

# HIS 290/African History

## Winter Term 2000

**Instructor:** Roy E. Finkenbine

**Office:** Briggs 322

**Office Hours:** 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. MW and by appointment

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This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to the African past, drawing on evidence from history, archaeology, anthropology, geography, linguistics, oral tradition, and literature. It is a broad survey from human origins on the continent to the coming of independence in the 20th century. Students who are interested in studying Africa since independence are urged to enroll in POL 467/Politics of Africa.

**Format:** We will use lectures, discussions and essays on selected primary sources, map exercises, and films from the recent PBS series *Wonders of the African World* to explore the African past. All readings are to be completed by the class session for which they are assigned. You are expected to participate in class by attending regularly, listening carefully, taking notes, asking pertinent questions, and contributing to class discussion.

**Required Texts:** You are required to purchase the following books, which are available at the University Bookstore on the McNichols Campus.

Joseph Harris, *Africans and Their History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Meridian, 1998).

D. T. Niane, ed., *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Longman, 1986).

Said Haidun and Noel King, eds., *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (Markus Wiener, 1994).

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Anchor Books, 1959).

Other articles and handouts will be distributed in class at appropriate points during the term. These are included among the required readings for the course.

**Evaluation:** You will be evaluated on the basis of a midterm exam (25%), a final exam (25%), a map quiz (10%), and two essays evaluating specific historical sources (40% -- 20% each). The instructor reserves the right to exercise some discretion in assigning final course grades.

The exams will consist of essay and identification questions. The former will require you to develop analytical responses to broad questions. The final exam will *not* be comprehensive. A study guide, listing key terms and concepts and possible essay questions, will be distributed in class one week prior to each exam. Makeup exams will be given only at the discretion of the instructor.

The map quiz will require you to locate and label important bodies of water, landforms, cities, states, and regions that Ave will refer to during the course. A study guide and practice maps will be distributed in class on Jan. 12. Makeup map quizzes will be given only at the discretion of the instructor,

The two source essays, each of which is to be four to six pages in length, will evaluate specific historical sources from the African past. The first (due Feb. 21) will comparatively evaluate the oral epic of Sundiata and the writings of Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta as sources for the history of the Mali Empire. The second (due Apr. 10) will evaluate the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe as a source for understanding the impact of European colonization on traditional African cultures. Separate handouts will explain each of the essay assignments in more detail. Late essays will be penalized one letter grade, plus an additional letter grade for each week past the due date.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance in class is both expected and required. The instructor will take roll at the beginning of each class during the first few weeks in order to learn your names and faces. After that, an attendance sheet will be circulated in each class. It is your responsibility to sign your name on the attendance sheet and to notify the instructor and provide documentation of any medical, funeral, legal, athletic, or other excused absences. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Additional unexcused absences will negatively affect your course grade.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating in any form (including *plagiarism*) is not permitted and may result in failure in this course. it may also be grounds for further university disciplinary action. Plagiarism consists of "submitting the words or style of another author or source without acknowledgment or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph, or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one's own writing without quotation marks or documentation. One also plagiarizes by paraphrasing the work of another, that is retaining another writer's ideas and structure, without documentation." (UDM Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty).

**Academic Support Services:** Those of you with learning difficulties, especially those with previously identified disabilities which might require accommodations, are urged to identify yourselves to the instructor as soon as possible. A variety of academic support services are available to you free of charge. This includes the Writing center in Briggs 27 and tutorial assistance at the Learning center in Briggs 17. Duplicate services are available in room G-1 of Marian Hall on the Outer Drive Campus.

**Calendar:** Every effort will be made to adhere to the following schedule:

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| Jan. 10 | Introduction to the Course   |
| Jan. 12 | Western Mythologies and the African Past<br>Reading: <i>Africans and Their History</i> , chap. 1 |
| Jan. 17 | Martin Luther King Holiday – NO CLASS  |

- Jan. 19 The Geographical Basis of the African Past
- Jan. 24 African Origins of Humankind  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 2
- Jan. 26 Nile Valley Kingdoms  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 3 (pp. 33-40, 47-48)
- Jan. 31 Film: "*Black Kingdoms of The Nile*"  
**Map Quiz**
- Feb. 2 Ancient Axum/Medieval Ethiopia  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chaps. 3 (pp. 40-47) and 10 (pp. 168-69)
- Feb. 7 Film: "*The Holy Land*"
- Feb. 9 Civilizations of the Western Sudan  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 3 (pp. 48-64, 70-76)
- Feb. 14 Discussion: *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*
- Feb. 16 Film: "*The Road to Timbuktu*"
- Feb. 21 Discussion: *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* ("West African Journey" – pp. 29-75)  
**First Source Essay Due**
- Feb. 23 Swahili Civilization  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chaps. 3 (pp. 64-70) and 10 (pp. 157-67)  
*Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* ("East African Journey – pp. 15-25)
- Feb. 28 Film: "*The Swahili Coast*"
- Mar. 1 **Midterm Exam**
- Mar. 6/8 Spring Break – NO CLASS
- Mar. 13 The African Slave Trade  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 4
- Mar. 15 Film: "*The Slave Kingdoms*"
- Mar. 20 Diaspora and Repatriation  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chaps. 5-6
- Mar. 22 Pre-Colonial Statemaking on the Guinea Coast  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 7
- Mar. 27 Pre-Colonial Statemaking in the Sudan  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 8

- Mar. 29 Pre-Colonial Statemaking in Central and Southern Africa  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 9
- Apr. 3 Film: "*Lost Cities of the South*"
- Apr. 5 The Colonization of Africa  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 11
- Apr. 10 Discussion: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*  
**Second Source Essay Due**
- Apr. 12 African Resistance to Colonization  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 12
- Apr. 17 Colonial Administration: Policies and Practices  
Reading: *Africans and Their History*, chap. 13
- Apr. 19 The African Struggle for Independence  
Reading *Africans and Their History*, chap. 14
- Apr. 25 **Final Exam (2:00-3:50 p.m.)**

This syllabus is provided as a general guideline. The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments for the orderly progress of the course.