

**Department of History**

**HIST\*2180: Introduction to African History**

Fall 2025

Section(s): 01

Credit Weight: .50

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**1 Course Details**

**1.1 Calendar Description**

This course will introduce students to the history of Africa through a chronological examination of key themes and topics from the earliest times until the recent post-independence period. Highlighting the interdisciplinary methodologies that anchor history, the course will consider archeological evidence, oral traditions, historical linguistics, and written documents in its examination of the most significant developments of the African past. These developments will include the creation of modern human culture, early state building efforts, the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the Atlantic Slave trade, colonialism and nationalism, and Africa's relationship with globalization. The course will enable students to develop an understanding of historical factors that have shaped and continue to influence the history of the African continent.

**1.2 Course Description**

Using a combination of interesting videos/documentaries and written text materials, this course will introduce students to key themes and topics in the history of Africa from the earliest times until the recent post-independence period. We will examine some of the most significant developments of the African past such as early state building efforts, slavery and the Atlantic Slave trade, colonialism and nationalism, and Africa's relationship with globalization. The course will enable students to develop an understanding of historical factors that have shaped and continue to influence the history of the African continent.

**1.3 Delivery Method**

Face-to-face, classroom.

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**3 Learning Resources**

**3.1 Required course materials:**

- Eustace Palmer, *Africa: An Introduction*. 1st ed. London; Routledge, 2022. (E-book on OMNI).
- John Parker, and Richard Rathbone. *African History: A Very Short Introduction*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [use OMNI to access the e-version]
- Access all other assigned materials on CourseLink, Course Reserve, or through OMNI search.

**3.2 Costs of all mandatory and optional learning materials**

\$0.00 No purchases are required

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## 4 Learning Outcomes

### 4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- be conversant with major themes in the history of Africa.
- examine and apply African perspectives to the historical scholarship on the experiences of the continent.
- critically analyze and synthesize information about Africa from extant sources, including films and videos.
- develop writing and oral presentation skills.

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## 5 Teaching and Learning Activities

### Course Schedule

#### Sept 8/10                      Introduction

Read

- African History\_ [Using Primary Sources](#) (online)
- Mbye B. Cham, "[Film and History in Africa. A survey of the current trends and tendencies](#)" Sept 3, 2011

#### Sept 15/17                      Re/presentations of Africa

View video:

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The Danger of a single story"

Read:

- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, pp.1-7.
- James Michira, "Images of Africa in the western media", *Semanticscholar.org* (2002)

#### Sept 22/24                      Precolonial African civilizations

View video:

- Basil Davidson, *Africa: Episode 1 - Different but Equal*
- The Fall of Songhai Empire. Africa's Age of Gold (optional)

Read:

- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, pp.25-32 [especially from p.15].
- [A-Bakri's Description of Ancient Ghana](#). See full version in Hopkins & Levtzion, *Corpus of early Arabic sources for West Africa al -Bakri*, "Ghana and the Customs of its inhabitants" pp. 79-85.

#### Sept 29/Oct 1                      Slavery and the slave trades

View video:

- The Diambourou: Slavery and Emancipation in Kayes-Mali (2014)  
<https://vimeo.com/245704289>

Read:

- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, pp.34-49.
- [A Muslim merchant, Ayubah Suleiman Diallo, recalls his capture and enslavement \(1733\)](#)

- [A European slave trader, John Barbot, describes the African slave trade \(1682\)\]](#)
- [A Collection of Letters Written by Afonso I, King of Kongo](#)

## **Oct 6/8                      Africa and European colonialism**

View video:

- Basil Davidson, *Africa: Episode 6 - This Magnificent African Cake*

Read:

- Parker and Rathbone, *African History, Chapter 5*

Primary source documents:

- Elspeth Huxley, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya* (London, 1935), pp. 1, 108-110, 206-208. Chatto & Windus, and Frederick A. Praeger.

Internet History Sourcebooks Modern History (fordham.edu) [[Capt. F. D. Lugard: The Rise of Our East African Empire](#) 1893.

## **Oct 13/14                      Semester break**

## **Oct 15 /20 (Wed/Mon)                      Independence struggles**

View video:

- Donald McWilliams, *A time there was: stories from the last day of Kenyan colony - Mau Mau*
- Basil Davidson. *Africa*, Episode 7 - The rise of nationalism (optional)

Read:

- Parker and Rathbone, *African History*, Chapter. 6, pp.114-122.
- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, Chap. 4, pp.74-93.
- Jomo Kenyatta: [The Kenya Africa Union is Not the Mau Mau, 1952](#)
- Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972): [I Speak of Freedom 1961, \(London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961\), pp. xi-xiv. excerpts](#)

## **Oct 22/27 (Wed/Mon)                      Independent Africa and the Cold war**

View video:

- Raoul Peck, *Lumumba*

Read:

- Kent, John. 2017. "The Neo-Colonialism of Decolonisation: Katangan Secession and the Bringing of the Cold War to the Congo." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 45 (1): 93–130. doi:10.1080/03086534.2016.1262644.
- Patric Lumumba, *Congo, My Country*. With a Foreword and Notes by Colin Legum. Translated by Graham Heath, (New York, Frederick A. Praeger 1962), pp. xxii-xxiv;
- Ludo de Witte, trans. Ann Wright and Renee Fenby, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London: Verso 2001) 120-21, 140-41.

## **Oct 29                      Catch up day**

## **Nov 3/5                      Racism/Apartheid**

View video:

- Euzhan Palcy, *A Dry White Season*

Read:

- William Beinart, and Saul Dubow. 1995. *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa*. (Rewriting Histories. London: Routledge), pp.1-24. [online via OMNI]
- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, 87-93

## **Nov 10/12                      Governance and violence in post-independence Africa**

View video:

- Raoul Peck, *Sometimes in April* [WARNING: it includes graphic representations of scenes of genocide]
- Genocide survivor Freddy Mutanguha on saying goodbye to his mother:  
<https://youtu.be/gApY7ZzsDIU>

Read:

- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*, pp.95-112
- Sara E. Brown, “Female Perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16 no.3 (2014. ): 448–69.  
doi:10.1080/14616742.2013.788806

## **Nov 17/19                      Gender**

View video:

- Sembene Ousmane, *Moolaade*

Read:

- Fuambai Ahmadu, "Rites and Wrongs: An Insider/Outsider Reflects on Power and Excision" at <https://thisisnotthat.com/tintdocs/Ahmadu-single.pdf>
- Eustace Palmer, *Africa*: Chap. 10, pp.191-208.

## **Nov 24/26.                      Course Review**

**Final Exam – In-class during the exam period, TBA**

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## **6 Assessments**

### **6.1 Assessment Details**

**60%    2 weekly group presentations;** one before and the other after the mid semester break

- Presenters: Each group presents their topic analyzing the videos and relevant readings for 15- 20 minutes. Each group will submit a detailed outline of their presentation of 1000 words maximum (references and images excluded).

**20%    weekly class discussions**

- Non-presenter class members: discuss the presentation among their own group for 10 minutes using the rubric given by professor, assessing the strengths and weaknesses, highlights, insights, and questions arising from the presentation. A member from each non-presenter group will then discuss their assessment of the group presentation.
- Presenter group response: The presenters will have the first opportunity to respond to any of the questions or issues raised.

- Finally, each group will also be able to respond to any issue raised in the class discussion, each group having its turn and each member having no more than one turn until all members have each had a turn.

**20% Final Essay / Final project/ Final exam** – choose your preferred format 12/12/2025 @ 19:00 (due on the date of Final exam)

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## **7 University Statements**

### **7.1 Email Communication**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### **7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement**

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

### **7.3 Drop Date**

The final day to drop Fall 2025 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: November 28<sup>th</sup>.

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the [Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml): <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

### **7.5 Late Penalty Policy**

Assignments (Reflective analysis & Response Papers) submitted late will not be graded, except for sudden emergencies and ill-health.

### **7.6 Artificial Intelligence Use Policy**

The use of ChatGPT, Aria, or other AI systems to **mimic independent analysis and generate text** for all assignments in this course **is strictly prohibited**. The unauthorized use of AI systems will be considered a violation of the university's academic misconduct policies. These AI systems must be treated as any other secondary source which, when used, **must be cited**.

Your course assignments must reflect your own intellectual work and demonstrate the application of critical thinking and analysis.

## **7.7 Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the [SAS website](#).

## **7.8 Academic Integrity**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

## **7.9 Accommodation of Religious Obligations**

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations](#).

### **7.10 Recording of Materials**

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

### **7.11 Resources**

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

### **7.12 Health and Wellbeing**

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the [Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness](#). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a [Student Wellness Navigator](#) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our [mental wellbeing resources](#). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

### **7.13 Illness**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

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