

Hist. 4263: Independence and Africa Today

Fall 2009

Dr. Andrea Arrington

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Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays, 10:00-12:00;

Wednesdays 1:00-2:00; or by appointment

Course Description: This class examines the last half century of Africa's history, with an emphasis on the transition from colonies to independent states. Starting in the late 1950s, African countries gained independence from their colonizing, resulting in a new era of political, social, cultural, and economic change. We will begin the course with a brief introduction into the colonial past of Africa, and then shift our attention to revolutions and struggles for independence. The course will then consider African development in the post-colonial and contemporary era as we analyze the successes and failures of independent Africa and the challenges the continent faces today. We will also have a thematic focus on the impact of post-independence wars on citizens.

Course Expectations: I expect all students to follow the guidelines for academic integrity as defined by the UArk Student Handbook. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. If you ever have a question about properly citing references or completing any of your coursework, do not hesitate to ask me. It is better to be overly careful than to violate the guidelines for academic integrity.

Each student is allowed one unexcused absences. Any unexcused absences beyond that number will adversely affect your participation grade.

Please keep your phones and ipods and all other fun but distracting wireless gizmos out of sight during class. I can, in fact, tell when students are "texting" from under the desk or table, and such activity is distracting to me and fellow students. If your cell phone goes off during class, I reserve the right to answer it for you.

Late work is highly discouraged. If you have concerns about getting work in on time, please talk to me as soon as possible. Unexcused late work will be penalized by grade reduction.

This class is organized as a seminar- there will be very few lectures, so our class sessions will be used for discussions over the assigned material. You need to come to class ready to participate in discussions. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group, please let me know so we can discuss strategies for you to get involved in the discussions.

Please communicate with me. I want every student to be successful in the class, and to get the most out of it as possible. If you are having any problems, let me know so I can help address the issue or concern. During class, always feel free to ask questions or for clarification.

Inclement Weather: If Fayetteville Public Schools are closed, our class will not meet. If there is bad weather but the schools are not closed and you find it dangerous to come to campus, I trust you to make an honest assessment of if you should come to school.

Texts:

Africa since Independence: A Comparative History Paul Nugent
The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid isn't Working Robert Calderisi
The House at Sugar Beach: In Search of a Lost African Childhood
Helene Cooper
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier Ishmael Beah
Don't Let's Go to the Dog's Tonight: An African Childhood Alexandra Fuller
Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe's Future
Martin Meredith

Grades:

Undergraduates:

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| Map Quiz | 20 points |
| Book Review | 30 points |
| Controversies, Critique, and Context Assignments | 30 points (ten points each) |
| Advisory Assignment/ Research Paper | 100 points |
| Participation | 70 points |

Total: 250 points

Graduate Students:

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| Map Quiz | 20 points |
| Book Review | 50 points |
| CCC Assignments | 30 points (ten points each) |
| Advisory Assignment/ Research Paper | 100 points |
| Participation | 100 points |

Total: 300 points

Map Quiz: I will hand out blank maps of Africa, a labeled map of Africa, and a list of countries to memorize. On quiz day I will randomly select 20 countries for you to identify.

Book Review: Each student will choose a book that focuses on contemporary African history (Africa during the last fifty years) and will provide a 2-3 page (3-4 pages for grad students) double spaced review of the text. I suggest that you choose a book relevant to the topic of your advisory assignment/research paper. **You must get your book approved by October 22nd.**

Controversies, Critique, and Context Assignments (CCC's): Throughout the semester, each student will turn in 3 writing assignments that address topics or issues raised in reading and class discussions. Each student can choose which days to submit these assignments, and are responsible for submitting three of them total. These papers allow you the opportunity to offer your critique or questions about reading assignments, your analysis or continuation of a discussion in class, or provide background information about a topic covered. They should be about a page long, double spaced.

Advisory Assignment/Research Paper: For this writing assignment, I ask you to assume the role of a consultant to the US State Department, an African government, the UN, or an NGO/Aid organization, or an organization you select (must be approved). You will choose an issue currently significant in contemporary Africa and prepare an advisory document giving background information and your opinions as to how they can address the topic at hand. This will require you to work on the research throughout the semester so you can assume a voice of authority and familiarity on the topic. The issue you choose to focus on is entirely up to you- choose something you are genuinely interested in, as you will be working on this project throughout the semester. I will set mini-deadlines to make sure you stay on target with the assignment. This should be 7-9 pages double spaced. More details to follow.

If you prefer writing a traditional research paper, rather than the advisory assignment, that option is available. It will also need to be a topic of your choice and should be 7-9 double spaced. More details to follow.

Regardless of which option you choose, **on November 19th you must turn in a 1-2 paragraph abstract explaining the topic you selected.**

Participation- This class is intended to be much more discussion than lecture, although I will provide some contextualization and background through lectures. Because the emphasis is on discussion, I expect every student to bear responsibility for keeping class discussions moving forward. You should come to class each day with the reading assignment complete and prepared to discuss your opinions on the topics raised. If it is difficult for you to speak up in class, please let me know as early in the semester as possible so we can develop strategies to ensure that you earn your participation points. Remember also that since this class only meets twice a week, it is in your best interest to make it to each class session. We will be discussing some difficult topics and I anticipate lively debates. Make sure you are respectful of your fellow classmates during our discussions.

Schedule (Subject to Change)

- Tues. 8/25 Intro to class, pass out syllabus
"What we think we know about Africa, and Why we think we know it" discussion
- Thurs. 8/27 How to talk about Africa: The Trouble with Tribe
Read <http://www.africaaction.org/bp/ethall.htm>
- Tues. 9/1 Flashback in Time: Europeans Notions about Africans
on the Eve of Colonization
Film: "The Life and Times of Sara Baartman, the Hottentot Venus"
- Thurs. 9/3 Colonialism Deconstructed
Read "The Colonial Era" by Sheldon Gellar (sent as e-mail attachment)
- Tues. 9/8 Colonial Complaints: The World Wars and Challenges to the System
- Thurs. 9/10 The Dawn of a New Day: Decolonization in Africa
Read Chapter 1 "African Independence: Poisoned Chalice or Cup of Plenty" from Nugent text
- Tues. 9/15 Case Studies of Revolutions: Ghana and Kenya
Reading TBA
- Thurs. 9/17 The Independence Hangover: Disappointments and Realities
Read Chapter 2, "A Profile of Africa at Independence" from Nugent text
- Tues. 9/22 Moving Forward: The Early Years of Decolonization
Read Chapter 3, "The Shape of Things to Come: Irredentism, Secessionism and the Pan-African Ideal" from Nugent text
- Thurs. 9/24 Looking Back: Pre-colonial Political Institutions
in a Post-Colonial World
Read Chapter 4, "Modernity and Tradition, Power and Prestige: Monarchs, Chiefs, and Politicians, 1956-74" from Nugent text
- Tues. 9/29 Lost in Translation?: African Interpretations of Socialism and Capitalism
Read Chapter 5, "'Isms Schisms': African Socialism and Capitalism, 1960-85" from Nugent text
- Thurs. 10/1 The Birth of an Unsavory Legacy: Post-colonial War and Conflict
Read Chapter 6, "Khaki Fatigue: Military Rule in Africa, 1960-85" from Nugent text
- Tues. 10/6 Dictators and the Collapse of States
Film TBA

- Thurs. 10/8 Life Disrupted: Africa's (un)Civil Wars, Part I, Liberia
Read p. 3-106 of *The House at Sugar Beach*
- Tues. 10/13 Disrupted cont'd
Read p.107-212 of *The House at Sugar Beach*
- Thurs. 10/15 Disrupted cont'd
Finish *The House at Sugar Beach*
- Tues. 10/20 Latecomers to the Independence Party: The Liberation of
Zimbabwe and South Africa
- Thurs. 10/22 *****Books for your book review must be approved by today*****
Life Disrupted: Africa's (un)Civil Wars, Part II, Zimbabwe
Read first half of *Don't Let's go to the Dogs Tonight: An African
Childhood*
- Tues. 10/27 Disrupted cont'd
Finish *Don't Let's go the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood*
- Thurs. 10/29 Zimbabwe's Liberation from a Different Perspective
Film: Flame
- Tues. 11/3 *****Book Reviews Due today*****
**Please submit a hard copy of your review either under my office door
or in my campus mailbox (Old Main 416) by midnight**
No Class
- Thurs. 11/5 Life Disrupted: Africa's (un)Civil Wars, Part III, Sierra Leone
Read first half of *A Long Way Gone*
- Tues. 11/10 Disrupted cont'd
Finish *A Long Way Gone*
- Thurs. 11/12 Blessing or a Curse?: Outside Intervention in African Affairs
Read Chapter 8, "Invasion of the Acronyms: SAPS, AIDS, and the NGO
Takeover" from Nugent's text
- Tues. 11/17 The Failure of Foreign Aid
Read Introduction and Chapters 1, 3, and 4 in *The Trouble with Africa: Why
Foreign Aid isn't Working*
- Thurs. 11/19 *****Advisory Essay/Research Paper Abstract Due Today*****
Please submit a hard copy, 1-2 paragraph long abstract in class.
Failure cont'd
Read Chapters 9 and 22 of *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid isn't
Working*

- Tues. 11/24 Film: TBA
Start reading *Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*
- Thurs. 11/26 Thanksgiving
Keep reading *Mugabe* text
- Tues. 12/1 *****All CCC assignments MUST be submitted by this day*****
Zimbabwe Revisited: The Post-Liberation Nightmare
You need to read, by this class session, ALL of *Mugabe: Power, Plunder, and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*
- Thurs. 12/3 Hope for Tomorrow? Africa in the 21st Century
Read Chapters 12 and 13 in *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid isn't Working*
- Tues. 12/8 Wrap up discussion

Your final writing assignments will be due on the day our final is scheduled, in hard copy form by 5 p.m.