

1/5/2016

History/Black Studies 49A: Survey of African History to c. 1800

Winter 2016, T/TR: 5:00-6:15, CHEM 1171

Prof. Stephan Miescher

Office: HSSB 4241, Office hrs. W: 1:00-3:00, or by appt.

miescher@history.ucsb.edu

TA Ross Melczer

Office: HSSB 3216

Office hrs. W: 9:00-11:00

melczer@umail.ucsb.edu

TA Joseph Mann

Office: South Hall 4431S

Office hrs. W: 1:00-3:00 pm

jmann@umail.ucsb.edu

The course provides an introduction to African history and cultures from the origins of human beings to the early nineteenth century. In chronological order, we will examine some of the major economic, social, and political developments of Africa's long and complex history. Themes include: sources of African history; ecological challenges; early African civilizations; food production; technological innovations; voluntary and forced migrations; sources of power and identity within African societies; African belief systems; emergence and disintegration of states; the impact of Islam; forms of trade; African forms of slavery; Euro-African encounters; Atlantic slave trade; Africa's connections to the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic world, and to the Middle East. Throughout the course, we will pay attention to the importance of culture in African history, such as religion, music, and art. Select case studies will allow us to gain an understanding of the historical experiences of African men and women. In addition to the textbook, *Africa: African History before 1885*, edited by Toyin Falola, and excerpts from other scholarly works, we will read primary sources, such as the Sunjata epic, the writings of fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Battuta, Portuguese explorers, commentators on the African slave trade and the Middle Passage, as well as the novel *Segu* by Maryse Condé. Slides, videos, and recordings will provide the class with images and sounds of Africa's environment, peoples, and the works they have left behind. This course is designed for all students wishing to learn about Africa's long and fascinating history.

Requirements:

The course is organized around lectures with weekly discussion sections. You are expected to have read the materials *before* class, take notes of the readings, and bring them to class. You are required to attend all lectures and sections; frequent absences will lower your grade. There will be weekly section homework, as well as a map quiz, midterm, and final examination with ID questions and essays. Each student will write one paper of approximately 1800 words about the novel *Segu* (paper assignment will be discussed in class). **There will be no extensions of due dates.**

On Tuesday of week four and on Thursday of week eight we will meet in the evening (6:30-8:30 pm) to view the feature-length films, *Keita: The Heritage of the Griot* and *Sankofa* respectively. Should you be unable to see these films during the scheduled screenings, you must view them on your own (VHS/DVD copy will be on reserve after

screening). These films are part of the class material and will be subject for exam questions.

Your grade will be assessed on your performance in the following ways:

Section assignments and participation, 20%

Map quiz, 5%, Tuesday, January 19

Midterm (IDs and essay questions), 25%, Tuesday, February 9

Paper, 20%, due in class, Tuesday, March 8

Final exam (IDs and essay questions), 30%, Wednesday, March 16, 7:30-10:30 pm

Academic Dishonesty

Be aware of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. If you have concerns about citing sources, consult with your TA, your professor, or visit a writing tutor. There are campus resources such as CLAS and the Writing Program which are at your disposal to help you improve your writing. CLAS will take both appointments and walk-ins for specific assignments. Plagiarism is a serious offense; any incident will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. For more information on UCSB's policy on academic dishonesty, see <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx>

Readings:

History 49A Reader (marked "R") is available at Associate Students Publications, U-Cen (phone: 805-893-4471) <http://publications.as.ucsb.edu/>; assigned books at the UCSB Bookstore, U-Cen. Copies of books are also available on two-hour reserve at the Davidson Library.

-- Maryse Condé, *Segu*, trans. Barbara Bray (Penguin, 1987)

-- Toyin Falola, ed. *Africa: Volume 1, African History before 1885* (Carolina Academic Press, 2000), hereafter *Africa*

-- Said Hamdun and Noël King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (Markus Wiener 2003)

-- D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, revised edition (Longman, 2006)

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Week 1: Introductions

Tuesday, January 5, 2016

Lecture 1: Images of Africa: Geography and Sources

A. Oyebade, "The Study of Africa in Historical Perspective," *Africa*, ch. 1, 7-18

Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story," TED Talk (2009)

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Lecture 2: Early Civilizations: Foraging and Pastoralism

-- W. Barnett, "The Geography of Africa," *Africa*, ch. 2, esp. 23-44

-- J. O. Adukunle, "Early History: Traditions of Origins..." in *Africa*, ch. 3, 55-64, 67-72

Film: *Mastering a Continent*, written and presented by B. Davidson (1984), excerpt

Discussion Questions: Why are terms, such as “tribe,” “primitive,” and “native,” so problematic when applied to history and cultures of other parts of the world? Are there loaded terms with a positive slant used when talking about our own history? How did notions, such as “Africa as the continent without history,” or “Africa as the dark continent” emerge? Which geographical conditions promoted or hindered the development of early civilizations in Africa?

Week 2: Technological Innovations and State Formation

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Lecture 3: Agriculture Revolution and Early Civilizations, c. 8000 BCE to 100 CE

-- F. Afolayan, “Civilizations of the Upper Nile...,” *Africa*, ch. 4, 73-103

-- A. Oyebade, “The Study of Africa in Historical Perspective,” *Africa*, ch. 1, 18-22

-- C. A. Diop, “Preface,” “What Were the Egyptians?,” in *The African Origin of Civilization* (Lawrence Hill, 1974), xii-xvii, 1-9 (R)

-- K. A. Bard, “Ancient Egyptians and the Issue of Race,” in *Black Athena Revisited*, ed. M. Lefkowitz and G. MacLean Rogers (UNC Press, 1996), 103-11 (R)

Film: *Different but Equal*, written and presented by B. Davidson (1984), excerpt

Thursday, January 14, 2016

Lecture 4: Bantu Expansion and Iron Making, c. 3000 BCE to 800 CE

-- J. Adekunle, “Early History: Traditions of Origins...,” *Africa*, ch. 3, esp. 64-67

-- F. Afolayan, “Bantu Expansion and Its Consequences,” *Africa*, ch. 5, 113-36

Film: *Mastering a Continent*, written and presented by B. Davidson (1984), excerpt

Discussion Questions: Who makes more compelling arguments about ethnic identities of the Egyptians, Cheikh Anta Diop or his critiques like Bard? Why are questions about the ancient Egyptians’ origins such a contested issue in contemporary scholarship? How does the history of Egypt relate to the basic tenets of Afrocentric scholarship? What are the major sources for a reconstruction of the Bantu expansion? Identify the origins of iron making in Africa. What are the links between technology and Bantu expansion?

Week 3: Political and Religious Cultures

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

* MAP QUIZ

Lecture 5: Political and Religious Cultures in Ancient Africa

-- J. Tishken, “Indigenous Religions,” in *Africa, vol. 2: African Cultures and Societies before 1885*, ed. T. Falola (Carolina Academic Press, 2000), ch. 5 (R)

-- E. Nwaubani, “Acephalous Societies,” *Africa*, ch. 12, 275-93

Thursday, January 21, 2016

Lecture 6: African Christianity: Aksum and Ethiopia, c. 150 to 1500 CE

-- F. Afolayan, “Civilizations of the Upper Nile and North Africa,” *Africa*, ch. 4, 103-08

-- S. A. Adejumobi, “Ethiopia,” *Africa*, ch. 10, 231-37

-- Francesco Alvarez, “The Land of Prester John. 1525,” in *Documents from the African Past*, ed. R. O. Collins (Markus Wiener, 2001), 27-31 (R)

-- "The *Kebra Negast*: An Account of the Origins of the Christian Kings of Ethiopia (c. 13th-14th centuries)," in *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Global Medieval Life and Culture*, ed. J. E. Salisbury (Greenwood, 2009), 502-03 (R)

Film: *Wonders of the African World: The Holy Land*, with H. L. Gates, Jr. (2000), excerpt

Discussion Questions: Explain the term "acephalous societies." Identify key characteristics of indigenous African religions; what are some of the difference to world religions, such as Christianity and Islam? What is Ethiopia's importance for the history of Christianity? Discuss the significance of the legends about Kebra Negast and Prester John.

Week 4: Islam and Sudanese Kingdoms, c. 700-1400

Tuesday, January 26, 2016

Lecture 7: Islam and Trade in West Africa

-- J. E. Tishken, "North Africa: Peoples and States to circa 1880," *Africa*, ch. 11, 249-54

-- J. I. Dibua, "Sudanese Kingdoms of West Africa," *Africa*, ch. 6, 137-57

-- S. Hamdun and N. King, *Ibn Battuta*, "West African Journey" (1532), 29-94

Film: *Caravans of Gold*, written and presented by B. Davidson (1984), excerpt

Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 6:30-8:30, Room TBA

Film: *Keita: The Heritage of the Griot* (dir. Dani Kouyaté, 1994, 97')

Thursday, January 28, 2016

Lecture 8: Oral Traditions and Sunjata's Mali

-- D. T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, revised edition (Longman, 2006)

Film: *Road to Timbuktu*, with H. L. Gates, Jr. (2000), excerpt

Discussion Questions: What do we learn about the expansion of Islam, the organization of long-distance trade, and the social and political institutions of West Africa by reading Ibn Battuta's travelogues? Do you recognize Battuta's cultural bias? What are some of the challenges of relying on oral traditions for the reconstruction of Africa's precolonial past? What can we learn about African societies like Mali by studying oral traditions? Examine the differences and similarities of the two presentations of the Sunjata epic by Niane and Kouyaté. What is the relevance of the Sunjata epic in contemporary Mali?

Week 5: Swahili Coast and Great Zimbabwe

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

Lecture 9: Swahili Coast: Indian Ocean Trade and Zimbabwe, c. 850-1500

-- J. O. Adekunle, "East African States," *Africa*, ch. 8, 191-205

-- S. Hamdun and N. King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*, "East African Journey" (1331), 1-25

Film: *Caravans of Gold*, written and presented by B. Davidson (1984), excerpt

Thursday, February 4, 2016

Lecture 10: Great Zimbabwe: Southern African State Formation and Trade, c. 800-1800

(Guest lecture by Ross Melczer)

-- S. I. Mudenge, "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Rozvi Empire: A Reappraisal,"

Journal of African History 15, no. 3 (1974), 373-391 (R)

-- Arthur Evans et al., "The Rhodesia Ruins: Their Probable Origin and Significance—Discussion," *Geographical Journal* 27, no. 4 (1906), 336-47 (R)

Discussion Questions: Explore the various cultural influences on the Swahili coast. How does Battuta describe his encounters on the Swahili coast? Do you think the power in the Kingdom of Rwanda was based on ethnicity? How does S. I. Mudenge challenge the so-called trade stimulus hypothesis in his presentation of the Rozvi Empire? Why is Great Zimbabwe such a controversial archeological site? Identify some of the historical interpretation of Great Zimbabwe as presented in the discussion published by the *Geographical Journal* in 1906? How do such historical interpretations impact our own understanding of present-day southern African cultures?

Week 6: Early Atlantic Age: Benin

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

** MIDTERM EXAM

Lecture 11: No formal lecture

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Lecture 12: European Expansion and Benin, 1450-1680

-- F. Afolayan, "Kingdoms of West Africa: Benin..." *Africa*, ch. 7, 161-69

-- Anonymous, "The Guinea Coast in the Sixteenth Century" (c. 1540) and John Barbot, "Benin" (c. 1680), in *Western African History*, ed. R. O. Collins (Markus Wiener, 1990), 175-84 (R)

-- Start reading M. Condé, *Segu*, trans. Barbara Bray (Penguin, 1987), part 1

Discussion Questions: What do these sources tell us about European perceptions of African societies, and especially about African rules and their religious practices? Do they provide us with useful information about what Africans in the kingdoms of Benin valued and sought to control?

Week 7: Atlantic Age: Kongo and Asante

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

Lecture 13: Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1480-1700

-- J. Tishken, "Central Africa: Peoples and States," *Africa*, ch. 9, 213-17, 220-23

-- J. K. Thornton, *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), excerpts (R)

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Lecture 14: Slavery, Asante, and the Atlantic Trade, c. 1500-1800

-- F. Afolayan, "Kingdoms of West Africa: Benin..." *Africa*, ch. 7, 177-88

-- J. E. Inikori, "Africa and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," *Africa*, ch. 17, 389-405

Film: *The Slave Kingdoms*, with H. L. Gates, Jr. (2000), excerpt

-- Continue reading M. Condé, *Segu*, part 2

Discussion Questions: What kind of relations existed between the kingdom of Kongo and the Portuguese? What role did Catholicism play in Kongo? List some of the concerns of the Antonian Movement, led by Dona Beatriz, for reforming Kongo society. How was the slave trade organized within Africa? What kind of types of slavery existed within African societies? To what extent was slavery gendered (differences between male and female slaves)? What was the connection between ideas of wealth and the institution of slavery in Asante?

Week 8: Atlantic Slave Trade and African Diaspora

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

Lecture 15: Middle Passage and Impact of Slave Trade in West Africa, c. 1650-1800

- J. E. Inikori, "Africa and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," *Africa*, ch. 17, 405-11
- "Olaudah Equiano Becomes a Slave (1789)," in *Africa and the West*, vol. 1, ed. W. Worger et al. (OUP, 2010), 57-66 (R)
- "Alexander Falconbridge Describes his Experience as a Physician on Slave Ships (1788)," *Africa and the West*, vol. 1 (OUP, 2010), 69-80 (R)
- B. Brooks, "The Signares: Entrepreneurial African Women," in *Problems in African History: The Precolonial Centuries*, ed. R. O. Collins (Markus Wiener, 1993), 213-21 (R)

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Lecture 16: The Black Atlantic, the African Diaspora, and Returning "Home"

- E. M. Bruner, "Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora," *American Anthropologist* 98, no. 2 (1996), 290-304 (R)
 - Seesta Imahküs, *Returning Home Ain't Easy: But It Sure Is...* (1999), excerpts (R)
 - Continue reading M. Condé, *Segu*, part 3
- Film: *The Slave Kingdoms*, with H. L. Gates, Jr. (2000), excerpt

Thursday, February 25, 2016, 6:30-8:30 pm, Room TBA

Film: *Sankofa* (dir. Haile Gerima, 1993, 125')

Discussion Questions: Looking at locations in Europe, Africa, and the Americas think about the causes of and the participants in the Atlantic slave trade. Why is the Atlantic slave trade so controversial? How did ideas about race intersect with notions about servitude? Explore the tensions between abolitionists' accounts of the middle passage and those by historians. Can you identify scholarly disagreements about the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa? How does the film *Sankofa* engage with scholarly discussions about Africans' contributions to the making of an Atlantic World? Why did descendants of slaves in the African diaspora return to the African continent, and what are the challenges they faced? How have these journeys "home" changed since the eighteenth century?

Week 9: African Diaspora in Indian Ocean and Revolutions in West Africa

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Lecture 17: Indian Ocean and Colonial World of Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius
 -- M. Vaughan, "Slavery and Colonial Identity in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius,"
Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 6th series, vol. 8 (1998), 189-214 (R)

Thursday, March 3, 2016

Lecture 18: Religious and Commercial Revolutions, 1750-1820

-- J. O. Adelunle, "The Jihads in West Africa," *Africa*, ch. 13, 299-319

-- M. Condé, *Segu*, parts 4, 5

Film: *Ceddo* (dir. Ousmane Sembène, 1976), excerpt

Discussion Questions: Characterize the slave society of colonial Mauritius. How did the experience of slaves in Mauritius differ from those in the Americas? Explore the dramatic historical changes concerning religious practices, Atlantic and West African trading systems, and forms of authority as represented in the stories of the historical novel *Segu*. What were the impact of these changes on ordinary men and women?

Week 10 Colonization in Southern Africa, 1652-1805

Tuesday, March 8, 2016, Pollock Theater

Film: *J. C. Abbey, Ghana's Puppeteer* (dir. Steven Feld, 2015, 53')

(Guest: Filmmaker Steven Feld)

*** PAPER DUE

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Lecture 20: "Life Focused on the Outside": Colonial Encounters with Capital and State in South Africa, 1652-1805 (Guest lecture by Joseph Mann)

-- L. Thompson, "White Invaders: The Cape Colony," in *A History of South Africa* (Yale University Press, 2000), 31-52 (R)

-- S. Marks, "Khoisan Resistance to the Dutch in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972), 55-80 (R)

Discussion: What brought European colonizers to southern Africa; what kind of society did they build? Discuss the interactions and tensions in the South African frontier. Prepare questions to be addressed during the review session. What do you consider the most important findings of our exploration of Africa's history prior to 1800? What are the significant linkages between African history and World history?

**** FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, March 16, 2016, 7:30-10:30 pm