Overview and Objectives

Africa is central to human history. It is the continent where our species arose, where some of the greatest ancient civilizations throve, and where dynamic, complex, and innovative cultures confronted a variety of social, political, and environmental challenges. Many African states and societies were materially wealthier than their European counterparts until the 1700s, and Africa has always been connected—however tenuously at times—to the wider world. Yet in the popular, Eurocentric historical imagination in the U.S. and Europe, there is sparse knowledge of Africa’s own history, and it was rarely even considered a subject for historical study until the 1950s. For the period before European political dominion in Africa (c.1880-1960), this lack is even more pronounced. In this course we will explore the history of Africa between the 800s and the late 1800s, while at the same time discovering the logic behind African historical developments and tracing the broader implications of processes in African history.

Our core themes in this course involve power, trade, and the production of social and cultural orders locally, in the context of developing global systems tied to the African continent. No one course can cover more than a tiny sliver of the complexity and variety in Africa, home today to over a billion people, 55 nations, and thousands of communities of language and culture. We will deal primarily but not exclusively with regions now south of the formidable Sahara Desert, but the desert was hardly impregnable, and the wide influence of Africa made the edges of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans increasingly important over time. Students completing this course satisfactorily will, at minimum:

- Develop a broad understanding of how various African societies evolved before the mid-1800s;
- Discover the important position of precolonial Africa within local and global historical processes;
- Interpret primary sources for major themes and episodes in African history within their own particular social, cultural, political, and economic contexts; and
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and discuss material dealing with Africa’s past in writing, with sensitivity to various African historical contexts.

Although this course extends past the mid-1800s, a large number of 19th-century developments relative to colonial empires, medicine, environment, religion, and production will only appear in HIST 326 (Spring term), where they flow more neatly and logically into the modern period. We hope you will stay with us!

An Important Note About This Syllabus

Everything on this syllabus is important. Read it carefully and refer to it frequently. You alone are responsible for knowing its contents. The paper copy you receive at the beginning of the course is, ideally, the final version, but sometimes the unexpected intrudes and changes must be made. In all cases I will inform you of these changes and assure that an updated version is available on Canvas. Check the date at the top of page one if you are unsure which syllabus is the latest, keep up to date with Canvas announcements, and don’t hesitate to contact our GE or I with any questions.
Assignments and Grading

Because African history requires the mastery of entirely new bodies of knowledge for most students, it is important for you not only to keep up with the reading but to think actively about it through analytical writing. Therefore, this course will incorporate three short thesis-driven analytical papers (1300 to 1600 words of actual text, which is roughly 5 to 7 pages) on topics connected to the major divisions of the course. These papers must be tendered to Canvas at the indicated dates / times and conform to the prompts’ accompanying instructions. These papers will only be accepted via Canvas.

Besides these papers, you will be required to complete a written final examination (cumulative, but weighted far more towards the second half and weeks 9-10), a map quiz the second Monday of the term, and the occasional pop quiz on the reading. The grade weighting breaks down as follows (out of 400+):

Map Quiz | 5% | 20 pts
---|---|---
Papers (3): | 20% each (60%) | 80 pts each (240)
Final Exam (Cumulative): | 30% | 120 pts
Quizzes & Participation: | 5% (minimum*) | 20 pts (or more*)

(*Noteworthy participation—questions, comments, observations, and discussion in class—might reach above the 40-point limit; engagement in group discussions at various times in the term also matters.)

Course grades will be assigned according to percentages on a decimal scale, with 93.00+ as an A, 90.00-92.99 as A-, 87.00-89.99 as B+, 83.00-87.99 as B, 80.00-82.99 as B-, 77.00-79.99 as C+, 73.00-76.99 as a C, and so on). There is no standard percentage for A+, which we award only in cases of extreme merit, and at my (LFB) sole discretion. As a final notice, we do not change paper, exam, or course grades, clerical errors excepted, though we’re happy to discuss your work to aid improvement going forward.

Please pay close attention to the important due dates & times, which we recapitulate in a list at the end of this syllabus for your convenience. Late papers will be marked down 10% (8 pts) per 24 hours or portion thereof (see page 4 for policy on extensions, however). No further papers will be accepted after that essay’s grades are released. No special exam sittings will be arranged except as required by University policy, and never before the exam date. You alone are responsible for assuring we receive your work on time and in proper format, so double-check.

Course Texts

The following books are required and can be purchased at the Duck Store or online from several retailers. Make sure you get the editions indicated, because content and pagination vary dramatically. Older editions, especially of Shillington, are very different. Also, do not splurge for his brand-new 4th edition.


All other readings will be posted on Canvas under “Files” a week or so before they must be read. Some related “recommended” readings will also appear there for your reading interests. Prioritize them. If you have any trouble obtaining them, please let me know immediately. We can always email PDFs of supplementary readings (not the textbooks) to you. Textbooks will have at least one copy on reserve.
Policies and Provisions:

Attendance & Conduct: Attendance is expected at all class meetings (film events are flexible; see the schedule). We do not grade attendance itself, although I will circulate a sign-in sheet to track it starting in week 2. Habitually poor attendance, however, always results in poorer grades because you will miss our quizzes and our discussions, besides which the lectures do not just recapitulate the readings. Class notes from others form a poor substitute, but you may always come to see us and talk about what you missed. We also ask you to be as punctual as possible, as late arrival and early departure—including anticipatory “rustling” five minutes before the end—are disruptive. We will also strive to start and end class on time, but I (LFB) like to show up early enough to play some relevant music as you come in.

Laptops & Phones: Although I’m a technophile too, gadget use in class can be annoying and distracting. This is especially true for those around you, who can hear your typing and whose eyes drift inexorably towards lit screens. Laptop and tablet computers are particular problems, and they have a demonstrably negative effect on learning and participation in large classes like ours. However, I also recognize that some students have grown up depending on note-taking via typing, so if you wish to use a laptop computer or tablet, you must sit at the back of the room to minimize the peripheral effects. Be sure to set your phone to “silent” when you come in. Lectures and discussions may not be recorded without full class consent, per Oregon law. Breaches of tech policy will affect your final grade. Medical devices are, of course, exempt from general policy on the use of outside technology in class.

Special Needs: The University of Oregon seeks to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify us if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. Substantial modifications of course policies or requirements, however, do require a letter from the Accessible Education Center. The AEC is located in 155 Oregon Hall; call (541) 346-1155 or email uoaec@uoregon.edu to set up a consultation. They are excellent advocates for your success, and I am happy to provide any and all accommodation that an AEC letter permits its holder.

Special Scheduling: In classes as large as this one, it is inevitable that a few people will have schedule conflicts with other activities. This is not a problem for the films, which are widely available and will be on reserve at the Library at the very least. For quizzes and the exam, if your absence is University-related or an emergency and documented, then you are exempt from any quiz given that day. No extensions will be given except in circumstances indicated on the next page (see “Paper Extensions”). The final exam must be taken in the standard format starting at 10:15am on 18 March 2020 in our room. There will be no makeup sittings, and the exam may not be taken early. In the rare case that a legitimate conflict with the final exists due to other exams or overlapping University-sanctioned programs, let me know as early as possible so that I may verify the particulars and make any necessary arrangements via the Deans.

Writing Style: All papers and other at-home writing for this course must be typed and must employ grammatically correct and clear college-level English. All non-lecture data or other material that is used in a paper must be cited properly. For citation format and writing tips, any humanities-based style guide should be fine. (If you don’t know what citation or style guides are, please ask.) I normally recommend M. L. Rampolla’s Pocket Guide to Writing History, 9th edition (available at the Duck Store or online), which includes citation models as well as other stylistic pointers that will greatly improve your work. Other styles (e.g., MLA) are OK so long as you are consistent. Poor style (grammar, formatting, and prose) can obscure your points indirectly, and the misuse of terms may also cause direct markdowns. For special writing assistance, see the Teaching and Learning Center: http://tlc.uoregon.edu/

**Paper Deadlines:** Unless specifically extended for the whole class, the paper deadlines are at *exactly* the minute specified, with submission time as recorded by Canvas. Make sure that your work gets to us in the proper format, at the time it is required. If Canvas is not accepting your work, email it to us to make sure it goes out, but keep trying to upload because we can’t upload your work ourselves. To be on the safe side, try to tender your paper a bit early.

**Paper Extensions:** Because the documentation requirement to obtain extensions for illness, etc., creates inequities for some students, I use a system that puts much of it back in your hands. Every student starts the term with a bank of four (4) indivisible 24-hour extensions that we will be applied to any late paper (not quizzes or the exam), for any reason, until they are gone. If you have the flu, need to travel for family, or any other reason, you will have those four automatic extensions to use. **Only AEC letters, UO sponsored programs, national service obligations, and hospitalization for longer than two days are eligible for other extension periods (with documentation),** so use your bank wisely. We’ll track it.

**Academic Honesty:** The information in this subsection isn’t necessary for 99+% of the students in my courses, but unfortunate ongoing experience dictates that we link to the UO academic misconduct guide:

https://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct

A number of relevant headings to policies on academic honesty and conduct are there. In practice, the issues of academic honesty that arise most often are cheating and plagiarism. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is, handy guides to it are available from many educational sources. The UO has one here:

http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism

It is a gross understatement to say that academic dishonesty will adversely affect your grade. At the very least, you will receive an automatic failing mark for the course. My personal view of the matter is that plagiarists and cheaters do not belong in an institution of higher learning, which usually means judicial review and ultimately suspension or expulsion from the University. If you have any concerns or you’re not sure whether something is plagiarism, ask *before* you turn it in for a grade. **Ignorance is not a valid excuse, and lack of malicious intent will not shield you from the consequences.**

One final warning, regarding the potential crutch of the Internet: if you can find it, so can we—so resist the temptation to cut corners. By all means use internet tools (such as Google or Wikipedia), but use them properly and judiciously, and accept nothing from an unaccredited source like Wikipedia or a non-academic webpage alone as reliable or authoritative. Verify their information, and never use outside sources as substitutes for actual assigned course material. Aggregators, search engines, and crowd-sourced information may be helpful to orient you, but they are not valid sources in themselves; using dodgy sources like newspaper opinion pieces, book summaries (Shmoop and the like), or blog posts as authorities will count against you on the papers. If you need an independent evaluation of a source’s reliability, come see us or send an email. We’ll be happy to look at it for you.

**VeriCite:** We use VeriCite on Canvas as the primary method for tendering papers, in order to have an easy means of collecting your essays, providing a time-stamp, and checking for duplication. VeriCite itself is a software tool designed to help students avoid plagiarism and improper usage. It encourages original writing and proper citation by cross-referencing submitted materials with an archived database of websites, essays, journal articles, and other published work, as well as papers submitted in prior years. **By enrolling in this course, you grant the instructor and any associated graduate employee permission to submit your work to VeriCite or similar analytical programs as needed.** See Canvas Help or ask us if you need that tool and its reach explained.

**Everything Else:** In all other matters of classroom policy, we default to the Duck Guide or the relevant Departmental standard. If you’re not sure of something, or need to talk about a concern, please see us!
HIST 325: PRECOLONIAL AFRICA

Class Schedule (subject to change based on our interests and time constraints)
Readings are to be completed before the class assigned. Be ready to talk about them for discussion opportunities or quizzes, especially the Collins, Niane, and Hamdun/King primary sources.

Readings marked (C) will be on Canvas. Readings marked (Collins) are from that book.

**Part I: Foundations (week 1)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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| M    | 6 Jan| **Introduction to the Study of African History and Its Challenges**  
Reading:  
Pier M. Larson, “Myths about Africa, Africans …” (C)  
Steven Lowe, “The Trouble with Tribe” (C) |
| W    | 8 Jan| **The Very Short Course: Geography and Core Concepts for the Era**  
Reading:  
Shillington, Chapters 1-5 (1-84) skim if desired as background.  
Optional:  

**Part II: States Around the Sahara and African Historical Sources, 800-1600 (weeks 2-4)**

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<th>Day</th>
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| M    | 13 Jan| **The Expansion of Trans-Saharan Trade & Islam to 1200**  
MAP QUIZ: PHYSICAL FEATURES (see syllabus pp. 9-10), 12 noon  
Reading:  
Shillington, Chapters 6-7 (85-100).  
Chronicles of Al-Ya’qubi, Ibn Hawqal, and Al-Muhallabi, in Levtzion and Spaulding, eds., *Medieval West Africa: Views from Arab Scholars and Merchants* (2003), 1-8. (C) |
| W    | 15 Jan| **Wagadu (“Ghana”) and the Almoravids**  
PAPER TOPIC #1 DISTRIBUTED  
Reading:  
Shillington, Chapter 7 (100-108).  
Note:  
Prof. Braun may have to report for jury duty, but will only know on Tuesday. |
| M    | 20 Jan| **DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., HOLIDAY – NO CLASS SESSION** |
| W    | 22 Jan| **Malian Society: Oral Tradition, Islam, and Syncretism**  
Reading:  
Hamdun & King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (2005), ix-xxxii, 29-75. Pay attention to the relevant translation endnotes, 76-94; they explain a lot and will enrich your knowledge. Start reading before Monday; it’s a lot to get through and think about!  
Film (7-9pm):  
Dani Kouyaté, “Keïta: Heritage of the Griot” (DVD 05213). You are not required to attend this particular showing, but we provide it as a convenience. If you cannot see the film at this time, you must see it before the weekend for any quiz or paper use. Compare the film’s telling with Niane’s transcription, and think about why they differ in detail, coverage, and tone. (ROOM TBD) |
**Part III: East African and Indian Ocean Systems, to 1500 (weeks 4-5)**

**W 29 Jan**
Northeast Africa: Traders, Muslims, and Christians
Reading: Shillington, Chapter 8 (114-22).
Francisco Alvaréz, “The Land of Prester John, 1525.” (Collins)

**R 30 Jan**
PAPER #1 DUE VIA CANVAS BY 11:59pm

**M 3 Feb**
The Swahili Coast and the Rise of Kilwa Kisiwani
Reading: Shillington, Chapter 9 (128-37, 143).
Tuan Ch’êng-Shih, “China’s Discovery of Africa, 863.” (Collins)
Hamdun & King, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (2005), 15-25, 129-47. **Again, be sure to read the relevant translation endnotes!**

**W 5 Feb**
States of the South Central Interior: Cattle, Gold, Trade, and Power
**PAPER TOPIC #2 DISTRIBUTED**
Reading: Shillington, Chapter 10 (151-59).
Manuel de Faria e Souza, “The Kingdom of the Monomotapa, 1666.” (Collins)

**Part IV: Travelers Unbidden, c.1400-1700 (weeks 6-7)**

**M 10 Feb**
The Rise of Afro-European Oceanic Commerce: West and Central Africa
Reading: Shillington, Chapters 13 & 14 (191-97, 203-7).
Antonius Malfante, “Tawata and the Western Sudan Trade, 1447.” (Collins)

**W 12 Feb**
New Factors in Northeast Africa and the Indian Ocean Network
Reading: Shillington, Chapter 9 (137-43).
John Laband, “Ravaging the Swahili Coast,” in *Bringers of War: The Portuguese in Africa ...* (2013), 36-70. (C)
Duarte Barbosa, “The East Coast of Africa at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century, 1540 [1516].” (Collins)
Father Lobo, “Portuguese Missionaries in Ethiopia, 1620.” (Collins)
(Revisit the latter part of the Marcus reading from week 4 for Ethiopia.)

**M 17 Feb**
Transformations in Atlantic Africa
Reading: Rui de Aguiar, “King Affonso I, 1516.” (Collins)
Alvare II and Alvare III, “Relations between the Kingdom of Kongo and the Papacy, 1613.” (Collins)
John Barbot, “Benin, 1680.” (Collins)
### Part V: Slavery, the Slave Trades, and the African Atlantic (weeks 7-10)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 8</td>
<td>20 Feb</td>
<td>PAPER #2 DUE VIA CANVAS BY 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 9</td>
<td>24 Feb</td>
<td>The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Rise of Industrialized Brutality</td>
<td>PAPER TOPIC #3 DISTRIBUTED</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
<td>Shillington, Chapter 12 (176-86).</td>
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<td>Optional:</td>
<td>P. C. Emmer, <em>The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy, 1580-1880</em> (1998), 11-37. Emmer’s text is provided for those interested in the Dutch company factor, which is often downplayed in general histories. It is a dense piece of text for a survey-level course, so I do not require it.</td>
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<td>William Snelgrave, “The Slaves’ Mutiny, 1730,” (Collins)</td>
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<td>Theodore Canot, “Slaving in Liberia, 1850.” (Collins)</td>
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<td>Charles Livingstone, “The Prazeros, 1859.” (Collins)</td>
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### Part VI: Africa and the “First Globalization” to 1880 (weeks 9-10)

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 12</td>
<td>4 Mar</td>
<td>Southern Africa: Colonies, Kingdoms, and Treks</td>
<td>Shillington, Chapters 15 &amp; 18 (218-29; 263-79).</td>
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<td>Anna Elizabeth Steenkamp, “The Great Trek, 1835.” (Collins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 13</td>
<td>6 Mar</td>
<td>PAPER #3 DUE VIA CANVAS BY 11:59pm</td>
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<td>David Prochaska, <em>Making Algeria French</em> (1990), 62-93. (C)</td>
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</table>
**W 11 Mar**  
**Reading:**  
The Rise of Mass Islam and Jihad in West Africa
- Shillington, Chapter 16 (230-36).
- Abdallah ibn Muhammad, “The Hijra & Holy War of Sheik Uthman dan Fodio, 1804” (Collins) with Shaykh al-Kanami, “The Case Against the Jihad, 1813.” (Collins) These provide views of Sokoto.

**W 18 Mar**  
**CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM, 140 TYKESON, 10:15am-12:15pm**

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Recapitulation of Deadlines and Key Dates:

- **Monday, 14 January 2020,** in class: Map Quiz (at start of class)
- **Thursday, 30 January 2020,** by 11:59pm: Paper 1 (Canvas)
- **Thursday, 20 February 2020,** by 11:59pm: Paper 2 (Canvas)
- [*Sunday, 23 February 2020, before midnight: Final UO deadline to change grade option / withdraw*]
- **Thursday, 6 March 2020,** by 11:59pm: Paper 3 (Canvas)
- **Wednesday, 18 March 2020,** 10:15am-12:15pm: Final exam, 140 Tykeson
Map Quiz Study Guide, HIST 325 Precolonial Africa, for Monday 13 Jan 2020

On the quiz I will give you twelve names, with letters A-M (omitting I) next to each; you must use the letters to indicate the location of ten, and only ten, on the blank map that we will provide. Excess answers will be disregarded randomly, right or wrong. Be as specific as possible; for large areas, such as the Sahara, indicate the rough extent by circling the area in question. Oceans and seas do not require such treatment, however, and you need not indicate the ENTIRE course of a river; only go up to the second fork. My rule of thumb is "can we understand what you're getting at?" Provided that what you're getting at is the correct answer, you're OK, so "close" sometimes counts. If you (say) circle two islands and only one of them is correct, or you’ve got part of the right rivercourse but part of the wrong one too, you may receive partial credit for that answer. Please note: The Niger Inland Delta is far upriver from the other Niger Delta; know both! Likewise, be clear which islands Zanzibar, Pemba, Bioko, and São Tomé are!

Bodies of Water:
- Atlantic Ocean
- Indian Ocean
- Red Sea
- Mediterranean Sea
- Gulf of Aden
- Victoria Nyanza (aka Lake Victoria)
- Lake Tanganyika
- Lake Malawi (aka Lake Nyasa)
- Lake Chad
- Bight of Biafra (aka Bight of Bonny)
- Bight of Benin
- Gulf of Sidra (aka Gulf of Sirte)

Rivers:
- Nile (Up to confluence of Blue/White)
- Niger
- Benue
- Congo
- Senegal
- Gambia
- Limpopo
- Zambesi
- Orange (Gariep)
- Volta (Black and White parts)

Landforms/Regions/Islands:
- Sahara Desert
- Kalahari Desert
- Namib Desert
- Atlas Mountains
- Ahaggar (Hoggar) Mountains
- Tibetsi Mountains
- Drakensberg Mountains
- Mount Kilimanjaro
- Mount Cameroon
- Ethiopian Highlands
- Zimbabwe Plateau
- Cape of Good Hope
- Niger Inland Delta
- Niger Delta
- Horn of Africa
- “Gold Coast”
- “Ivory Coast”
- Canary Islands
- Comoros Islands
- São Tomé
- Fernando Pó / Bioko
- Zanzibar
- Pemba
- Madagascar

A copy of the full-size blank map is on the next page; it is the same blank map you will receive for the quiz. Note that it is a fairly "simplified" map as river-courses go, but I believe all the rivers are indicated. Maps in Shillington or elsewhere online will help you find features, but please feel free to email us if you have any difficulty or questions. The simple process of making a study map will actually do a great deal to assure success!