

# The African Experience

AFS2002

Summer B 2021

M,T,W,R,F | Period 4 (12:30 - 1:45 PM)

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Office hours: TBD



## Course Description

This course presents an opportunity to discover the richness and diversity of a continent once called the Dark Continent. We will explore the places, politics, economies and cultures. The course approach will be highly interdisciplinary. We will discuss issues about the past, present and make projections into the future in such a way as to allow us understand better the socio-economic situation of the continent. An important theme of the course will be the diversity of Africa: with 55 recognized independent Nation-states, with close to about 2000 distinct languages (about 1/3 of all the languages spoken by humans today), and a wide variety of belief systems and religions, there will be a lot to learn. It will thus become obvious that generalization about Africa is tenuous. 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. What can we learn from the various challenges Africa as a continent faces.

### **Student Learning 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).
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- Evaluate, organize and analyze a range of source material from diverse perspectives
  - Develop original ideas about 'solving' (or articulating) one of the challenges Africa is facing presently using evidence gathered from articles or guest presenters.
  - Debate and discuss contemporary issues with your peers
  - Write effectively

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

#### **Required texts:**

Gordon A.A. and Gordon D.L.(2013). Understanding Contemporary Africa, Lynne Rienner, 5<sup>th</sup> (Please, note you should use the fifth edition of this book) (henceforth UCA)

*The Dark Child: The Autobiography of an African Boy* by Camara Laye

#### **Additional readings :**

Other required class material will be available on the course website on the UF Canvas system, and will include chapters, books, and journal articles (as detailed in the class schedule below). The course site on Canvas can be accessed through <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.), 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.

### **COURSE FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS**

The COVID-19 outbreak has forced this course to move from its original brick-and-mortar format to online delivery. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course format if it becomes clear that the learning objectives are not being met.

## Course Requirements:

Your final evaluation is based on the following components:

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- Map Quiz (15%)
- Reaction Paper (15%)
- Country Profile Project (25%)
- Final Test (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 %	94-100	90-93	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>

- **Attendance and participation (20%):** This is a **synchronous** online course. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class – it is therefore important you arrive in class on time. I will take points off for each class absence, unless appropriate written justification is provided, or the absence is due to one of the “acceptable reasons” as per UF policies (see link below).
  - **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 and inappropriate/unprofessional conduct (e.g. talking and disturbing others, using cell phones) will be heavily penalized, after a first warning.
- **Map Quiz (10%):** On Thursday, July 8, you will be tested on your knowledge of the names and locations of the 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.
- **Discussion Boards (15%):** On select days TBD on canvas, students are expected to submit an original discussion post and respond to at least one peer’s post.
- **Reflection Paper (20%):** Each student is required to write one short reaction paper (approximately 1500 words, typed, double-spaced) analyzing a case study of development in Africa. Due Friday, July 23.
- **A country profile (20%):** Students will be responsible for researching and creating a country profile looking at geography, history, politics, the economy, ethnic and religious composition, and cultural and artistic aspects (Music, Art, and Sport). All students will be expected to present their country profile in the last week of class (August 4-5). More information to follow.

- **Final TEST** (15%) 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 Friday, August 6.
- **AFRICAN AFFAIRS:** you should regularly follow African news and affairs through media, such as: The Economist (<http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east/africa/>); the BBC (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>); The New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/africa/index.html>); Al Jazeera (<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/>) and The Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/africa/roundup>).
- **RECOMMENDED FILMS:**  
 Lionheart (2018) - Netflix  
 Abouna (2002) – Library West  
 District 9 (2009) – Library West  
 Tsotsi (2005) – Library West  
 Kirikou and the Sorceress (1998) – online

**Make-up policy:** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Excuses for missing a class test or deadline for assignments will only be accepted for proven and acceptable reasons. You should give me prior notice whenever possible.

## 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.

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu) (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, [www.hsc.ufl.edu](http://www.hsc.ufl.edu) (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161

- 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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!

### **Zoom Etiquette**

**Do not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.**

When attending a Zoom class or meeting:

- Zoom in on time or a few minutes early if possible. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class session.
- **Your webcam must remain on throughout the class hour.**
- During class session, set yourself on mute unless you want to speak or you are called upon to minimize interference.
- If you want to speak, you can raise your hand during lecture or share openly during discussion.
- When you are assigned to a breakout room, enable your webcam and microphone so that your partners may hear and see who they are working with.
- Alert your instructor as soon as possible if you experience technical difficulties. A “chat” can be sent at any moment during a Zoom session if, for example, you find that your webcam or microphone are not functioning properly. *For any technical difficulties, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk (352-392-4357).*  
<https://elearning.ufl.edu/media/elearningufl.edu/zoom/How-to-Join-a-Meeting.pdf>
- Follow the same rules of respectful interaction as you would in a face-to-face course. This is especially important in a remote situation, where multiple voices attempting to speak at once result in no one being heard.

**Class schedule:**

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

This course will explore the continent from the perspective of time; we will look briefly at the past, present and make projections as to the future of Africa. This will be done according to themes such as geography of the continent, politics, culture (especially the creative industry) and economics. If time permits, we shall explore selected aspects of African spiritualities.

Most of the readings and audiovisual materials can be found online. Where not found, they will be sent to your email address. **You are required to do the relevant reading before each class.**

DATE	TOPICS	REQUIRED READINGS AND VIDEOS <i>Assignments</i>	SUGGESTED MATERIALS
<b>WEEK I:</b> <b><u>Introduction to the continent: resources and geography</u></b> <b>What do you know about Africa ?</b>			
June 28	Course Introduction	Syllabus Cradle of Humankind	Comaroff & Comaroff - Africa in Perspective
June 29		Review foundations in anthropology	
June 30	What do you know about Africa ?	<b>Read:</b> UCA Introduction Myth About Africa The Real Truth about Africa	
July 1	<i>African Geography</i>	<b>Read:</b> UCA, Ch. 2 "Africa: A Geographical Preface"  The maps of African States: <a href="#">preparation for the Map Quiz</a>	
July 2		<i>Discussion Board</i>	



Week II : The European Gaze			
July 5	HOLIDAY – No class		Rodney – How Europe Underdeveloped Africa
July 6	Europe in Africa	<b>Read</b> : AGC Ch. 4, “The scramble for Africa <b>Watch</b> : European Conquest and African Resistance; Colonial Africa: Comparisons and Change (course reserves)	
July 7	Colonial Legacies	<b>Read:</b> Ranger – Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa <b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Black Girl   Kanopy</a> ( <i>La Noire de...</i> 1966; Senegal)	
July 8	Religion in Africa	<b>Read</b> : UCA Ch. 11 <b>Watch:</b> Guest Lecture - Abdoulaye Kane (pre-recorded)	
July 9		<b>Read:</b> Evans-Pritchard - Notions of Witchcraft Austen – Moral economy of Witchcraft <b>Watch</b> : <a href="#">I Am Not a Witch   Kanopy</a> (2017; Zambia)  <b>Recommended:</b> <a href="#">The Songs Of Women Accused Of Witchcraft: New Recording From Ghana : Goats and Soda : NPR</a>	
Week III Writing an African Expérience			
July 12	How to read a classic of African Literature	<b>Read:</b> UCA Ch. 12 “African Literature”	<a href="#">African Men and Self Knowledge: Why Knowing Self Must be a Priority   Baba Buntu   TEDxGaborone - YouTube</a>
July 13	Rites of Passage / Youth	<b>Read</b> : <i>The Dark Child</i> (Pp 1-92) <b>Watch</b> : Liyana (2017; eSwatini/Swaziland)	
July 14		Discussion Board	

July 15	Identity	<b>Read :</b> <i>The Dark Child</i> (Pp 93-188) <b>Watch :</b> <a href="#">Return to Belaye on Vimeo</a> (Senegal)	
July 16		<b>Discussion Board</b>	
<b>Week IV</b> <b><u>Economics &amp; Development</u></b> EXPLORE : What work does development do in Africa ?			
<b>July 19</b>	International Relations and development	<b>Watch :</b> Anthropology of Development lecture <b>Read:</b> Ferguson – Expectations of Modernity	
<b>July 20</b>	<b>CASE STUDY:</b> Gender, Development and African Feminisms	<b>Read:</b> UCA, Ch 10 “Women and Development”  <b>Watch:</b> Guest Lecture, Megan Cogburn  Recommended: Ostebo & Ostebo “Magic Bullet” <a href="#">Talking back: African feminisms in dialogue (africasacountry.com)</a>	
<b>July 21</b>	<b>CASE STUDY :</b> Water & Climate Change	<b>Read :</b> AGC Ch. 8, <u>Water</u> ; AGC Ch. 11, <u>Climate change</u>  <b>Watch :</b> Guest Lecture, Netty Carey	
<b>July 22</b>	<b>APPLIED CASE STUDY :</b> Environment, Health and Security	<b>Read :</b> UCA/ AGC sélections TBD; <a href="#">Everything dey Scatta   Otherwise Magazine</a> <b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">Turning Livelihoods to Waste on Vimeo</a> (2020 ; Cape Town, South Africa)	
<b>July 23</b>		<b>Reflection Essay</b>	
<b>Week V</b> <b>African Nations and Nationalities – Colonial Legacies</b>			



July 26	Nations & Nationalism: Languages in Africa	<b>Read :</b> UCA Ch. 10 <a href="#">How Amharic unites – and divides – Ethiopia   African Arguments</a> <b>Watch :</b> <a href="#">Special edition: How the legacy of European colonialism is shaping Africa's future - YouTube</a>	
July 27	Democracy in Africa	Guest Lecture, Dr. Sebastian Elischer – Democracy in Africa	
July 28		Discussion Board	
July 29	Do African states constitute nations ?	<b>Read :</b> UCA, Ch. 4 “African Politics” & Ch. 6 “African International Relations <a href="#">Hip hop and Pan Africanism: from Blitz the Ambassador to Beyoncé (theconversation.com)</a>	
July 30	Migration & Diaspora	<b>Read:</b> AGC, Ch. 6, Africa’s mobile phone revolution ; AGC, Ch. 7 “Migration” <b>Watch:</b> Guest Lecture, Abdoulaye Kane (pre-recorded)  Discussion Board	
Week VI African Futures			
Aug 2		Student Workday	
Aug 3	Challenges and Opportunities for the continent	<b>Pick one:</b> UCA Ch. 13 “Trends and Prospects”; AGC, Ch. 12, China and Africa; AGC, Ch. 13, African Futures <b>Watch:</b> <a href="#">ANBESSA Online   Vimeo On Demand on Vimeo</a> (2019 ; Ethiopia)	
Aug 4	Final Presentations		
Aug 5	Final Presentations		
Aug 6		Final Exam	