

HIS 364G/AFR 372G: African History in Films and Photographs
Tue/Thu 11:00-12:30 UTC 3.122

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Western exposure to Africa has primarily been through stylized Hollywood films which rarely offer any historical context for the events they depict. These films have led to an overall lack of understanding for the complexities of African history and had detrimental effects on popular conceptions of Africa, its peoples, and its plights. This course seeks to increase the understanding of social, economic, and political challenges present throughout Africa's history through an examination of several documentaries and popular films. Each film will serve a twofold purpose: First, it will be a case study used to speak to an issue central to the history of Africa, and second, aid in dispelling many of the misconceptions present in popular portrayals of the continent and its peoples. Each film, where possible, will be accompanied by a text that corresponds with the subject matter. It is the intention of these texts to speak to events and major themes of African history. The ultimate goal of these films, lectures, and discussions is to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of Africa, its societies, cultures, governments, and histories. This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside of the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the knowledge and understanding of African history, culture, and society
2. To identify key themes in African history that transcend national boundaries
3. To help students understand the social, cultural, political, and economic agents which have influenced Africa's history
4. To assess the viability of film as a historical source
5. To learn to interpret and evaluate primary sources
6. To understand perceptions about Africa and how they lead to misunderstandings of the past

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Course Package (*Key Events*)

Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn, *Black and White in Colour: Africa's History on Screen* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2007). (hereafter listed as *Black and White*)

Toyin Falola and Adam Paddock, *The Women's War of 1929: A History of Anti-Colonial Resistance* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2011). (hereafter listed as *Women's War*)

***The fourth required book for this class is chosen from the list in the “Response Paper” assignment below and depends on the mid-semester project the student chooses. It is recommended that students wait to purchase one of the following books until they know what topic interests them for the assignment. ***

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade:	Grade Assessment:
93-100: A	A = Excellent
90-92: A-	B = Above Average
87-89: B+	C = Average
83-86: B	D = Below Average
80-82: B-	F = Little evidence of learning course material
77-79: C+	
73-76: C	
70-72: C-	
67-69: D+	
63-66: D	
60-62: D-	
0-59: F	

ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1. Attendance (10%)**
- 2. Film Discussion Handouts (10%)**
- 3. Take Home Essay (15%) – Due February 26th**
- 4. Film Response Paper (25%) – Due March 24th**
- 5. Africa Conference Review (15%) – Due April 14th**
- 6. Final Research Paper (25%) – Due May 7th**

Attendance:

Students must be present to view each film; therefore, attendance is mandatory. Late attendance will disturb the class. You must arrive on time. Cell phones must be off and there should be no talking in class during film viewing. To get full points for attendance you may only miss 2 classes without a documented absence. Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or a university-related conflict. Such conflicts will require signed documentation from the Dean’s Office explaining the reason for your absence. In most cases, films can be reviewed for free on Youtube. If a film is unavailable, please contact the TA to coordinate access to the film.

Film Discussion Handouts:

During each film students will be required to fill out Film Review handouts and turn them in following the class discussion of the film. Student responses should reflect analytical thinking and the complexities of the topics covered. Each film review will require students to do a minimal amount of pre-film research. This simply means to “google” the film and become familiar with the topic, filmmaker, time period and issues addressed by the film. It is impossible to understand what is going on in the film (and therefore to adequately complete the Film Review) without coming to class with some basic context. A total of FIVE film review sheets will be randomly selected and graded.

Take Home Essay:

This assignment will involve an essay question covering class readings, films viewed in class, and lectures/discussions. The prompt will ask students to compare and contrast the methodological differences between primary and secondary historical sources as well as the implications of displaying history through text, images, and film. Good papers will analyze these dynamics to consider and evaluate the ways in which history is represented, particularly where competing accounts are involved. Essays should be roughly 500 words in length.

Response Paper:

Each student is required to write a response paper that incorporates one film from a set list and its corresponding reading. See the list at the end for details. The films can be found online or in the Fine Arts Library. Reviews should be analytical, and not just a retelling of the book and film narratives. You must analyze the film in your own words and critically examine the historical content, style and the overall impression these had on you. Additionally, you will need to incorporate examples and evidence from the given readings that either support or contradict the film. Feel free to express your own opinion, but do so clearly with a well-supported argument. Organize and develop the main points you wish to make and re-emphasize them in a conclusion. Papers should be roughly 500 words in length.

Option 1: African Civilizations

FILM: *Magical Egypt-Episode 7; Illumination*

BOOK: Davidson, Basil. *African Civilization Revisited: From Antiquity to Modern Times*. New York, African World Press, 1990. (pgs. 1 – 166).

Option 2: Colonialism in Africa

FILM: *This Magnificent African Cake*

BOOK: Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Option 3: Racism in Africa

FILM: *Cry, the Beloved Country*

BOOK: Van Woerden, Henk. *A Mouthful of Glass*. London: Granta Books, 2000.

Option 4: Independence Struggles

FILM: *Cry Freedom*

BOOK: Biko, Steve. *I Write What I Like: Selected Writings*. London: Bowerdean Press, 1978.

Option 5, Governance and Violence

FILM: *Hotel Rwanda*

BOOK: Gourevitch, Philip. *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Picador, 1998. (pgs. 5-171.)

Option 6, Governance and Violence

FILM: *The Devil Came on Horseback*

BOOK: Eggers, David. *What is the What?* New York, First Vintage Books, 2006. (pgs. 9-207)

Africa Conference Review:

All students must attend **TWO** panels and the keynote lecture during the UT Africa Conference (April 3-5, 2015)—additional information will be announced in class. Students may select any two panels based on their own individual interests. Students must write a paper discussing each of the panels, the keynote, and the Q&A sessions that follow. Successful papers will include summaries of each of the panels with reference to at least some of the specific presentations and your opinion of the strengths and weaknesses, etc. The report will be due the Tuesday a week after the conference. Papers should be roughly 500 words in length.

Final Paper:

All students must complete a short final research paper of roughly 1500 words. By April 14th, students must email the TA about an African history film that has not been watched in class or as a part of class assignments which they would like to pursue further research on. The TA will confirm that the film can be used for the final project. Students will be expected to perform additional research that helps them write a paper reflecting on the film, its portrayals of historical events, and other themes emphasized throughout the course. This project is an extension of the skills practiced during the “Response Paper” assignment, but engages students’ abilities to research additional readings on their own. Given the longer nature of the paper, more and deeper analysis is expected.

Formatting Guidelines:

All assignments must be stapled, typed, double spaced, have 1” margins and size 12 Times New Roman font. Assignments that do not follow these guidelines will receive a five point deduction. Part of writing history includes clearly communicating your ideas. As such, written assignments must conform to standard rules of written English including the organization of essays and grammar. Students who require assistance can use the undergraduate writing center free of charge. All papers should use Chicago/Turabian style footnotes for citations. Any direct quotes **MUST** include full citations, including the pages they came from. A formal bibliography at the end is not required on any of the assignments with the exception of the final paper.

Class Policies:

- **Policy on Late or Missed Assignments/Examinations:** Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Make-ups will only be given when a request is made prior to the date of the assignment except for documented medical emergencies. Even with prior notice, an alternative deadline will only be given in extreme documented cases.
- **Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted on due dates. Assignments turned in late will incur a penalty of 5 points per calendar day late. Assignments more than three calendar days late will not be graded and will receive a zero for the assignment. Unless otherwise agreed upon with the TA prior to the due date, email submissions will not be accepted.
- **University of Texas Honor Code:** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity,

honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive an “F” in the course and be remanded to the appropriate University of Texas authorities for disciplinary action. For more information, view Student Judicial Services at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

- **Use of Class Materials:** No material presented in lecture may be directly or indirectly published, posted to the Internet, or rewritten for publication or distribution in any medium. Neither these materials nor any portion thereof may be stored in a computer except for personal and non-commercial use. All information derived from the internet must be adequately cited.
- **Student Privacy:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require that student privacy be preserved. Thus the posting of grades, even by the last four digits of the social security number, is forbidden. All communication will remain between the instructor and the student, and the instructor will not be able to share details of the student’s performance with parents, spouses, or any others.
- **Documented Disability Statement:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone). Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter from the Service for Students with Disabilities. This letter should be presented to the Professor at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodations discussed at this time. Five days prior to an exam, it is the student’s responsibility to remind the professor of the accommodations needed. If the student fails to produce the letter and speak with the Professor five days before the exam, then the student may not get the accommodations he/she requires.

Course Schedule

Part One: African Origins and Pre-Colonial Africa

Introduction to Africa

Jan 20:

Lecture: Film analysis and Stereotypes of Africa

Film: Africa Series by Basil Davidson: Episode 1: *Different But Equal* (51 mins)

Reading: *Key Events*, Africa: An Overview and Chapter 1; “Talking about Tribe” PDF on Blackboard

Jan 22:

Lecture: African Origins/ Civilizations

Film: Africa Series by Basil Davidson: Episode 2: *Mastering a Continent* (51 mins)

Reading: *Key Events*, Chapters 2 and 3

Images of Africa

Jan 27:

Lecture: "Perceptions of Africa"

Film: Africa Series by Basil Davidson: Episode 3: *Caravans of Gold* (51 mins)

Reading: *Key Events*, Chapters 4, and 5

African Civilizations

Jan 29:

Film: *Lost Kingdoms of Africa: Nubia* (60min)

Reading: *Key Events*, Chapters 7, 8, and 9

Feb 3:

Film: *Lost Kingdoms of Africa: Great Zimbabwe* (60min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 10, 12

Feb 5:

Class discussion of documentaries and Ancient Africa

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 11

Early African Contact with Europe

Feb 10:

Lecture: Africa's Contact with Europe

Film: *Mountains of the Moon* (136 min)

Reading: *Black and White* Chapter 4

Feb 12:

Film: *Mountains of the Moon* cont.

Reading: *Key Events*, Chapters 13, 14, 15; *Women's War* Chapter 1

Part Two: Colonial Africa

Feb 17:

Film: *Mountains of the Moon* discussion

Lecture: "Scramble for Africa"

Reading: *Women's War* Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5

Colonialism in Africa

Feb 19:

Primary Source Discussion

Lecture: Africa in the World Wars

Film: *Congo: White King, Red Rubber, Black Death* (84 min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 18, 19; *Women's War* Chapter 6, First 10 Documents from Section 1, Section 2

Feb 24:

Film: *Congo: White King, Red Rubber, Black Death* cont.

Reading: *Women's War* First 10 Documents from Section 3 (First 10 from each part in section), and Section 4

The World Wars

Feb 26:

Film: *Black and White in Color* (90 min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 21; *Black and White* Chapter 9

Mar 3:

Film: *Black and White in Color* cont.

Lecture: Independence and African Radicalism

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 22, 23

Independence Struggles

Mar 5:

Film: *Lumumba* (115 min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 24; *Black and White* Chapter 13

Mar 10:

Film: *Lumumba* cont.

Reading: *Black and White* Chapter 12

Part Three: Independent Africa

Mar 12:

Lecture: Independent Africa

**** SPRING BREAK****

Governance and Violence in Africa

Mar 24:

Film: *General Idi Amin Dada* (90 Min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 25, 26

Mar 26:

Film: *General Idi Amin Dada* cont.

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 27

Mar 31:

Film: *Sometimes in April* (140 min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 28; *Black and White* Chapter 16

Apr 2:

NO CLASS ****AFRICA CONFERENCE: April 3-5****

Apr 7:

Film: *Sometimes in April* cont.

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 29

Gender

Apr 9:

Lecture: Contemporary Issues in Africa

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 30, 31

Apr 14:

Film: *Moolade* (124min)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 32; Websites:

<http://www.equalitynow.org/fgm>

<http://www.iac->

[ciaf.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=9](http://www.iac-ciaf.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=9)

<http://www.tostan.org/web/page/644/sectionid/548/pagelevel/3/interior.asp>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2005/jun/05/features>

Apr 16:

Film: *Moolade* cont.

Reading: *Key Events* Chapter 33

Apr 21:

Lecture: Apartheid in South Africa

Film: *National Archives Politics International: Apartheid in South Africa, 1957* (33 mins)

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 34, 35

Apartheid

Apr 23:

Film: *The Wooden Camera* (105 min)

Reading: *Black and White* Chapter 15

Apr 28:

Film: *The Wooden Camera* cont.

Reading: *Key Events* Chapters 36

Apr 30:

Schedule Delay Day

May 5:

Schedule Delay Day

Globalization

May 7:

Lecture: Final Thoughts