

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE, FALL 2003

HIS 104/AFST 104: INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN STUDIES

Instructor: Fiona Vernal, History/African Studies

Class Times: MWF 2:40-3:55 p.m.

Location: Upjohn Library: Room 206

[Library Policy Reminder: No food or Drink]

Office: Dewing 303F

Office Hours: Mondays 4-5; Thursday, 10-12; or by appointment

Phone: 269-337-5789

Email: fiona.vernal@kzoo.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the history of Africa from the eve of colonial conquest in the 1880s to the post independence period. Africa's pre-conquest relationship with the West, the nature of authority in indigenous polities, the European scramble, the colonial economy, the rise of nationalism, colonial education, ethnicity and genocide are among the themes examined throughout the quarter.

STRUCTURE

Lectures are delivered on Mondays and Wednesdays. Fridays are devoted exclusively to discussion of the assigned readings/ASSIGNMENTS.

READINGS

The following books are available from the bookstore in HICKS

Author	Title	Subject Matter
Chinua Achebe	<u>Things Fall Apart</u>	[Nigeria on the eve of colonialism]
Tsitsi Dangaremba	<u>Nervous Conditions</u>	[Colonial Education in Rhodesia]
Frantz Fanon	<u>The Wretched of the Earth</u>	[African Nationalism]
*Philip Gourevitch,	<u>We Wish to Inform you that Tomorrow we Will be Killed by Our Families</u>	[Genocide in Rwanda] [*Final Paper Source]
Adam Hirsch	<u>King Leopold's Ghost</u>	[Economic Imperialism and Genocide in The Congo]
D. T. Niane.	<u>Sundiata</u>	[Imperial Mali]

Readings for **Weeks 1, 3, and 8** will be distributed in class. There are no readings during **WEEK 6, the week of the mid-terms.**

CLASS POLICIES:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Medical and Athletic absences will be excused with the appropriate paperwork from the Health services or coach. Lectures are on Mondays and Wednesdays. Fridays are devoted to the discussion of the assigned readings. If you missed a lecture, be sure to get notes from your classmates. If you miss a discussion on Friday for medical, athletic or any other reason, a 2-page report on that week's reading is due within one calendar week. You can bring the paper to class or to my office, Dewing 303F.

Academic Integrity: There is a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism on this campus and in this class. Suspected cases will be turned over to the Student Development Office for review and your work will be submitted for inspection by Turnitin.com. Confirmation of cheating or plagiarism will result in a **failing grade** for this class.

Assistance: If you are in doubt about correct citation styles, especially about internet sources, please consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian,'s *Manual* at the library or the wonderful handbook used by first-year seminars, Kirszner and Mandell's *The Brief Handbook*. I highly recommend in your academic career here at Kalamazoo College that you invest in this handbook. It has a cornucopia of information about everything from research methods and time management, to grammar and citation styles. Ignorance is no excuse for incorrect citations. If you need help you can see me during office hours, or by appointment; and remember to take advantage of the Academic Resource Center.

GRADING

Mid-Term 20% Consists of a choice of five identifications and an essay and covers materials in lectures and discussion up to the 24th of October, meaning material from **King Leopold's Ghost will be included.** The mid-term will be taken *in class* on Monday 27 October 2003.

Participation 35% The strength and quality of this course depends partly on your engagement with the assigned readings and participation in weekly discussions. While there will be time for discussion during lecture, Fridays are reserved for discussing the assigned readings. **Student's are responsible for leading one discussion section.**

Final Project 25% Description of PROJECT will be distributed in class

Paper 15% Final Paper on Gourevitch, **We Wish to Inform you**

Map quiz 5 % The short quiz will take place during Wednesday of **week three.**

Week One. September 22, 24, 26

Lectures: African topography, economy, culture and politics

Readings: A reading packet will be distributed in class that surveys several African societies ranging from large empires to small-scale societies

***ASSIGNMENT:** *Make a grid that compares the African societies discussed in the readings in terms of the economic, political, ecological, social and religious features [and any other characteristics that may be of interest to you]. Be prepared to discuss how these features interact with each other as a source of strength, tension or weakness for example. Consider the type of SOURCES of information and the strengths, reliability and shortcomings of those sources.*

Week Two. September 29, October 1, 3

Lectures: African Politics between the 15th and 19th Century

Readings: Niane, **Sundiata**

***ASSIGNMENT** *Be prepared to discuss: the plot of this epic story of the kingdom of Mali, how power is represented in the pre-colonial kingdom, the role of oral sources as repositories of historical information. Building on Week One's assignment, consider how Mali differs from some of the other societies surveyed and the implication that may have*

in terms of trade, political authority, day-to-day life or warfare for example; what are the limits/strengths of official SOURCES?

Week Three. October 6, 8, 10

Lectures: Africa and the Slave Trade

Readings: A reading packet on slavery will be distributed in class

***ASSIGNMENT:** *How did Africans from various strata experience the INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY in Africa and the SLAVE TRADE? How did men and women experience slavery? How did factors like geographical location, physical features, religion or the economy influence slavery and the slave trade? How did slavery change in the nineteenth-century?*

Map Quiz Wednesday, October 8th

NOTE : BY NOW YOU SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN THE ETHNIC/LINGUISTIC GROUP YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON IN YOUR CLASS PROJECT

Week 4. October 13, 15, 17

Lectures: The nineteenth-century as a turning point

Readings: Achebe, Things Fall Apart

***ASSIGNMENT:** *In this fictional account of an Ibo society on the eve and in the aftermath of early colonial contact, consider the use of literature as a means of dramatizing the experiences of Africans. What issues arise when you use fiction to talk about historical events? Is Okonkwo, the main character, the quintessential African? Is he a hero, a victim, a villain? Do you come to sympathize with him in the end? Does Ibo society, as it is portrayed in the novel agree with his ultimate solution to the problem of colonial encroachment? Feel free to role-play as any character in this book. What is your perspective? Why are you taking certain actions? For example, as Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, why does Christianity interest you? As the missionary, what sort of approaches do you use to attract members of Ibo society? Does your strategy need to change depending on the gender of the potential converts?*

ON FRIDAY THERE WILL BE A 15-MINUTE MID-COURSE EVALUATION OF WHAT IS WORKING AND WHAT IS NOT WORKING IN THE CLASS SO I CAN TRY TO INCORPORATE YOUR SUGGESTIONS INTO THE REST OF THE QUARTER. AGAIN THE QUALITY OF THE CLASS DEPENDS PARTLY ON YOU AND YOUR FEEDBACK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO LET ME KNOW WHAT IS GOING.

Week 5. October 20, 22, 24

Lectures: The Scramble for Africa and African Resistance

Reading: Hochschild King Leopold's Ghost [This book is rather long so you may want to start reading it early]

***ASSIGNMENT:** *This is the first of two cases of genocide we will examine in Africa. Typical questions often asked about this kind of violence include: why this place, these people and at this time? You may want to consider these questions as you read. How complicit is the international community in allowing these brutalities to happen? And how much blame do we place individually on King Leopold? In terms of the typology of violence, does it matter what you call it? Does it make a difference if we call it a holocaust, decimation, mass murder or genocide? Finally, the victims of this violence*

often get lost in the larger narrative, but to the extent that you can excavate their voices, what do Africans have to say about their experience of Leopold's Congo?

MID-TERM IS MONDAY OCTOBER 27, 2003

Week Six. October 27, 29, 31

Lectures: Colonial Administration and Development

NO READINGS FOR THIS WEEK. LECTURES ARE ON WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY. THERE IS NO READING ASSIGNED FOR THIS WEEK TO GIVE YOU AN OPPORTUNITY TO DECOMPRESS AFTER MID-TERMS, AND ALSO TO WORK ON YOUR PROJECTS.

Week Seven. November 3, 5, 7

Lectures: Turning Points in the Colonial Policies and African Resistance

Reading: Dangarembga: Nervous Conditions [This novel is rather long so you may want to start reading it early]

***ASSIGNMENT:** *In the preceding lectures we have examined the principles of colonialism, the scramble for Africa, the mechanics of colonial administration and development. This week we delve into the theme of colonial education in a novel that begs the question of whether one's consciousness can be colonized and depicts how education can be used as a tool of both oppression and liberation. While these are central themes in the book, consider also the relationship between men and women and parents and children and how these are transformed or reinforced by colonialism. This is the second novel we use in this course so keep in mind the question of how fiction lends itself to history and how literature serves as a means of empowerment for Africans whose voices are absent from conventional colonial records.*

Week Eight. November 10, 12, 14

Lectures: Nationalism and Decolonization, Film Screening

Reading: To be distributed in class

ASSIGNMENT: *Be prepared to role-play as African nationalists. Communicate your particular experience of colonialism and aspirations as a future leader of independent Africa.*

NOTE: YOUR PROJECT DUE DATE IS FAST APPROACHING ON
MONDAY NOVEMBER 24, THE LAST DAY OF CLASS.

Week Nine. November 17, 19, 21

Lectures: Liberation wars and civil wars on the road to African independence

Reading: Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*

ASSIGNMENT: *Fanon raises a host of prescient issues about the relationship between colonialism and African nationalist movements. What are the characteristics of the caricatured "native" and "settler"? What is the relationship between national leaders and the masses? What role does Fanon envision for them? What are the pitfalls of national consciousness?*

Week Ten. November 24, FINAL CLASS

Lecture: Post-Colonial Legacies

PROJECTS DUE IN CLASS; STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Reading: Gourevitch, **We Wish to Inform you that Tomorrow we Will be Killed by our Families**

FINAL PAPER: *Paper on Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform you You will have a choice of topics distributed in class. Due 3 December 2003 by NOON—in my office or underneath my door.*

Due Dates Reminder

Every Friday except weeks 6 and 10: Discussion of Assigned Readings.

Week 3 October 8 Map Quiz

Week 6 Monday October 27

Weeks 7, 8, 9 Crucial time to work on your class projects

Week 10 November 24 Class Project Due in Class

December 3, Final Paper, 7-8 pages Due by Noon in Office

Short synopsis of project. *Some consideration will be given to students working as pairs/teams depending on the class size. You will be asked to select a country of interest and within that country an ethnic/linguistic group. You will have to do research in the library and on the internet that relates the lecture themes to that particular group. You may select one of the groups we use in class, but you will have to find parallel sources to the books/articles we use on that particular group. For example if you choose the Ibo of Nigeria, the subject of **Things Fall Apart** which we read in week 4, the part of the project that emphasizes the literary theme should focus on **another** author who writes about the Ibos of Nigeria, or you can choose a **different** book by the author. More details of the project will be announced in class.*