

History of West Africa

Instructor: Toyin Falola

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday (Strictly by appointment)

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Class Venue: UTC 3.134, Tuesday & Thursday 11.00-12:30

Course Description

This course examines the history of West Africa from around ca. AD 1000 to the present. The approach focuses on key themes within a chronological framework. The syllabus is divided into four major eras: States and State Formations till 1800; the Nineteenth Century; Colonial period; and the Post-colonial. The course emphasizes key regional innovations generated by women, farmers, political leaders, and others. As many of the events took place in the concept of a "global world", the connections between West Africa and other parts of Africa, Europe and the Americas are woven into the weekly lectures. West Africa operated at the regional level, but also as part of a larger African continent and the Atlantic World. Local and regional events are treated in relation to global events and their consequences.

Course Objectives:

1. To learn how to assess historical materials (their relevance to a given interpretative problem, their reliability and their importance) and to determine the biases present within particular scholarship. These include not only historical documents, but literature and films as well.
2. To identify and discuss the main themes in West African history.
3. To recognize the dynamic nature of African history and culture, and to apply new knowledge of the different agencies that have impacted upon the region.
4. Lectures will not cover all the topics in the recommended text.

Required Texts:

Eugene L. Mendonsa, *West Africa: An Introduction to Its History, Civilization, and Contemporary Situation* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2002) Paper ISBN 0-89089-649-6

Toyin Falola, *Counting the Tigers Teeth* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014) paper ISBN 978-0-472-03656-1

TEACHING AND READING SCHEDULE

January 22-24: Geography, Environment, and Language

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 1

January 29-31: Precolonial Formations

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 8

February 5-7: Kinship and Kingship

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 2

February 12: Film screening

Lost Kingdoms of Africa 4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW_kaUuUg8Y

February 14: Religions

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 3

February 19-21: Islam and Its Impact

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 9

February 26-28: Economy

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 4

March 5: Film Screening

The manuscripts of Timbuktu

<http://catalog.lib.utexas.edu/record=b8288613~S29>

March 7: Film Screening

Yoruba Pilgrimage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDpC8XihetE>

March 12: Politics

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 5

March 14: Mid term exam in class.

March 18-23: Spring Break

March 28: Conference Trade-off

April 2: Art

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 6

April 4: Music

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 7

April 9-11: European Contacts

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapters 10, 12, 13

April 16-18: Colonial Rule and Its Impact

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 14

April 23-25: Decolonization

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter, Chapter 15

April 30: Postcolonialism

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 16

May 2: Development

Reading: Mendosa, *West Africa*, Chapter 18

May 7: Decoloniality: Discussion on Change and Continuity

May 9: Final Exam in class.

Grading and Assignments

Final Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Due Date	Grade
Class Attendance		10%
Book Review	March 7	20%
Submit hardcopy		
Mid-Term Exam	March 14	20%

Conference Review/Presentation	April 4	20%
Submit hardcopy		
Final Exam	May 9	30%

Overall semester averages will earn the following letter grades:

93-100: A 90-92: A-
87-89: B+ 83-86: B 80-82: B-
77-79: C+ 73-76: C 70-72: C-
67-69: D+ 63-66: D 60-62: D- 0-59: F

Evaluation and Points: (No extra credit will be awarded, and the course is not graded on curve) The weight is distributed to ensure success for all students, balancing the various needs to participate, interact, engage, think critically, and write well. Not all students seek an A or B grade, but those who do should expect to do the maximum required. Always read before the class so that you can understand the lectures and ask questions.

Class Rules:

- 1) All assignments must be submitted on due dates. 5 points per day are deducted thereafter.
- 2) Except on medical ground or permission from the Dean's office, there is no make-up examination.
- 3) There is no option for additional credit.
- 4) Failure to read the books, which will be detected in projects and examinations, will be treated as lack of preparation.
- 5) Attendance is necessary to make sense of the lectures. It is expected that lectures and class discussions will be reflected in all projects. The Instructor will not use office hours to repeat class lectures but to clarify points. Also, the Instructor and the TA will not give lecture notes to those who miss classes. Class lectures will not be posted on Canvas.

Mid-Term Exam:

The examination consists of two essay questions. Students are expected to answer both questions, writing at least three pages on each. Essay questions will be drawn from a pool of questions submitted through Canvas. Students who integrate materials from textbooks, lecture notes, and films will be rewarded.

Book Review:

All students are required to review the following book.

Toyin Falola, *Counting the Tigers Teeth*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014.

The book review should be **no less than 3 pages** typed and double-spaced. Book review should be analytical, and not just a retelling of the narrative. The best way to do this is by synthesizing the narrative in your own mind and then critically examining such things as the historical content, style and the overall impression the book made on you. You will probably want to assess how the book fits in with particular topics or themes we are developing in the course. Feel free to express your own opinion, but do so clearly. Organize and develop the main points you wish to make and re-emphasize them in a conclusion. Proofread your review before submitting it. Late submission will be penalized. **Book review is due in class on March 7, 2019.**

Conference Review/Conference Presentation:

All students must endeavor to attend the 2019 Africa Conference to be held from **March 29-31, 2019**. (Additional information will be announced in class).

For information and panels, visit the link below:

<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/africa-conference/conference-schedule1/conference-schedule.php>

The conference is part of the attempt to provide students with new knowledge about Africa. The conference participation assignment comes with two options:

- 1) Attend a minimum of two panels (not two presenters!) of your choice and the Conference Keynote and write a report on them, **minimum of 5 pages**. A panel consists of a set of presenters. Participation in the conference is part of the class and it is mandatory. There is no substitute assignment unless on medical grounds, mandatory official duties or religious holidays. During the presentations, students will be allowed to ask respective presenters questions on issues pertaining to the lecture. For the review, students will be expected to fulfill a two-fold task: first, summarize the lecture in no more than **2 page** (roughly 500 words); secondly, offer an analysis of the presentations in **2 page** (roughly 500 words); thirdly, give your opinion of the lecture in no less than **1 page** (roughly 300 words). Report will be due in class on April 4, 2019.
- 2) Alternatively, students can utilize the Africa Conference as an opportunity to enhance their skills in public speaking and academic presentation. As part of this option, students will be asked to present a paper in the Africa Conference written by a scholar who is unable to attend. If you present then you will write the conference review based on the keynote and only one panel. In other words, you are exempted from writing about two panels. In this case, your paper should be 3 pages instead of 5. **(If you want to take up this option, please discuss this with me ahead of time so that I can make available to you the paper you will present.)**

Final Examination:

The examination consists of two essay questions. Students are expected to answer both questions, writing at least three pages on each. Essay questions will be drawn from a pool of questions submitted through Canvas. Students who integrate materials from textbooks, lecture notes, and films will be rewarded.

Make-up policy: Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Such conflicts will require signed documentation from the Dean's Office explaining the reason for absence.

Attendance policy:

The class attendance will be counted from the 24th of January 2019. It will be counted based on the total of 27 classes. For each absence, students will lose approximately 0.37 points from the final grade. Absences will be excused if a student provides documentation of emergency health situation, death in family, job interviews, etc. However, without documentation no excuses will be granted.

University Regulations

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).

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit:

<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students: E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564>

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.

If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office gives you instructions.

Q Drop Policy: Texas law limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six. Senate Bill 1231 says: "Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."