“Funeral and a Crescent” (Ibrahim El-Salahi, 1963)

Instructor Information
Prof. Carina Ray
Mandel 219
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Office Hours: T 5:00-6:00PM/W10:00-11:00AM

Course Location and Meeting Time
Tuesday @ 6:30-9:20PM
Mandel G10

Course Description
This course addresses a unique set of theoretical and methodological questions that focus on Africa as an idea and a field of study, paying specific attention to the major debates and issues that have shaped the discipline of African history. This course will also introduce you to major themes in Africa’s long, diverse, and complex history. Areas to be covered include early human origins; trade networks; state building; slavery and the slave trade; colonialism; and liberation struggles. This course will equip you with a working knowledge of African history, but more importantly it will provide you with the skills necessary to continue learning and thinking about Africa after the semester has ended.

Course readings will be complemented by lectures and class discussions that bring together the major themes under consideration and that provide different ways of thinking about and interpreting the issues at hand.

Learning Goals
* Critical introduction to African History as a field of study.
* Introduce you to key themes and questions in Africa’s history.
* Provide you with the analytical skills necessary to filter information so that you are able to construct your own critical framework for thinking about Africa and its history.
* Provide a solid foundation for future learning in African Studies.
Course Readings
You are expected to complete all readings and assignments on time as indicated on the course schedule. Bring all assigned readings with you to class and have them accessible before class begins.

Required Books
D.T. Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*
Dennis Laumann, *Colonial Africa* (2nd Edition)
Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *The River Between*
Noo Saro-Wiwa, *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria*

Course Reader
All other assigned readings will be contained in our course reader.

Grading Structure

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Map Quiz
A map quiz which requires you to identify each African country will take place on Tuesday, September 17th. You can prepare for the quiz by using these apps: [http://online.seterra.net/en/vgp/3034](http://online.seterra.net/en/vgp/3034) and [http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africa.html](http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africa.html). The map quiz counts for 15% of your course grade.

Africa in the News
You will present a current event news story that links up with the course readings for the day of your presentation. This presentation counts for 15% of your course grade. Please see assignment sheet for further details.

Quizzes
Rather than test your ability to memorize particular facts and figures or regurgitate lectures and reading materials, I am interested in equipping you with a critical understanding of African History as a field of study, and with more sophisticated ways of analyzing key questions and themes in Africa’s history. To this end, over the course of the semester you will take 5 quizzes, each of which will count for 10% of your total grade for a grand total of 50% of your course grade. Each quiz will feature several questions or prompts designed to elicit critical reflection on and engagement with our readings and other course materials, lectures, and discussions covered prior to the date of the quiz. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of class, and will last for 30 minutes.

Class Participation
Engaged learning is a key to success in this course. Your thoughtful contributions and questions about the readings and lectures are both welcomed and expected. 20% of your course grade is based on your class participation.

Course Expectations

Weekly Time Commitment
This is a Four-Credit Course (with 2.5 hours of class-time per week). Success in this 4-credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings and preparation for quizzes, presentations, and exams, etc.).

Attendance
Attendance is absolutely mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. The presence of every student is valued and unexcused absences risk disrupting the cohesion of the class. Repeated absences are disrespectful to me, as your professor, as well as to your fellow classmates. If you plan to miss a class, you must have a valid excuse (ie. sickness or injury, family emergency) and inform me ahead of time. Excused absences will
still require that all work is made up. More than one unexcused absence will result in an automatic 10% reduction of your final grade.

**Classroom Conduct**
Your classroom conduct will be a factor in your participation grade. You are expected to arrive to class on time, be attentive (no falling asleep), and focused (no cellphone use). Please use the restroom **BEFORE** you come to class. Eating is not allowed during class. We will take a short break half way through our class period – please use this time to go to the bathroom, have a snack, stretch your legs, check you cell phone, etc.

You are expected to maintain the highest standards of collegiality with your classmates. Discussions of the course materials and content must be conducted with awareness that we all bring differing levels of knowledge, experience and perspective to the subject matter. Acts of disrespect will not be tolerated. Repeated disruptive behavior will result in your failure of the course.

**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity as stated in Section 4 of the *Rights and Responsibilities* handbook. [http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/)

Plagiarism and evidence of cheating on exams will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade. You may refer to the International Center for Academic Integrity for additional information: [http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php](http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php)

**Disability Policy**
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services (x63470 or brodgers@brandeis.edu.)

Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

**Computer Policy**
Computers and other electronic devices, including iPads and other tablets, are not allowed in class. Please ensure that you bring you books and/or course reader to class with you.

**Key Dates**
October 1: No Class—Rosh Hashanah
October 15: No Class—Brandeis Thursday
November 25: Special Monday Class

**Quiz Dates**
September 17: Map Quiz
September 24: Quiz #1
October 22: Quiz #2
November 5: Quiz #3
November 19: Quiz #4
December 10: Quiz #5
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week #1
September 3: Course Orientation and Expectations
*Reading: 2 news articles of your choosing covering current events in Africa. Please print your articles out and bring them to class with you.

Week #2
September 10: The Trouble with Tribe and other Misconceptions
*Reading: J. Gettleman, “Disputed Vote Plunges Kenya Into Bloodshed” (Course Reader, hereafter CR)
*Reading: APIC, “Talking about ‘Tribe’: Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis” (CR)
*Reading: Binyavanga Wainaina, “How to Write About Africa” (CR)
*Reading: Gilbert and Reynolds, “Notions of Africa” (CR)

Week #3
September 17: African Studies: A Field in Crisis? **MAP QUIZ**
*Using the bibliography of Du Bois’ work provided on p. 176 of Hashim Gibrill’s article, select, locate, read, and summarize one piece of Du Bois’ writing on Africa.
*Reading: Jean Allman, “#HerskovitsMustFall? A Meditation on Whiteness, African Studies, and the Unfinished Business of 1968” (CR)

Week #4
September 24: African History: Methodologies, Contributions, and Consequences **QUIZ #1**
*Reading: John Henrik Clarke, “The Historical Legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop: His Contributions to a New Concept of African History” (CR)
*Reading: Theophile Obenga, “Sources and Specific Techniques Used in African History: A General Outline” (CR)
*Reading: Steven Feierman, “African Histories and the Dissolution of World History” (CR)

Week #5
October 8: Out of Africa? Early Human Origins and Egypt
*Reading: John Relethford, “Modern Human Origins: The Out of Africa Debate” (CR)
*Reading: Aaron Kamugisha, “Finally in Africa? Egypt, from Diop to Celenko” (CR)
*Reading: Martin Bernal, “The Afrocentric Interpretation of History: Bernal Replies to Lefkowitz” (CR)

Week #6
October 22: Mansa Musa and Sunjata: Orality and State Building in Medieval Africa **QUIZ #2**
*Reading: Jan Vansina, “Oral Tradition and Its Methodology” (CR)
*Reading: Seydou Camara, “The Epic of Sunjata: Structure: Preservation, and Transmission” (CR)
*Reading: D.T. Niane, Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali

Week #7
October 29: Globalizing Africa: The Swahili
*Reading, Pawlowicz and LaViolette, “Swahili Historical Chronicles from an Archaeological Perspective: Bridging History, Archaeology, Coast, and Hinterland in Southern Tanzania” (CR)
*Reading: Prita Meier, “Unmoored: On Oceanic Objects in Coastal Eastern Africa, 1700-1900” (CR)
*Reading: Prita Meier, “The Surface of Things: A History of Photography from the Swahili Coast” (CR)

Week #8
November 5: African Understandings of the Transatlantic Slave Trade **QUIZ #3**
*Reading: Kwasi Konadu, Transatlantic Africa: 1440-1888
Week #9
November 12: Claiming Freedom/Contesting Slavery
   *Reading: Trevor Getz and Liz Clarke, Abina and the Important Men

Week #10
November 19: Colonialism: Imperatives, Methods, Responses **Quiz #4**
   *Reading: Dennis Laumann, Colonial Africa (Introduction, Ch. 1-2)
   *Reading: Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, The River Between (Ch. 1-13)

Week #11
November 25: Colonial Encounters/Colonial Ruptures SPECIAL MONDAY CLASS
   *Reading: Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, The River Between (Ch. 13-26)
   *Reading: Dennis Laumann, Colonial Africa: 1884-1994 (Ch. 3-4, Conclusion)

Week #12
December 3: African Independence/Independent Africa?
   *Reading: Frederick Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective” (CR)
   *Reading: Noo Saro-Wiwa, Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria

Week #13
December 10: **Quiz #5**