Africa and the West  
Spring Semester 2016 – Brandeis University

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Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 10am to 11 am, in Mandel 207  
Lecture: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 11:00am–11:50am in Olin-Sang 112

Introduction

Hello, and welcome to the spring semester and the course Africa and the West! This semester, we will cover a wealth of topics concerning the relationship of African and Western societies, from antiquity to the present era. The course materials will emphasize the African experience as the peoples encountered Westerners politically, economically, and culturally across these eras. After completing the course, students will be able connect the themes covered in class to a greater understanding of global history and societies, which they can carry to all their areas of study.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
- Describe pre-colonial encounters and interactions between African and Western peoples
- Connect African trade networks to global networks of trade
- Describe the evolving relationships of African states upon the increasing presence of European trade
- Understand the impact of race and racism on interactions and relationships between African and Western peoples
- Identify points of contention, cooperation, and incorporation of African and Western cultural elements both in contact and abroad
- Describe the persistence and resistance of African societies during the colonial and independence eras
- Identify the contemporary political states of Africa
- Understand neo-colonialism and challenges Africa experiences in its relationship with Western states

Beyond class, students should use an additional 7 hours per week reading and studying course materials, for approximately 9.5 hours of work per week in total.

Materials

- Texts (required)
- **Other (required)**
  o One notebook or binder with loose-leaf paper, in either case having removable pages; occasionally, there will be in-class assignments turned in to the instructor

- **Albums (not required; available free through LATTE; albums also available via music streaming services Google Play or iTunes)**
  o Alemu Aga, *Ethiopiques Volume 11*
  o Baaba Maal, *Firin ’in Fouta*
  o Miriam Makeba, *The World of Miriam Makeba*
  o Robert Johnson, *King of the Delta Blues Singers*
  o Assorted Artists, *Highlife Time Volume 2*
  o Tinariwen, *Amassoukoul*
  o Fela Kuti, *Gentleman*
  o Oumou Sangare, *Oumou.*
  o Konono No.1, *Congotronics*

**Class Rules**

- We will be covering a number of potentially sensitive or controversial topics, and in some cases we will be discussing them with one another. It is important to respect one another’s opinion, and avoid racist, homophbic, and sexist language in this setting. Anyone disrespectful of others will be asked to leave the class.

- Please remember to silence phones during class. If you must receive a call, sit next to the door so that you can receive it outside the classroom.

- Your course texts and notebook/loose-leaf binder will be incredibly important for your success in this course. Bring both to every class, without exception.

**Graded Assignments**

- **Map Quiz** (10 points)
  o Students have one map quiz during the semester on the contemporary political states in Africa (**February 4th**). The map and list of countries will be provided in digital form on LATTE, and left blank for you to fill out in preparation. Students are expected to learn the locations of all contemporary African political states.

- **Course Papers** (20 points each, 3 during the semester for 60 total points)
  o Over the semester, students will be guided through in-class activities and homework in completing **three papers of at least five pages in length**. Every other week, students will have a smaller assignment due related to the paper, designed to aid students in composing their paper. These will include activities to generate a short list of sources, generate an outline of the paper, then submission and small-group presentation of their paper. The first paper, due **February 25th**, will be concerned with pre-colonial African regions and their relationship to the West; the second paper, due **April 7th**, will be related to colonial Africa, and the third paper, due **at the final exam**, will involve neocolonialism and challenges for contemporary African states. Additional details will be provided in class.

- **Participation** (20 points)
  o Participation is graded using the student’s participation in and completion of in-class and homework activities, including smaller assignments mentioned above
related to their papers and reactions to course materials on LATTE. Each assigned reading will have an accompanying short response question on the LATTE online course supplement, to which students are expected to submit their response. Students will be expected to make responses of at least three sentences in length; the instructor will use their discretion to determine whether the student has sufficiently attempted to answer the question and therefore receive full credit.

- **Attendance** (10 points)
  - Attendance is required, and will be taken daily. Excused absences will only be granted in times of ill health or death in the family, and there must be documentation for both (a doctor’s note for ill health, and an obituary or notice of death in the paper for death in the family). Students are allowed three unexcused absences. If there is a major health issue that will involve absences beyond a week, please discuss this with me as soon as possible (rather than upon return). Students are responsible for all work missed in their absence.

**Late Work, Cheating, & Plagiarism**

Late work will lose half-credit; after one week of being late, all credit will be lost. Cheating on the quiz or plagiarism on a paper will lead to a zero grade for the graded item, and potential automatic failure for the course.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any students with a documented disability should contact me immediately so we can arrange your accommodations.

**Class Schedule**

First listed is the topic for the day, followed by the reading and/or listening exercise which is due on the date on which they are listed. I also include any other things that might be done in-class that day (such as watching a film, or taking a quiz).

**Wednesday, 1/13**
- Introduction to Course & Syllabus

**Thursday, 1/14**
- What is “Africa?”
- See LATTE for reading

**Wednesday, 1/20**
- What is “the West?”
- See LATTE for reading

**Thursday, 1/21**
- Citation & Research discussion; Students select countries of focus

**Monday, 1/25**
- Early African history and trade
**Wednesday, 1/27**
- Early Interactions of Africa and the West
- Northrup, p. 1-22

**Thursday, 1/28**
- Early Interactions of Africa and the West
- *Due: Student list of sources for Paper #1*

**Monday, 2/1**
- African Empires in Antiquity
- Alemu Aga, *Ethiopiques Volume 11*

**Wednesday, 2/3**
- African Empires in Antiquity
- Northrup, p. 25-50

**Thursday, 2/4**
- African Empires in Antiquity
- *Map Quiz*

**Monday, 2/8**
- African and Western Exchange: Part I
- Baaba Maal, *Firin’ in Fouta*

**Wednesday, 2/10**
- African and Western Exchange: Part I
- Northrup, p. 54-77

**Thursday, 2/11**
- African and Western Exchange: Part I
- *Due: Student outline of Paper #1*

***Midterm Recess, February 15th-19th***

**Monday, 2/22**
- African and Western Exchange: Part II

**Wednesday, 2/24**
- African and Western Exchange: Part II
- Northrup, p. 83-110

**Thursday, 2/25**
- African and Western Exchange: Part II
- *Due: Paper #1*

**Monday, 2/29**
- Africans and Navigating Western Cultures
- Miriam Makeba, *The World of Miriam Makeba*

**Wednesday, 3/2**
- Africans and Navigating Western Cultures
- Northrup, p. 115-152

**Thursday, 3/3**
- Africans and Navigating Western Cultures
- *Film in Class: Ousmane Sembene’s Bosom sorret*
Monday, 3/7
- Culture, Capitalism, and the Atlantic Slave Trade
- Robert Johnson, *King of the Delta Blues Singers*

Wednesday, 3/9
- Culture, Capitalism, and the Atlantic Slave Trade
- Northrup, p. 157-185

Thursday, 3/10
- Culture, Capitalism, and the Atlantic Slave Trade
- *Due: Student list of sources for Paper #2*

Monday, 3/14
- Colonialism and Survival
- Assorted Artists, *Highlife Time Volume 2*

Wednesday, 3/16
- Colonialism and Survival
- Fanon, p. 23-67
- *Film in Class: Göran Olsson & Frantz Fanon’s Concerning Violence*

Thursday, 3/17
- Colonialism and Survival
- *Film in Class: Olsson & Fanon’s Concerning Violence, continued*

Monday, 3/21
- Utilization of Western Devices and African Colonial Resistance
- Tinariwen, *Amassoukoul*

Wednesday, 3/23
- Utilization of Western Devices and African Colonial Resistance
- Fanon, p. 69-97

Thursday, 3/24
- Utilization of Western Devices and African Colonial Resistance
- *Due: Student outline of Paper #2*

***March Recess, March 25th – 28th***

Wednesday, 3/30
- Contemporary Cultural (mis)Communication
- Fela Kuti, *Gentleman*

Thursday, 3/31
- Contemporary Cultural (mis)Communication
- Fanon, p. 121-145

Monday, 4/4
- Neocolonialism and Colonial Legacy

Wednesday, 4/6
- Neocolonialism and Colonial Legacy
- Fanon, p. 99-120

Thursday, 4/7
- Neocolonialism and Colonial Legacy
- *Due: Paper #2*
Monday, 4/11
- Shaking the Past, Building Beyond
- Oumou Sangare, *Oumou.*

Wednesday, 4/13
- Shaking the Past, Building Beyond
- wa Thiong’o, p. 1-44

Thursday, 4/14
- Shaking the Past, Building Beyond
- *Film in Class:* Roger Ross Williams’ *God Loves Uganda*

Monday, 4/18
- New Communications: Reaching Back Before Pushing Forward
- Konono N°1, *Congotronics*

Wednesday, 4/20
- New Communications: Reaching Back Before Pushing Forward
- wa Thiong’o, p. 45-90
- *Due: Student source list for Paper #3*

***Brandeis Day, Friday Schedule on April 21**th***
***Spring Recess & Passover, April 22**nd – 29**th***

Monday, 5/2
- New Communications: Reaching Back Before Pushing Forward
- wa Thiong’o, p. 91-152
- *Due: Student outline of Paper #3*

May 5**th – 12**th
- *Due: Paper #3*

*Grading Scale* - The total of all the graded assignments above is 100 points:
A   = 94-100
A-  = 90-93
B+  = 87-89
B   = 84-86
B-  = 80-83
C+  = 77-79
C   = 74-76
C-  = 70-73
D+  = 67-69
D   = 64-66
D-  = 60-63
F   = 59 and below