

## **International Studies 201: Introduction to African Studies**

University of Mississippi, Spring 2017  
T/Th 2:30 – 3:45  
Croft Room 107

Professor Zachary Kagan Guthrie  
Office: Bishop 309A  
Office Hours: Wednesday 1 pm to 3 pm, or by appointment  
Phone: 662-915-3314  
Email: zkguthri@olemiss.edu

### **Introduction**

This course provides an introduction to modern sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is a big continent, and no course can come close to achieving a comprehensive coverage of its past and its present. As a result, this course is organized thematically, around understanding the history and politics of the African state, from the colonial era through to the present day. Africa is often mistakenly described as a single country, or as a land of interchangeably messed-up countries, commonly glossed as “failed states” full of war, atrocities, famine, pestilence, and so on. By exploring the realities of modern Africa, this course will move students beyond these simplistic stereotypes – and, in the process, scrutinize the validity and universality of the assumptions that implicitly shape how we interact with the rest of the world. The first half of the course examines the past of Africa’s present, showing how the legacies of colonial rule and early postcolonial regimes remain visible in present-day problems. The second half of the course engages with the sociology, economics, and politics of present-day Africa, beyond the lurid accounts of horror and disaster that dominate media narratives, to gain a deeper understanding of the way that African countries function, as well as the mutual interactions between the internal dynamics of African states and their external relations with the wider world.

### **Learning Objectives**

This course has three primary objectives. One is for students to gain an introduction to the complexities of Africa beyond the oversimplified images that dominate the public sphere, providing a foundation for pursuing further study into Africa and more knowledgeably reflecting upon its present and future. Another is for students to gain critical perspective on the assumptions – both analytical and stereotypical – that shape how we view other regions, as well as the global connections that bind together different regions of the world. A third is for students to develop important capabilities: closely analyzing written sources; working through abstract and occasionally tricky conceptual frameworks; conducting research into other regions; organizing and delivering public presentations; and writing and editing persuasive essays.

## Evaluation

### *Grading Scale*

Per Croft policy, the grading scale is as follows:

A 93-100	A- 90-93	
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-82
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72
D 60-69	F lower than 60	

Grades lower than a C will not count toward the International Studies major.

### *Assignments*

Map Quiz:	5%
Essays:	45% (15% each)
Presentation:	15%
Participation:	20%
Final Exam:	15%

The map quiz will require you to identify the countries of Africa on a map. You will receive materials to practice.

The essays will be 1,000–1,200 words (roughly 4-5) pages and will draw upon several weeks worth of discussion and readings to formulate an analytical argument about each of the three time periods that we will be discussing: colonial Africa, post-colonial Africa, and present-day Africa. They do not have to be comprehensive, but must address key thematic issues and show a strong grasp of the questions being raised in the course. Further information on the papers, including questions to consider and a grading rubric, will be given to you in separate handouts.

For the presentation, groups of two students will spend 20 minutes discussing a country in Africa and using it to illustrate one of four important political and economic themes that mark contemporary Africa: democratization and authoritarianism; economic policy; civil war; and international trade and aid. You can choose your partner; you can also choose the country you will present on (although only one group can present on a given country) and the thematic approach you intend to take. Plan to discuss both the country and the theme with me long in advance of the presentation.

Participation requires that you come to class having already done the readings, prepared to discuss them; your participation grade will be based on how frequently and how effectively you contribute to class discussion. If I get the sense that students are not doing the readings, I will start assigning in-class reading quizzes, and I won't feel bad about it. But I'm feeling hopeful that we won't need to go down that road.

The final exam will be an essay-based test that requires you to think about the general themes that span the course. You will have a choice of topics, which will be broad-based and designed to ensure that, if you have kept up with the reading and the discussion, you will have many different answers to choose from.

### **Required Readings**

Most of the readings will be posted to Blackboard, but there are two required novels: *Houseboy*, by Ferdinand Oyono, and *Allah Is Not Obligated*, by Ahmadou Kourouma. *Houseboy* is available at the bookstore, while *Allah Is Not Obligated* is not, but there are plenty of inexpensive used copies you can purchase online.

### **Assignment Policies and Penalties**

Essays must be submitted the day they are due. Late essays will be graded down two marks (e.g. an A minus to a B) the first day they are late and one mark (e.g. B to a B minus) for every day thereafter.

You can take **one** emergency extension on a paper for up to 72 hours. This is for cases where you get a stomach bug, you have a temporary personal issue, you are totally swamped with work from your other classes, and so on. Any subsequent extensions will require extreme, unforeseeable circumstances (think having to go to the hospital, not having to go to the student health center) and verifiable documentation.

If you receive a B minus or lower on your paper, you may choose to rewrite it, in consultation with me. The paper you receive on your rewritten paper will be averaged with your original grade. A rewritten paper is not guaranteed a better grade, and it must incorporate substantive analytical changes; it is not a question of rewriting a few things here and there.

### **Attendance**

This is a small seminar, so it is important that you come to class. You are permitted one unexcused absence. The second and third unexcused absences will each take 5% off of your participation grade. The fourth, fifth and sixth absences will take a further 10% off your participation grade. If you have 7 or more unexcused absences, you will automatically receive a D or F in the course. If you have a doctor's note or another university-sanctioned excuse, then these penalties will be reduced or eliminated.

### **Plagiarism**

This class follows the University of Mississippi's Academic Discipline Policy, and students are expected to sign and submit the Croft Institute's Declaration on Plagiarism.

Do not plagiarize. If you have any questions on whether or not your work constitutes plagiarism, ask me for advice, rather than risk punishment. If you plagiarize an assignment, regardless of whether it was accidental or intentional, you will be referred to the Academic Disciplinary Committee, and the assignment will receive a 0. If two assignments are plagiarized, you will get an F in the course. Do not plagiarize.

## **Electronics**

We all know that the internet is a lot of fun, but it's distracting to you and (worse) distracting to your fellow students. If I see people with the fish-like stare that indicates that they are using their computers to do things other than taking notes, I reserve the right to ban computers from the classroom. Please: don't be that person. Don't use your smartphones, either, under any circumstances; doing so is disrespectful to the rest of the class and will result in a substantial reduction to your participation grade.

## **Course Schedule**

January 31: Map Quiz  
February 18: First Essay Due  
March 24: Second Essay Due  
April 18-27: Student Presentations  
April 28: Third Essay Due  
May 9: Final Exam

## **Unit I: What Was the Colonial State?**

### Week 1: Background

January 24: Course Introduction

January 26: Thinking about Africa

Readings:

Video, Taylor Swift, "Wildest Dreams"

Vivianne Rutabingwa and James Kassaga Arinaitwe, "Taylor Swift is Dreaming of a Very White Africa," *National Public Radio*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "Jumping Monkey Hill"

Binyavanga Wainana, "How to Write About Africa" *Granta*

Laura Seay, "How Not to Write About Africa," *Foreign Policy*

Jina Moore, "The White Correspondent's Burden," *Boston Review*

Chris Lowe, "Talking about Tribe"

Mehdi Hassan, "Obsessing over Europe's Refugee Crisis While Ignoring Africa's Is White Privilege at Work," *Washington Post*

Keren Weitzberg, "Can African States Offer New Approaches to Refugee Asylum?"

## Week 2: Making a Colonial State

January 31: The Slave Trade, Abolition, and Invasion

### **\*\*Map Quiz**

February 2: Establishing a Colonial State

Readings:

Joel Quirk, "Uncomfortable Silences: Anti-Slavery, Colonialism, and Imperialism"

Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, Chapter 3

Buganda Agreement of 1900

## Week 3: Governing a Colonial State

February 7: Cultural Encounters: Ethnicity, Religion, Gender

Readings:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Headstrong Historian"

John Dramani Mahama, "The District Commissioner's Hat"

February 9: How to Govern a Colony: State and Politics in Colonial Africa

Readings:

Gregory Mann, "What Was the *Indigenat*? The 'Empire of Law' in French West Africa," *Journal of African History*

Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Chapter 4

William Worger, Nancy Clark, and Edward Alpers, *Africa and the West: A Documentary History*, pp. 63-74

Nancy Jacobs, *African History through Sources*, pp. 199-216

## Week 4: The Colonial State

February 14: How to Profit from a Colony: State and Economy in Colonial Africa

February 16: The Colonial State Revisited

Readings:

Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy*

**\*\*February 18: first essay due**

## **Unit II: The Fruits of Independence**

### Week 5: Independence

February 21: World War II and the Challenge to the Colonial State

February 23: The Political Kingdom: From Colonial to Postcolonial State

Readings:

Selwyn Lloyd, "Secret Memorandum on Africa: The Next 10 Years"

Amilcar Cabral, "Unity and Struggle"

Kwame Nkrumah, "Tribute to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke," "Africa for Africans" and "Rededication"

### Week 6: The Postcolonial State

February 28: The Developmental State, Part I

Readings:

Video, "A Mamprusi Village"

Video, "Men of Africa"

Video, "Here Is the Gold Coast"

March 2: How to Govern a Country: State and Politics in Postcolonial Africa

### Week 7: Things Fall Apart

March 7: Coups, Crises, Collapse

March 9: Structural Adjustment and the Lives of the Adjusted

Readings:

World Bank, Berg Report, Introduction

James Ferguson, "De-moralizing Economies"

**\*\*\*Spring Break\*\*\***

### Week 8: A History of an Absence

March 21: The Non-State

Readings:

Steven Pierce, "Looking Like a State"

Steven Ellis, "A World of Light and Shade"

March 23: The Postcolonial State Revisited

Readings:

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, "The Bounties of Dependence"

James Ferguson, "Governing Extraction"

**\*\*March 24: second essay due**

## Unit III: War and Peace

### Week 9: "Civil Wars" in Africa

M March 28: Cold Wars: Global Politics and Conflict in Africa

W March 30: Uncivil Wars: Warlord Politics and Conflict in Africa

Readings:

Ahmadou Kourouma, *Allah Is Not Obligated*

### Week 10: Problems from Hell

April 4: The Rwandan Genocide, Part I: Rwanda to 1994

April 6: The Rwandan Genocide, Part II: 100 Days in April

Readings:

Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (selections)

### Week 11: Foreign Interventions?

April 11: War in Central Africa, 1994-Present

Readings:

Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*, Chapter 11

April 13: The World and Africa, Revisited

Readings:

Video, "Kony 2012" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc>]

Teju Cole, "The White Savior Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic*

Norbert Mao, "Thoughts on Kony 2012," *Foreign Policy*

Dinaw Mengetsu, "Not a Click Away," *Warscapes*

Betty Bigombe, "Interview on Kony 2012," *Foreign Policy*

Tim Burke, "Kony Heads"

John Prendergrast and Sasha Lezhnev, "Suffocating Congo's War"

Sudarsan Raghavan, "How a Well-Intentioned Law Left Congolese Miners Jobless," *The Washington Post*

Lauren Frank, "How Dodd-Frank is Failing Congo," *Foreign Policy*

Fidel Bafilemba, Sasha Lezhnev, and Sarah Zingg Wimmer, "From Congress to Congo"

Severine Autesserre, "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences," *African Affairs*

## **Unit IV: Into the Present**

### Week 12: Politics in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

April 18: Democratization and Dictatorship

Student Presentations, Part I

April 20: Terrorism, Civil War, and International Law

Student Presentations, Part II

### Week 13: African Economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

April 25: Africa Rising and Africa Falling

Student Presentations, Part III

April 27: Trade, Aid, and Development

Student Presentations, Part IV

*\*\*April 28: third essay due*

### Week 14: The Present and the Future

May 2: The World of the NGOs

Readings:

Jeffrey Sachs, "The Case for Aid," *Foreign Policy*

Stephen Radelet and William Easterly, "The Development Debate," *Council on Foreign Relations*

Michael Maren, "The Might Interview"

Claire Melamed, "What Do They Want?" *Aeon Magazine*

Jason Hickel, "Enough of Aid, Let's Talk Reparations," *The Guardian*

Michael Hobbes, "Stop Trying to Save the World," *The New Republic*

May 4: What Is To Be Done?

Readings:

Dana Goldstein, "Can 4 Economists Build the Most Economically Efficient Charity Ever?" *The Atlantic*

Matt Yglesias, "The Best and Simplest Way to Fight Global Poverty," *Slate*

James Ferguson, "Cash Transfers and New Welfare States: From Neoliberalism to the Politics of Distribution"

**Final Exam: Tuesday, May 9, 4:00 pm**