- 12:00
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Course Warning

This is a very rigorous course that requires attendance as well as abundant reading and study. The teacher will penalize the final grades of those students who do not meet the mandatory minimum attendance.

Course Description and Philosophy

This course is a general survey of African history to 1800. Its primary goal is to provide the students with an historical framework for interpreting the current state of African societies and their relations with the World. The second goal is to help students develop their analytical skills and to express their analyses in formal essays. The students will write two short essays, a midterm and a final exam. The course will introduce broad historical processes such as the rise of Ancient Egypt; the spread of Islam; the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean trades; state formation; the Atlantic slave trade; and slavery within Africa. The course will also briefly address various themes affecting these broad processes, such as religion, gender, ethnicity, racism, economics, and the environment. In addition to a general text, the course readings include selected excerpts from prominent historians who have contributed to the debates surrounding the issues mentioned above. The readings also include primary sources relevant to many of these debates. The course assumes no prior background in African Studies, however, it requires the students to master the general history of Africa to 1800, and then analyze the broad historical debates.

Some students will find this course somewhat more difficult than comparable courses on American or European history, because of their lack of familiarity with the names of African peoples and places. This problem can be solved by carefully reading the assigned material when it is assigned, thus gradually digesting the material. Although some students habitually neglect weeks of reading assignments only later to cram them into their brains over a single weekend-- such a strategy is not suited to this course. The design of the course encourages daily reading, and the instructor expects students to come to class prepared. Class lectures will address and supplement the assigned readings in ways designed to help the students develop their own analyses, which they will express in the formal essays and the written exams. Therefore, in addition to learning about African history, the successful students will improve their abilities to read, to think analytically, and to express their ideas in formal essays.

Course Requirements (The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.)

Readings- The required readings include four books for purchase and several reserved readings. The books for purchase consist of a general history text, a translated oral epic from West Africa, and two collections of interpretive secondary texts. All these books are available at the Tate University Bookstore, and other bookstores may stock some of them. Students may also choose to purchase their books online, in which case they are responsible for obtaining the books in time to complete their assignments. The reserved readings are available at the reserve desk in the Main Library and on electronic reserve.

Books For Purchase: Available at the University Bookstore at the Tate Center

1) *History of Africa*, by Kevin Shillington
Publisher: St. Martin's Press; Revised edition (1995)
ISBN: 0312125984 (Amazon List Price: \$26.95)

2) *Problems in African History: The Precolonial Centuries*, by Robert O. Collins

Publisher: Markus Wiener Publishers; Revised edition- 2005
ISBN: 1558763600 (List Price: \$24.95, 23 used & new from \$1.95)

3) *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, by D. T. Niane
Publisher: Pearson Education; (1995)
ISBN: 0582264758 (List Price: \$14.00, 43 used & new from \$4.49)

4) *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Problems in World History) by David Northrup
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company; 2nd edition (2001)
ISBN: 0618116249 (List Price: \$24.36, 20 used & new from \$13.49)

Reserve Readings (listed by Professor under 'Cleaveland')

- 1) *Africa and the West*, edited by William Wolger, et. al.
- 2) *Problems in African History* (1993 edition), edited by Robert Collins, et. al.
- 3) *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, trans. by Hopkins and Levtzion
- 4) *Africa Remembered*, edited by Philip Curtin, et. al.

Essays- The students will write two analytical essays of roughly 1,250 words (about 4 pages). Writing guides for the short essays will be distributed in class more than a week before each essay's due date. The teacher and teaching assistants will grade the essays on the basis of content, grammar, presentation, and style. Essays should bear only the last four digits of the student's identification number. Do not write your name on your paper. Essays must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date due. All essays, late or on time, must be submitted in class. One letter grade will be deducted from late essays for each class meeting after the due date. The two essays together constitute one third (33%) of the course grade.

Short Exams- The students will take three, short, scheduled exams that will collectively count as 33% of the course grade. Exams will cover material from the lectures and reading assignments and will consist of identification questions. Students are advised to read carefully and take notes, as casual reading will often be insufficient to pass the exams. The short exams will not be comprehensive. For example, if the first exam covers the 7th reading assignment, the second exam will only cover the reading assignments that follow (ie. the 8th, 9th, etc.).

Final Exam- The students will write a comprehensive final exam, which will count as one third (33%) of the course grade. This exam will consist of a fill-in-the-blanks section and an essay, each counting as 50% of the exam. The teacher will distribute a study guide for the final exam in early November. Students should bring a 'blue book' to the final, as well as two blue or black pens.

Class Attendance- Instruction in this course will mainly consist of lectures, although the students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings on the days they submit essays or take short exams. The teacher expects students to attend class and participate in occasional discussions, but will not ascribe a grade for attendance or participation. However, attendance is mandatory and the teacher will automatically drop any student who accumulates four absences before the midpoint withdrawal deadline (March 4) regardless of the reasons for the absences. Thereafter, the teacher will deduct two-thirds of a letter grade from the student's course average for every absence after the sixth. Excessive tardiness or early departure without permission from the instructor will count as a half absence. Attendance will be recorded on sign-in sheets, and every student is responsible for signing the sheet. If a student does not sign the attendance sheet the instructor will count the student absent. Students are also responsible for keeping track of their own absences, and should not expect to be warned when they reach the limit. Attendance is important because those students who are occasionally absent and fall behind in the

readings will almost certainly perform badly on the exams and essays, because of their lack of familiarity with Africa. Students who maintain excellent class attendance and participation will receive extra credit points toward their final course averages—3 points for no absences, 2 points for one absence and 1 point for two absences. Assignments missed because of illness or the like may be submitted without penalty if the documentation is acceptable to the teacher and within university guidelines, but the absence still counts against the student's maximum allowance. Students should contact the teacher by email in advance of missed assignments. Students who suffer a major illness or a series of minor illnesses during the semester should request a medical withdrawal from the Registrar.

Email- I require all students to provide me with an email address in order to facilitate communication regarding assignments. I will occasionally send the class emails bearing advice regarding the assignments or changes to the schedule. For this reason, students should check their email regularly, at least twice a week. Students should also be careful to keep their in-boxes tidy, as the teacher has often had messages to students bounce back because of overloaded in-boxes.

Academic Honesty- This course has "zero tolerance" for cheating. Any work that infringes the University's academic honesty code (see web address below) will at a minimum receive a grade of "0". The consequences for what I consider significant plagiarism on an essay in this course can also include suspension or expulsion. For a definition of plagiarism please refer to my general writing guide, which I will distribute early in the semester. My policies regarding plagiarism conform to the History Department recommendations. Similar penalties apply to cheating on exams or falsifying an attendance sheet.
(http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm)

Grading Scale

100-90= A = 4.0
89- 85= B+ = 3.3
84- 80= B = 3.0
79-75= C+ = 2.3
74-70= C = 2.0
69- 60= D = 1.0
<59= F = 0.0

Schedule of Assignments at-a-glance

- January 8-Course Introduction and African geography
- January 10-Overview of African History: Shillington Chapter 1
- January 15- Ancient Egypt: Shillington Chapters 2 and 3
- January 17- Ancient Egypt contested: Collins pp. 1-19
- January 22- Egyptology and African history: Collins pp. 20-53
- January 24- Iron and the Bantu 'migrations': Shillington Ch. 4, Collins Ch. II
- January 29- Early Christianity and Islam in Africa: Shillington Ch. 5
- January 31- The Swahili Coast and the Zanj Revolt: Shillington pp. 122-131, al-Tabari on E-Reserve

- February 5- Islam and the trans-Saharan trade: Shillington Chs. 6 & 7
- February 7- The Kingdom of Ghana: Al-Bakri in *Corpus* on E-Reserve (esp. 64-69, 77-87)
- February 12- Ibn Battuta & the Mali Kingdom : *Corpus* (esp. 281-301) **(1st Short Exam)**
- February 14- Oral History and the Epics of Old Mali: *Sundiata* pp. 1-30
- February 19- Keita and the rise of Mali: *Sundiata* pp. 30-60
- February 21- Islam and Society in Old Mali: *Sundiata* 60-end **(1st Essay due)**
- February 26- Late Iron Age East & Southern Africa: Shillington Chs. 8 & 10, Collins pp. 101-8, 127-34
- February 28- The Ottoman Empire and the Iberians in Africa: Shillington Ch. 11 and pp. 131- 37

- March 4- The rise of Europe and the Atlantic Slave Trade: Shillington Chs. 12, 13 and 15
- March 6- Europe and the Atlantic Slave Trade (AST): *Africa and the West*, pp. 13- 27 on E-Reserve
- March 11- **Spring Break**
- March 13- **Spring Break**
- March 18- Historical debates on African slavery, Collins Ch. VI.
- March 20- The slave trade and slavery within Africa: Northrup Ch. II. **(2nd Short Exam)**
- March. 25- The experience of the AST: Northrup Ch. III.
- March. 27- The effects of the AST: Northrup IV.

- April 1- The Western effects of the AST: Northrup Ch. V.
- April 3- African women, from slaves to elites: Collins Ch. V.
- April 8- The ideology and economics of the AST: Northrup Ch.I.
- April 10- The rise and fall of the AST: Shillington Ch. 16, Northrup Ch. VI. **(2nd Essay due)**
- April 15- The Atlantic and Saharan slave trades and West African jihads: Collins Ch. IV.
- April 17- Ayuba Suleiman Diallo's narrative: Curtin pp. 1-59, on E-Reserve
- April 22- Philip Quaque's narrative: Curtin pp. 99-139, on E-Reserve **(3rd Short Exam)**
- April. 24- Course discussion and review
- April 29- **Reading Day- No Classes**

- May. 6- 8:00- 11:00am- **Final Exam**