

AFA 3153 AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

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COURSE SUMMARY AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES

This course seeks to answer the question: Did civilizations exist in Africa prior to direct contacts with Europeans in the late 15th century? We hope to answer the question in the affirmative by exploring diverse forms of precolonial African civilizations defined in terms of complex political organizations and cultural formations comparable to other world civilizations. Since seldom do civilizations emerge in absolute vacuum, we will emphasize both the local origins of African political and social systems while considering the extent to which African civilizations borrowed from and integrated external ideas. We will also explore evidence of Africa's contributions to other world civilizations. Through trade and religious activities, Africa participated in the global exchange of ideas and goods. Thus, contrary to popular and sometimes rather racist perceptions still prevailing in some quarters in the "West," Africa was not isolated from the rest of the world until the era of European exploration, but rather, it was part of the world wide web of commercial and cultural interactions.

The course covers Ancient Egypt, Kush, Nubia, the West African Islamic kingdoms and empires, East-Central and Southern Africa before 1870 (Swahili City States, Great Zimbabwe and the Kongo Kingdom, ...), the eastern slave trade and the transatlantic slave trade, the scramble for Africa and its partition at the 1884-1885 conference of Berlin among the European powers at the time, and a glimpse on the installation of European colonialism.

COURSE'S LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. By completing the requirements for this African history survey, therefore, students will acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity.
2. Students will have the ability to refer to the knowledge acquired in order to engage critically with the still too numerous stereotypical representations of Africa that circulate in mass media.
3. This knowledge will furnish students with insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues in continental Africa and in the world at large, and with a foundation for future comparative understandings of all human civilizations.
4. Students will also be able to think critically through the study of diverse interpretations of historical events and to apply that skill in careful analysis and appreciation of primary and secondary historical sources.

Course materials are designed to help students acquire or enhance their written and oral communication skills necessary for analyzing historical documents.

GL STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course:

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of how much local African realities have been interrelated with global, international, and intercultural issues, movements, trends, and systems. (GLOBAL AWARENESS)
- Students will be able to take into consideration African, Western, and other perspectives when conducting analyses of African realities and history, as they are influenced by global and international forces, in ever growing intercultural contexts. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES)
- Students will be able to propose solutions to specific problems taken from local, global and intercultural African socio-historical realities and from African history. (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

TEXTBOOKS (see FIU bookstores)

Keim, Curtis

2009 *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. Second Edition. Boulder: Westview Press. ISBN 9780813343860

Gilbert, Erik and Jonathan T. Reynolds

2012 *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present*. Third Edition. Boston: Pearson. ISBN 9780205053995

DO NOT PURCHASE OTHER EDITIONS OF THESE BOOKS.

In the schedule of classes below, other required readings (articles or chapters) are indicated, along with specific page numbers in the two books listed above. These other required readings are all available in pdf on this site, in their respective module.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

3 Papers (8 to 10 double spaced pages each, with .12 font, 200 points per paper) = 600	600
Three quizzes=15% (This is to ensure that you follow the schedule and do the readings in due time). (50 points each)	150
Active and sophisticated participation, made in due time, in the e-discussions initiated by the professor.	200
African Geography quiz (will be administered early in the course)	50
Extra credit	100
Total	1000 (1,100)

Please note the **total points possible in this course is 1,100**; extra credit points have been built into the method of assessment (I will calculate the final grade as if your total number of points was out of 1,000). There will be **NO OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTRA CREDIT** given for any reason in this course. The extra credit assignment will be revealed and explained early in the semester along with its due date.

GRADING

920 and above = A 890-910 = A- 870-880 = B+
 830-860 = B 800-820 = B- 770-790 = C+

740-760 = C 700-730 = C- 650-790 = D+
620-640 = D Below 620 = F

PAPERS

This is a Gordon Rule course, which means that it is a writing intensive course. This is why 60% of your final grade (600 points out of 1,000) will come from the grades you obtain for each one of your 3 papers. (8 to 10 double spaced pages each, with .12 font).

You must avoid quotations at all cost. The professor wants to hear student voices. To cite (or, in your text, make reference to an already published text, see the AAA styleguide on the course content page of this course's website.

Paper 1

This paper is directly related to the global learning outcome called **global awareness**. While the question that should reveal the exact focus of the paper will be made available to students two weeks before the due date, it must be clear that in this paper students will be asked to demonstrate knowledge of how much local African realities have been interrelated with global, international, and intercultural issues, movements, trends, and systems. The question for this paper will be related to one of the *New York Times* articles that can be found in the folder called "Recent News Articles of Interest" on the Course Content" page of this site.

Paper 2

This paper is directly related to the global learning outcome called **global perspective**. While the question that should reveal the exact focus of the paper will be made available to students two weeks before the due date, it must be clear that in this paper students will be asked to show that they are able to take into consideration African, Western, and other perspectives when conducting analyses of African realities and history, as they are influenced by global and international forces, in ever growing intercultural contexts.

Paper 3

This paper is directly related to the global learning outcome called **global engagement**. While the question that should reveal the exact focus of the paper will be made available to students two weeks before the due date, it must be clear that in this paper students will be asked to show that they are able to propose solutions to specific problems taken from local, global and intercultural African socio-historical realities and from African history.

The following should help you understand how your papers will be graded:

"**C**" essays will clearly demonstrate understanding of the question and will include: an introductory paragraph that contains your thesis; a body of several paragraphs in which you offer evidence from the materials covered, Power Point presentations, maps, videotaped lectures, films, and discussions to support your thesis; and a conclusion that reiterates your basic argument.

"**B**" essays will include: all of the above requirements for a "C" essay plus more relevant data and analyses than is found in an average essay.

"A" essays will include: all of the above requirements for a "B" essay plus more data and some indication of independent or extended thought. In addition, an "A" essay will be clean of all minor grammatical errors and typos.

"D" and "F" essays: We do not anticipate giving "D" and "F" grades but any essay that fall below the basic requirement for a "C" essay will certainly qualify for "D" or "F."

The grading will give important credit for references to the uploaded films and videotaped lectures (see schedule of classes).

The professor requires that all students use the AAA format when writing all three papers. You will find the AAA guideline booklet on the main content page.

The professor has a zero tolerance for plagiarism, as per the FIU policies (see course's homepage). Any student who is caught plagiarizing will receive an "F" grade for the course. In such a case, the professor will request from FIU's Academic Affairs that this "F" grade not be removed. Your papers must be uploaded **in Word** on the FIU course's website, in the Turnitin.com folder. This process will help the professor to detect any plagiarism. **REPORTS THAT ARE NOT UPLOADED ON THE COURSE'S WEBSITE BY THE STUDENT WILL NOT BE GRADED.**

LATE PAPERS

No Late Paper will be accepted.

QUIZZES

Three quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. This is to make sure that you keep visiting the site and keep doing the required readings and the assignments on time. These quizzes will be taken online, during a limited period of time, and will consist in a series of short answer questions. Obviously, you must have gone through the material for each covered section of the course covered prior to the time availability of the quiz and before you decide to take the quiz. This strategy is the only way you can get an "A" grade on the quizzes.

DISCUSSIONS

You are required to do the assigned readings before participating in the discussion pages. The professor has provided some questions to guide the discussions of pertinent materials. I therefore recommend that you take these questions very seriously. Please, consult with me or the TA if you are having difficulties in the course.

Keep in mind that our main responsibility is to help you succeed in this course so please take advantage of this opportunity.

As indicated 20% (200 points) of the final grade will be reflective of your level of participation in the chapter discussions that the professor will initiate. There will be more than one discussion open per chapter. The chapter discussions will be open for a limited time period, which will correspond to the chapter we are covering in each specific week (see schedule of classes). When the discussions of a specific chapter will close, the

discussions of the following chapters will automatically be available. What is looked for here with this system is your enthusiastic participation IN DUE TIME. It is highly recommended that you keep up with the program set up in the syllabus and calendar. Participation in chapter discussions help students to score better in quizzes and write better papers. At the end of the semester, the professor will review the level of participation of each student in the course's e-archives and assign a participation grade accordingly. The objective of these discussions is to provide the students with the opportunity to discuss material that might be novel and surprising. Discussions help the comprehension of new concepts. However, in order to facilitate the actual discussions, and make sure that they stay on focus, students should enter relatively brief (3 paragraphs maximum) interventions at a time. Twice a week, the professor will take a look at the evolving discussions and intervene as he sees it necessary. **The e-space of the discussions may NOT be used for the transmission of personal messages from a student to another, or from a student to the professor. For the latter, the course's e-mail and message posting systems must be used.**

DISCUSSION OF GLOBAL LEARNING REQUIRED READING

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Participation in class discussions, the research necessary for the writing of the papers, along with the obligation to carefully “listen” to or read every students’ presentations, will constitute the most important active learning strategies of this course.

FIU WRITING CENTER

This is a writing intensive course. That is why 60% of your final grade is determined by how well you will write papers. I strongly recommend that you make good use of the Writing Center. **Seeking assistance from the Writing Center DOES NOT constitute academic misconduct.** Consult the Center’s website for further information:
<http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>

ADDITIONAL GROUND RULES

- 1) Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and number, and **page numbers**.
- 2) All email correspondence must begin with a salutation ("Professor Rahier", "Dear Dr. Rahier", "Hi Professor," etc.) and end with your name. I will not read your email if you fail to include this.
- 3) In this course, we will be discussing topics some might consider sensitive, provocative, or taboo such as race, sexuality, and religious beliefs. It is imperative that you express your opinions in a respectful manner.

COURSE CALENDAR

Module 1

Week 1

Introduction to the course and other details

- Watch the Professor’s welcome video to the course

- Read this syllabus carefully
- Purchase the 2 books without delay (they are available at the FIU bookstore on MMC)

I. Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind (1)

A Introduction

- Changing Our Mind About Africa
- How We Learn

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module I
- Read the "Instructions" documents with summarized important information about the course
- Read in Curtis Keim's *Mistaking Africa*: pages vii-34.
- Watch the videotaped lecture by Kenneth Vickery:
Lecture 1. Finding the "Lost Continent"
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 1

Additional Resources:

- Watch the 1939 film "Tarzan Finds a Son"
- Go through the Power Point Presentation "Map Essay"

Module 2

Week 2

I. Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind (2)

B The Weight of Unilineal Evolutionism in the Making of Stereotypes about Africa

- The Origins of "Darkest Africa"
- "Our Living Ancestors": Twentieth-Century Evolutionism
- Real Africa, Wise Africa
- We Should Help Them

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 2
- Read in Curtis Keim's *Mistaking Africa*: pages 35-104.
- Watch the videotaped lecture by Kenneth Vickery:
Lecture 2. Africa's many natural environments
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 2

Module 3

Week 3

I. Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind (3)

C Cannibalism in Africa and Other Additional Misperceptions

- Cannibalism: No Accounting for Taste
- Africans Live in Tribes, Don't They
- Safari: Beyond Our Wildest Dreams
- Africa in Images
- Race and Culture: The Same and the Other
- From Imagination to Dialogue

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 3
- Read in Curtis Keim's *Mistaking Africa*: pages 105-188.
- Watch the first 30 minutes of "The Naked Prey"
- Watch the videotaped lecture by Kenneth Vickery:
Lecture 4. The cradle of humankind
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 3 and in the GL discussion initiated by the professor on the GL required reading indicated below in this weekly section.

Recommended reading:

Hume, Peter

1998 "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene." *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*. Edited by F. Barker, P. Hume and M. Iversen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1-38.

- **Quiz 1 available from Thursday 01/26 at 12:01am until Sunday 01/29 at midnight. One attempt for 50 minutes.**

Module 4

Weeks 4 & 5

II Africa Up to 1500 C.E. (1)

- Physical Context of African History: Geography and Environment
- Africa and Human Origins
- Finding Food and Talking about It: The First 100,000 Years
- Settled Life: Food Production, Technology, and Migrations
- North and Northeast Africa in Early World History

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 4
- Read in Gilbert & Reynolds' *Africa in World History*: pages xi-84.
- Go through the Power Point Presentations 1 to 5
- Watch the videotaped lectures by Kenneth Vickery:
Lecture 3. A Virtual Tour of the Great Land
Lecture 5. Crops, cattle, iron—taming a continent
Lecture 6. Kinship and community—societies take shape
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 4
- **Do the map quiz (it will be available from 02/06 at 12:01am through 02/12 at midnight).**
- **Paper 1 due on Sunday 02/12 at midnight. The focus of the paper will be revealed to students on 01/30 at 12:01am (see assignment dropbox).**

Module 5

Weeks 6 & 7

II Africa Up to 1500 C.E. (2)

- Africa and the Early Christian World
- North and West Africa and the Spread of Islam
- East Africa and the Advent of Islam

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 5

- Read in Gilbert & Reynolds' *Africa in World History*: pages 85-138.
- Go through the Power Point Presentation "The Religious Landscape: A Brief Overview"
- Go through the Power Point Presentations 6 to 8
- Watch the videotaped lectures by Kenneth Vickery:
 - Lecture 7. Like nothing else—the ancient Nile valley
 - Lecture 8. Soul and spirit—religion in Africa
 - Lecture 9. Ethiopia—Outpost of Christianity
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 5
- Quiz 2 available from Thursday 02/23 at 12:01am until Sunday 02/26 at midnight. One attempt for 50 minutes.**

Module 6

Weeks 8, 9, 10 (Spring Break), and 11

III Africa Since 1500 C.E.

- Slavery and the Creation of the Atlantic World
- West and Central Africa: 1500-1880
- North Africa and the Soudan: 1500-1880
- East Africa: 1500-1850
- Southern Africa: 1500-1870

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 6
- Read in Gilbert & Reynolds' *Africa in World History*: pages 139-261.
- Go through the Power Point Presentations 9 to 13
- Watch the videotaped lectures by Kenneth Vickery:
 - Lecture 10. West Africa's "Golden Age"
 - Lecture 11. The Swahili commercial world
 - Lecture 13. The Atlantic slave trade- the scope
 - Lecture 14. The Atlantic slave trade- the impact
 - Lecture 15. South Africa—the Dutch Cape colony
 - Lecture 16. South Africa—The Zulu Kingdom
 - Lecture 17. South Africa- The frontier and unification
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 6
- Paper 2 due on Sunday 03/25 at midnight. The focus of the paper will be revealed to students on 03/12 at 12:01am (see assignment dropbox).**

Module 7

Weeks 12 & 13

IV Africa in the Era of European Colonialisms

- Colonialism and African Resistance
- Economic Change in Modern Africa: Forced Integration in the World System
- Political Change in the Time of Colonialism
- African Culture in the Modern World

- Watch the professor's videotaped introduction of module 7
- Read in Gilbert & Reynolds' *Africa in World History*: pages 262-359.

- Go through the Power Point “The Colonial Period”
- Go through the Power Point Presentations 14 to 17
- Watch the videotaped lectures by Kenneth Vickery:
 - Lecture 19. Prelude to the "scramble for Africa"
 - Lecture 20. European conquest and African resistance
 - Lecture 21. Colonial Africa- new realities
 - Lecture 22. Colonial Africa—Comparisons and change
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 7

Module 8

Weeks 14 & 15

V From the End of Colonialism to Contemporary Africa

- Politics of the Era of Decolonization and Independence
- Contemporary Africa

- Watch the professor’s videotaped introduction of module 8
- Read in Gilbert & Reynolds’ *Africa in World History*: pages 360-415.
- Go through the Power Point Presentations 18 to 19
- Watch the videotaped lectures by Kenneth Vickery:
 - Lecture 23. The lion awakens—the rise of nationalism
 - Lecture 24. The peaceful paths to independence.
 - Lecture 25. The Congo- promise and pain
 - Lecture 26. Segregation to apartheid in South Africa
 - Lecture 27. The armed struggles for independence
 - Lecture 28. The first taste of freedom
- Participate in the e-discussions for module 8
- Quiz 3 available from Thursday 04/19 at 12:01am until Sunday 04/22 at midnight. One attempt for 50 minutes.**

Week 16

Last Week of the Semester

- Paper 3 due on Sunday 04/22 at midnight. The focus of the paper will be revealed to students on 04/09 at 12:01am (see assignment dropbox).**