

AFS 2002: The African Experience
Section 0941, Spring 2013, 3 credits
T, P4 (Little Hall 0121)
R, P 4-5 (Little Hall 0121)

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 12:45-2:45 PM

Course Description

This course presents an opportunity to discover the rich and fascinating tapestry of diverse peoples, societies and cultures in an important and little known continent which shares a long history of relations with the Americas.

The course approach will be highly interdisciplinary. We will discuss issues related to the history, culture, arts, politics, and languages of African peoples, as well as to the socio-economic development of their societies. An important theme of the course will be the diversity of Africa: with 54 countries, perhaps 2000 languages (about 1/3 of all the languages spoken by humans today), and a wide variety of cultures and religions, it is hard to generalize about Africa. Yet at the same time, there are important commonalities in “the African experience” (the title of this course). These are rooted in some shared cultural norms, a largely shared history of European colonization, and similar positions in the global political and economic order since independence in the 1960s. This course will examine both the commonalities of the African experience, and its variations.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should have:

- Acquired a broad knowledge of the African realities,
- Become aware of the diversity of the African experiences,
- Acquired some basic knowledge of African geography, history, politics, religions, societies and cultures,
- Grasped some of the complexity of African contemporary challenges (socio-economic development, uneven patterns of trade and globalization, HIV/AIDS).

Course Requirements:

Your final evaluation is based on the following components:

Presence and participation (20%)
Map Quiz (15%)
Reaction Paper (15%)
Poster Project (25%)
Final Exam (25%)

Each component/assignment will be given a percentage grade. After calculating the weighted average of such grades, the final grade will be assigned according to the table:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot %	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points you can consult the appropriate undergraduate catalog web page <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

- PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%): Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class – it is therefore important you arrive in class on time. You are allowed two absences, after which I will take one point off every further unjustified absence.
 - POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT: This course succeeds when students engage with each other and the course material in a positive, informed, and constructive way. Participation in class discussions, and taking responsibility for your role in classroom debates, is key, and contributes to your final score. Readings must be completed prior to the start of every class. Disrespectful class demeanor (e.g. talking and disturbing others, using lap-tops for anything else than taking class notes, and using cell phones) will be heavily penalized, after a first warning.
- MAP QUIZ (15%) : You will be tested on your knowledge of the names and locations of the 54 sovereign African countries and critical geographic features. Blank maps and the full list of countries will be distributed in advance so that you can practice before the test.
- REACTION PAPER (15%): Each student is required to write one short reaction paper (of about 1000 words, typed, single-spaced) analyzing the two books by I. Beah and W. Kamkwamba – more instructions to come.
- POSTER (25%): In lieu of a midterm exam, students will be responsible for researching and creating a poster on an assigned theme (20%). This semester, the theme is Islam in Africa. All students will be expected to present your poster at the Center for African Studies Symposium on Islam in Africa (5%).
- FINAL EXAM (25%) will be based on course readings, videos and lectures. It will be a combination of multiple choice, fill-in the blank and other types of questions. It will be held on Thursday, May 2nd, 2013 (7.30-9.30 a.m.) Location TBA

Reading and other course material:

There is one core textbook for this course:

- Gordon A.A. and Gordon D.L. Understanding Contemporary Africa, Lynne Rienner, 4th ed. (Please, note you should use the last edition for this book) (henceforth UCA)

Plus three other texts, both required:

- The Dark Child: The Autobiography of an African Boy by Camara Laye, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux
- Unbowed: A Memoir, by Wangari Maathai. Anchor Press.
- Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, by Charles Piot. University of Chicago Press.

Plus one other text, recommended:

- Taking Sides: Clashing Views On African Issues by W.G. Mosely. McGraw-Hill/Dushkin. (2011 edition)

Other required class material will be available on the course website on the UF Sakai system, and will include chapters, books, and journal articles (as detailed in the class schedule below)

The course site on Sakai can be accessed through <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>, by entering your Gatorlink username and password. You need to consult this site on a regular basis since it is here where all announcements related to the course will be posted, as well as instructions regarding the assignments.

The videos shown in class are part of the class material on which you may be tested. If you miss class in which a video is shown, it is your responsibility to borrow and watch the video.

Academic Honesty: The University places a high premium on academic honesty. Accordingly, severe penalties are imposed for plagiarism and other instances of deception or fraud. The university's policies regarding intellectual honesty are detailed in the Academic Honesty Guidelines, printed in full in the current Undergraduate Catalog.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. Both the Counseling Center and Student Mental Health provide confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal or lacking clear career and academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance. The Counseling Center is located at 301 Peabody Hall (next to Criser Hall). Student Mental Health is located on the second floor of the Student Health Services in the Infirmary.

1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, www.counsel.ufl.edu
2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, www.hsc.ufl.edu/shcc/smhs.htm
2. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
3. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Students with Disabilities Act

The Dean of Students Office coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faulty-student disability related issues. Dean of Students Office, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066, www.dso.ufl.edu.

Do you like courses with African content and you want to know more? Then learn about the many opportunities UF offers to increase your knowledge of Africa:

- The Center for African Studies offers many courses with an African content. You can pick up a free booklet with details from 427 Grinter, and ask for more information.
- Many stimulating opportunities exist, such as Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs (including the prestigious Lumbardi Program). For more info contact the CAS deputy director Todd Leedy (427 Grinter; email tleedy@africa.ufl.edu).
- Do you want to meet your foreign language requirement in a different and exciting way? Learn one of several African languages taught by AALL department. For more information contact Dr C. Bwenge at cbwenge@africa.ufl.edu.
- Are you taking, or planning to take, other courses in African Studies? If so, you may qualify for a Minor in African Studies. Make sure you declare it: in the past, some students who qualified, failed to declare it! Dr Leedy will be happy to help you make the process even easier: he will send the form for you!

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Please note: the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to the following schedule during the semester

You are required to do the relevant reading before each class.

Week 1: Introduction

Tu. Jan. 8: Course overview

Th. Jan. 10: What do you know about Africa? The maps of Africa: preparation for the Map Quiz

Reading: UC Africa, Chapter 2, online resources in Resources on Sakai

Week 2: Natural Resources and Geography

Tu. Jan. 15: Researching Africa at UF: Dr. Dan Reboussin, African Studies at Smathers Library

Class meets at Library West Room 212

Th. Jan. 17: Lecture by Dr. Abe Goldman, Geography and African Studies

Reading: UC Africa, Chapter 2

Week 3: Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Slave Histories

Tu. Jan. 22: Map Quiz, Slavery and the pre-colonial period

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 3 (pp. 23-49)

Th. Jan. 24: The colonial period: Lecture by Sue O'Brien, History and African Studies

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 3 (pp. 49-end); Ch. 4 (up to p. 68)

Week 4: Contemporary states and politics

Tu. Jan. 29: The Politics of African Independence and Post-Colonial States

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 4 (all)

Th. Jan. 31: Lecture by Dr. Todd Leedy, Center for African Studies

Week 5: Economics and development

Tu. Feb. 5: The politics of development aid

Reading: UC Africa Ch. 5 (especially from p. 114 on)

Th. Feb. 7: Economic Development: main issues and challenges: Lecture by Dr. Renata Serra, African Studies

Reading: [Steven Radelet](#), Emerging Africa Chapters 1,2, 7 (available online)

Week 6: Language and Religion

Tu. Feb. 12: Presentation by professors and lecturers of African languages

Charles Bwenge, African Language Program and Senior Lecturer

Th. Feb. 14: Religion in Africa: Lecture by Dr Terje Østebø (Religion and CAS)

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 11

Week 7: Tradition and Modernity

Tu. Feb. 19: Childhood and Education

Reading: Laye's The Dark Child (1-92)

Th. Feb. 21: Adulthood and Aspirations

Reading: Laye's The Dark Child (93-188)

Week 8: Family and Kinship

Tu. Feb. 26: Family ties

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 9

Th. Feb. 28: Lecture by Dr. Abdoulaye Kane, Anthropology and African Studies

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Globalization

Tu. Mar. 12: Reading: Part 1 of Piot's Remotely Global; class discussion

Th. Mar. 14: Reading: Part 2 of Piot's Remotely Global; class discussion

Week 10: Environment, health, and food security

Tu. Mar. 19: Main environmental issues

Reading: UC Africa Ch. 8, and Ch. 5 (pp. 135-139)

(Tentatively scheduled visit from International Center folks for panel on "How to go to Africa from UF")

Th. Mar. 21: Lecture by Dr. Richard Rheingans, Public Health and African Studies

Week 11: Women in Africa

Tu. Mar. 26: Gender issues

Reading: UC Africa Ch. 10

Th. Mar. 28: Lecture by Marit Østebø, History and African Studies

Week 12: Music and Arts

Tu. Apr. 2: African Music: Lecture by Dr. Victoria Rovine, Art and Art History, and CAS

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 11; and "Beauty Stripped of Human Flaws: Soweil Masks" from Art in Africa by Pamela McClusky pp.197-213

Th. Apr. 4: Visit to the Harn Museum of Art Collection on African Art

Week 13: African Cinema

Tu. Apr. 9: African cinema: Lecture by Dr. Alioune Sow (LLC & CAS)

Th. Apr. 11: Film showing in class

Mandatory: Poster Presentation on Islam in Africa at the Center for African Studies Symposium on Islam in Africa, April 12-13, 2013.

Week 14: Health in Africa

Tu. Apr. 16: HIV/AIDS

Reading: UC Africa, Ch. 5 (125-7) and Ch. 7 (p. 223-230); plus browse

www.avert.org/aids-hiv-africa.htm

Th. Apr. 18: Lecture by Meredith Marten, Graduate Student in Anthropology and African Studies

Week 15: The Future of Africa: Climate Change and Social Change

Tu. Apr. 23: Discussion on the Future of Africa: Reading: UC Africa Ch. 13

END OF CLASSES

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 2nd, 2013 (7.30-9.30 a.m.) Location TBA