

## **Introduction to the Study of Africa**

AFR 317C

University of Texas at Austin

Fall 2018

Professor: Tshepo Masango Chéry, Ph.D

### **Course Overview:**

This introductory course on African Studies examines the social, cultural, political and economic diversity of the African continent. It introduces students to major currents in African Studies through an interdisciplinary lens. By engaging disciplines such as history, politics, and economics alongside studies on culture, gender, and religion students gain a wider perspective on Africa and its people. This study will equip students with foundational tools to navigate more complex issues in an increasingly global world that range from international politics to artistic production. Additionally, it exposes students to the history of the field formation in an effort to contextualize dominant western narratives about the African continent. It's aim is to prepare students to critically engage Africa and some of the most pressing concerns facing Africa(ns) at home or abroad.

**Course Objectives:** 1) To think critically about the distinct historical, political, and cultural dimensions of the African continent to provide understanding for the contemporary moment; 2) To engage African history within a global framework; 3) To consider the development of the field of African studies in the West and its impact on higher education.

## **GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Grading Policy:**

Class assignments are based on a point system with an overall course total of 100 points. Class attendance is mandatory and late assignments are not accepted. The professor will consider medical or other emergencies with written documentation and/or prior notification on a case-by-case basis.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>
Course Engagement	15 points
Quizzes	15 points
Museum Reflection Paper	25 points
Presentation	20 points
Midterm Examination	25 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

A	94-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F Below 60 pts
A-	90-93	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66	
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62	

### Assignment Descriptions

#### Course Engagement (Total: 15 points)

African Studies in a broad sense is very likely unfamiliar and even foreign to you. This means attendance at every class is among the minimum requirements for success. It will be incredibly difficult for you to do well in this class if you do not attend the lectures regularly. Successful students rely on lecture notes alongside the text. These students also come to class prepared and ready to actively engage all assigned texts. This requires reading and reflecting on the text as well as being prepared to pose relevant questions, provide comments, and feedback on the reading for each class period. In other words, you must have an active voice in the class. We will employ various strategies to encourage your participation beyond simply speaking-up in class. You can always actively ignite and join discussions via the discussion forum on Canvas. Plan on posing (via email or in class itself) at least one thoughtful question or comment at least every two weeks to ensure your participation. You are also welcomed and encouraged to use social media to discuss various components of the course (be prepared to share your posts and tweets with your classmates as well as with me). Nevertheless, each student is allowed three unexcused absences during the course of the semester. Each additional (unexcused) absence will result in a 5-point deduction from your final grade.

#### \*Absences Due to Athletics or University Activities

Any athlete competing for UT on an NCAA or club level team needs to notify me as soon as possible about any absences. Written documentation from the Athletic department will be required for accommodations to be given.

Your success in this course depends on close reading and engagement with the texts (readings, films, video clips, web links and information posted to Canvas), as well as active and informed participation in class discussions. You will be responsible for checking the Canvas course site and your email regularly for additional texts and announcements.

Your class participation grade will be based on attendance and meaningful participation in class discussions. Meaningful participation is taken to be analytic engagement with the texts and course themes in class discussions (both in the classroom and in virtual classroom space i.e. Facebook), not vague commentary or generalizations. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to participate actively in class discussions each week. This includes but is not limited to doing the assigned reading and preparing thoughtful questions to share with the class. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Those students who take the initiative to engage critically with the readings and themes of the class and actively participate in class discussions by sharing their ideas and thoughts openly and respectfully on a regular basis will be graded highly. Those who do not participate in class discussions unless called upon will be graded down. *Always be prepared to speak when you are called upon.*

*In-Class Assignments:* Students will also be graded on their thoughtful completion of in-class assignments. In-class assignments will be assigned throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Quizzes (Total: 15 points)**

There will be several quizzes that cover major concepts, definitions, and ideas at various moments in the semester (most will be unannounced with the exception of the map quiz). For the map quiz, all students will be expected to be familiar with the cities, towns and regions, that we will study this semester. The list of all of these categories will be provided in the second week of the semester to get students acclimated to the geography of Africa. Other quizzes will reflect concepts and ideas that were presented in previous lectures, reading that is due for the class period, and or information posted on Canvas. The purpose of these quizzes is to hold you accountable for these ideas and to highlight important aspects of the course that will be reflected in both the midterm examination.

### **Midterm Examination (Total: 25 points)**

There will be an in-class midterm exam part way through the semester. We will discuss the format as well as sample questions in class together. *All your answers to this exam must be entirely of your own making. Working with someone else on the exam in any way will be interpreted as academic dishonesty and will be reported.*

### **Museum Reflection Paper (Total: 25 Points)**

This project requires you to choose one image from the exhibits we review on the African continent. Your task is to analyze this image in an effort to provide some critical insight for an outside reader. You will be given the opportunity to think through some of the ideas you will use to produce the final entry. Your final analysis, in the form of a single-spaced two-page paper, of the source will be published online depending on the quality of your work. Each entry will include the image and your analysis in an effort to provide critical historical information and contextual analysis for outside readers.

The entry MUST:

- (1.) Provide a BRIEF description of the image to provide visual context. The description of the image should provide an introduction to the historical period, the key figures, and the issues at stake but in a way that asserts your main reading of the image.
- (2.) Clearly identify and articulate the major argument(s) or narrative you make in the digital entry upfront. In short, you must define the focus of your paper by making a clear and concise thesis statement that demonstrates your thinking/intellectual vantage point about the primary source.
- (3.) Explain how the image might inform, challenge, and/or expand your understanding of Africa, Africans, and African related subjects by using specific examples and details. This may require limited outside research and or discussions with your professor during office hours. You must consider specific portions of your primary source (and not generalizations) in your entry, which might require citation.
- (4.) Use the conclusion to describe some of the larger implications for the arguments you are

making about your image.

Essays must be a MINIMUM of 2 pages (and no more than 3.5 pages) in length, typed (in 12-point font), single-spaced with standard 1" margins. It must also be free of grammatical errors/typos and use proper citation techniques specific to the discipline of history (Chicago Manual Style). Please do not use any other form of citation.

### **Museum Entry Presentation: (Total 20 points)**

Students are required to present their analysis of the image in a 15-min presentation during class. Details of this assignment will be provided in class.

### **Class Schedule**

\*As the professor of this course, I reserve the right to deviate or modify parts of this schedule. All changes will include advanced written notice on Canvas.

<b>DATE/TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>
<b>Week 1</b> <b>9/3-9/5</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> Karen Attiah, "Louis Linton Just Wrote The Perfect White Savior Narrative: Finally, one narrative that nails every cliché of the genre," July 6, 2016, The Washington Post  <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/07/06/louise-linton-just-wrote-the-perfect-white-savior-in-africa-story/?noredirect=on&amp;utm_term=.6b3141f48671">https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/07/06/louise-linton-just-wrote-the-perfect-white-savior-in-africa-story/?noredirect=on&amp;utm_term=.6b3141f48671</a>  "Zambian Embassy Slams Louise Linton Memoir," July 11, 2016, The Scotsman: Scotland's National Newspaper <a href="https://www.scotsman.com/news/zambian-embassy-slams-louise-linton-memoirs-1-4174540">https://www.scotsman.com/news/zambian-embassy-slams-louise-linton-memoirs-1-4174540</a>	
<b>Week 2</b> <b>9/10 - 9/12</b>	No Class 9/3 Labor Day  <b>Required Reading:</b> Wainaina, Binyavanga, "How Not to Write About Africa", Granta 92. <a href="http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1">http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1</a>  Wainaina, Binyavanga, "How to Write About Africa II: The Revenge" <a href="http://www.bidoun.org/magazine/21-bazaar-ii/how-to-write-about-africa-ii-the-revenge-by-binyavanga-wainaina/">http://www.bidoun.org/magazine/21-bazaar-ii/how-to-write-about-africa-ii-the-revenge-by-binyavanga-wainaina/</a>  <b>Watch YouTube Film:</b> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story" <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg</a>	

<b>Week 3</b> <b>9/17 - 9/19</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> M. McNulty, "The Contemporary map of Africa," ed. Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara, <i>Africa</i> , 9-22.	
<b>Week 4</b> <b>9/24 – 9/26</b>	<b>Watch the Film:</b> African Americans Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates. Episode 1: Earliest Africans	<b>Map Quiz</b> <b>9/24</b>
<b>Week 5</b> <b>10/1 – 10/3</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> R.O. Collins and J.M. Burns, Chapter 18: "The European Conquest of Africa," <i>A history of Saharan Africa</i> (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 265-279.  A.A. Boahen, "Chapter 2: The Imposition of the Colonial System: Initiatives and Response," <i>African Perspectives on Colonialism</i>	
<b>Week 6</b> <b>10/8– 10/10</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> W. Rodney, Chapter 6.1: "Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa," <i>How Europe Underdeveloped Africa</i> (New York: Black Classic Press, 2012), 320-351. <a href="http://abahlali.org/files/3295358-walter-rodney.pdf">http://abahlali.org/files/3295358-walter-rodney.pdf</a>	
<b>Week 7</b> <b>10/15 – 10/17</b>	<b>Watch YouTube Film:</b> Africa A Voyage of Discovery Episode 7: the Rise of Nationalism	<b>Midterm Examination</b> <b>10/17</b>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>10/22 – 10/24</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> Arit John, "Why the All-Ivy League Story Stirs Up Tensions Between African Immigrants and Black Americans, April 1, 2014, The Wire: News From the Atlantic  V. Harding, The Vocation of a Black Scholar	
<b>Week 9</b> <b>10/29 – 10/31</b>	<b>Required Reading:</b> Ronald H Chilcote and Martin Legassick, "The African Challenge to American Scholarship in Africa," <i>Africa Today</i> , 18,1 (Jan 1971), 4-11.	
<b>Week 10</b> <b>11/5 – 11/7</b>	P. T. Zeleza, The Perpetual Solitudes & Crisis of African Studies in the United States," 44,5, <i>Africa Today</i> (Apr-June 1997), 193-210.  <b>Watch YouTube Film:</b> "Shutting Down the Rainbow Nation: #FeesMustFall	

	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksgrJyOrd7A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksgrJyOrd7A</a>	
<b>Week 11</b> 11/12 – 11/14	<p>D. Moyo, <i>Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is A Better Way for Africa</i> (New York: New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2009), 3-9;</p> <p>D. Moyo, <i>Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is A Better Way for Africa</i> (New York: New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2009), 28-35.</p> <p>“Finding Simple and Creative Solutions,” The Leonard Lepoate Show  <a href="https://www.wnyc.org/radio/#/ondemand/354174">https://www.wnyc.org/radio/#/ondemand/354174</a></p>	
<b>Week 12</b> 11/19 – 11/21	M. Hunter, <i>Love in the Time of Aids: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa</i> (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2010) 205-215; 215-226.	
<b>Week 13</b> 11/26 – 11/28	<p>No class 11/23 – Thanksgiving holiday</p> <p><b>Required Reading:</b>  A. Cornwall, “Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa,” in <i>Readings in Gender in Africa</i>, ed. Andrea Cornwall (Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 1-19.</p> <p>M. Bloom &amp; H. Matfess, “Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram’s Terror, PRISM, 6,1(March 2016).</p>	
<b>Week 14</b> 12/3 – 12/5	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Presentations all Week</b>
<b>Week 15</b> 12/10	<b>Last Class</b>	<b>Museum Reflection Paper Due</b>