

Introduction to Traditional Africa

HIS 311K (39245) — AFR 310L (30375) — AHC 310 (32927)



Class hours: Tuesday & Thursday 11.00–12.30

Venue: UTC 3.112

Instructor: Toyin Falola

Email: Toyinfalola@austin.utexas.edu

Office hours, Instructor: T & TH 2.00p–3.00 in GAR 2.142

Teaching Assistant: Abikal Borah

Office hours: Thursday 1.00-3.00

Email: aborah@utexas.edu

Course Description:

This is an introductory, inter-disciplinary course on the peoples and cultures of Africa, designed for students with a limited background in African studies as well as those who want to improve their understanding of this huge continent. The course is divided into two parts, one on a survey history and the other on aspects of culture. The subjects cover the long historical era known as the *precolonial*, which terminated at the turn of the twentieth century when Africa came under European rule. Among the main themes are: early history, kingdoms, interactions with external agencies, and various institutions and customs of society. Readings are drawn from two textbooks, two monographs. The books deal with essential outline histories and dense interpretive literature on a few issues. Films provide visual illustrations and additional perspectives.

Goals:

- 1) To use a combination of films, lectures and reading materials to introduce students to a number of themes in African history and cultures.
- 2) To enable students to reflect on a number of issues in order to reach independent conclusions.
- 3) To provide an adequate background that will prepare students for other courses on Africa.
- 4) To improve the writing and analytical skills of students, by introducing them to the craft of history writing.

Required Materials

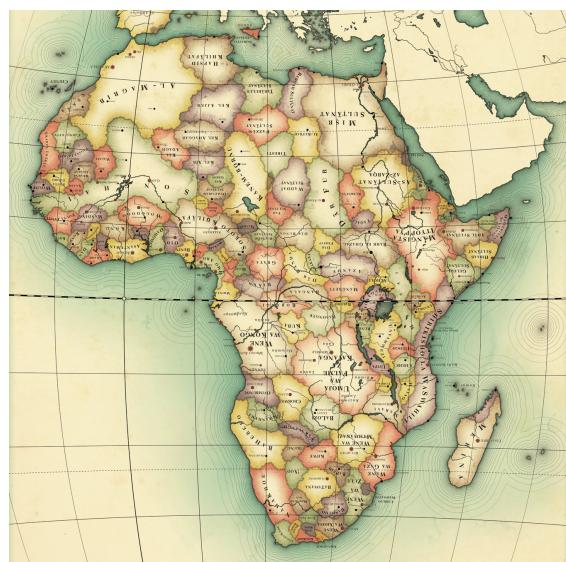
Toyin Falola, ed., *Africa, Vol. 1, African History Before 1885*, Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2000.

Toyin Falola, ed., *Africa, Vol. 2, African Cultures, and Societies Before 1885*, Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2000.

*** Books are available at Co-op. Students can also use the Internet to order direct from the publishers or through Amazon.com

Evaluation and points--100%

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|---|-----|--------------|
| 1) Community Project | 25% | September 18 |
| 2) Mid-Term Examination— <i>Take Home</i>
<i>(Two essay questions, at least three pages on each)</i> | 25% | October 18 |
| 3) Class attendance and participation | 20% | |
| 4) Final examination— <i>Take Home</i>
<i>(Two essay questions, at least three pages on each)</i> | 30% | December 10 |



Part A: Historical Themes

August 30 Introduction

About the course:

Geography and the concept of Africa

Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 2: "The Geography of Africa."

September 4 The Study of Africa

Discuss the growth of African studies and the various approaches to the understanding of Africa.

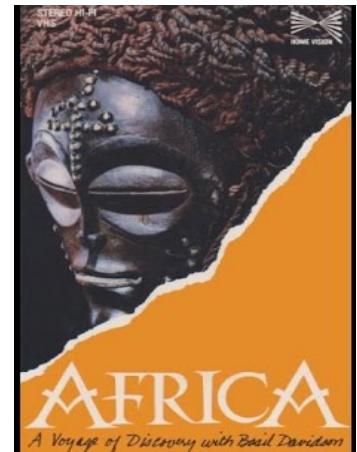
Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 1: "The Study of Africa in Historical Perspective."

September 6: Understanding the early period: methods and issues

Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 3: "Early History: Traditions of Origins and Archaeological Interpretations."

September 11 and September 13: Video illustrations

Students will visit a local museum in Austin during this week. Each student will choose an African object/artifact/monument and will write an one page long essay.
Recommended museums are: Blanton Museum of Art and George Washington Carver Museum.



September 18 Upper Nile and North Africa

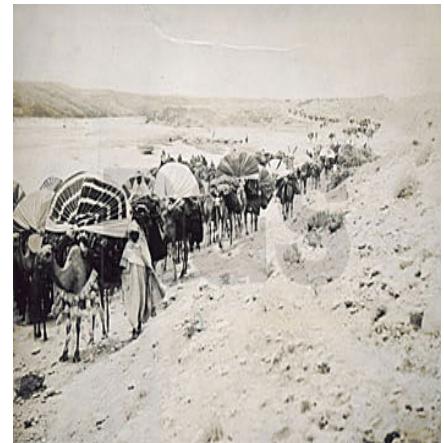
Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 4: “Civilizations of the Upper Nile and North Africa”

Community project due.

September 20 Kingdoms of West Africa

Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 6: “Sudanese Kingdoms of West Africa.”

Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 7: “Kingdoms of West Africa: Benin, Oyo and Asante.”



September 25 Kingdoms of East Africa

Reading: *Africa* vol. 1, Chapter 8: “East African States.”

September 27 Africa and Europe

Reading:

Africa vol. 1, Chapter 17: “Africa and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.”

Africa vol. 1, Chapter 18: “Euro-African Relations to 1885.”

October 2 Mfecane and the Southern African States

Africa vol. 1, Chapter 16: “The Mfecane and South Africa”

October 4 Pastoralism and peasant economy

Reading: *Africa* vol. 2, Chapter 10: “Pastoralism”

October: 9 Video illustration and discussion

Basil Davidson, *Africa*.
Episode 4: "Kings and Cities"

October 11 Video illustration and discussion

Basil Davidson, Episode 3, *Africa*: "Caravans of Gold"

October 16 The idea of Culture

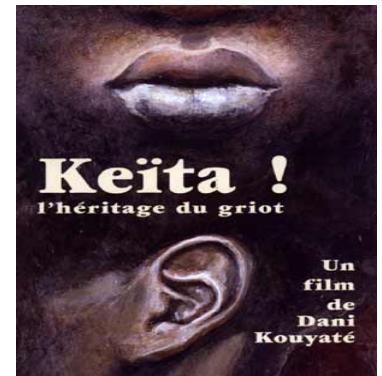
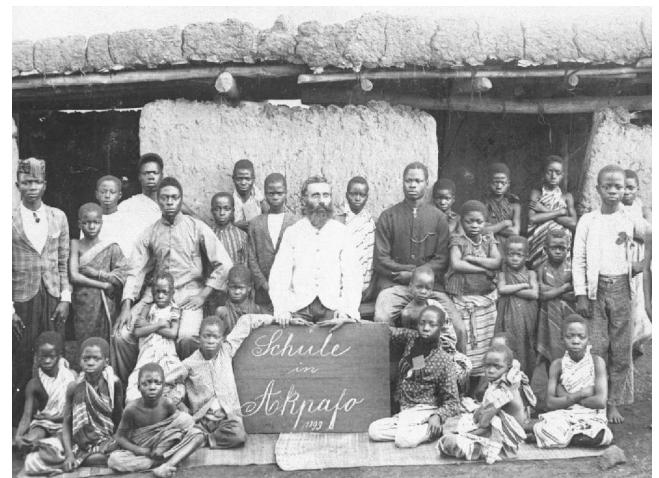
Reading: *Africa* vol. 2, Introduction & Chapter 1: "The Study of Culture."

*****Mid-Term Exam distributed**

October 18 Video illustration and discussion

Basil Davidson, *Africa*
Episode 5: "The Bible and the Gun"

Take Home Mid-Term Examination due in Class



Part B Themes on Culture

October 23 Cities and architecture

Reading: *Africa* vol. 2, Chapter 13: "Cities and Architecture"

October 25 Economy

Africa vol. 2, Chapter 11: "Agriculture, Trade and Industries."



October 30 & November 1 Intellectual History and Education

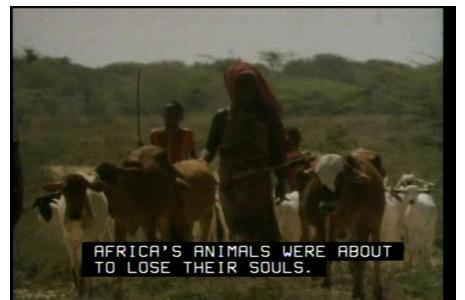
Keita: Heritage of the Griot DVD 7018 (VIDCASS 5267)
<https://utexas.kanopystreaming.com/video/keita-heritage-griot>

Reading: *Africa* vol. 2, Chapter 4: "Education."

November 6 Marriage and kinship

Guest Speaker: Dr. Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso, Babcock University, Nigeria

Reading: *Africa* vol. 2, Chapter 3: "Social Institutions."



November 8 & 13 Religions of Africa

Africa vol. 2, Chapter 5: "Indigenous Religions."

- ___. Chapter 6: "Talking to God: Divination Systems."
- ___. Chapter 7: "Islam."
- ___. Chapter 8: "Christianity."

November 18 Explorations in Culture

Africa vol. 2, Chapter 14: "Art"



November 20 Video illustration and class discussion

Screening: *The Manuscripts of Timbuktu*

Thanksgiving break:

November 27 Music

Africa vol. 2, Chapter 15: "Music"

November 29 Video illustrations

Ali Mazrui, *The Africans*

Part 8: "Clash of Culture"

December 4 Oral Literature

Africa vol. 2, Chapter 16: "Written and Oral Literature."

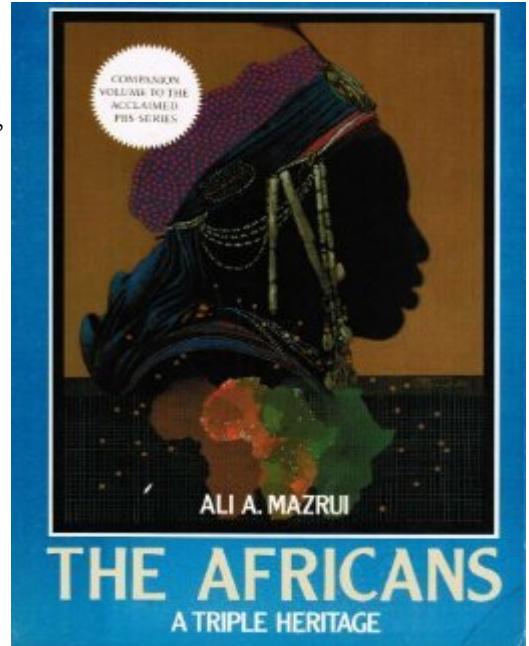
December 6

Review Class for the Final Exam.

*****Final Exam distributed**

December 10

Turn in Take Home Final Exam in class.



Instructions for community project essay

- 1) Click a photograph of the object that you will choose to write about. Your essay should be analytical in nature. First, describe the object with in precise language. Second, give your opinion about the object. Third, ask yourself a set of questions: What are your overall impressions? How would you connect to object to the past of African continent? Why did the object find a place in the museum? Try to answer these questions in your essay.
- 2) You are most welcome to do research on the object and use the available secondary literature on the object you will choose to write about. Please use citations to refer to the secondary sources.
- 3) The word limit for the essay is 700 words. It should be typed in Times New Roman and double space. Proofread your essay before submitting it.
- 4) Turn your essay in on time because late reviews will be penalized.

Attendance Policy

The class attendance will be counted from the 4th of September. It will be counted based on the total of 24 classes. This is excluding September 11 and 13 when students will be watching the films for review at home. So for each absence, students will lose approximately 0.83 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.

Midterm and final exam essays

For the mid-term and final exam essays, students will receive additional instructions on canvas. Canvas will be widely used post information related to class. So please keep an eye on Canvas regularly.