

West Virginia University, Morgantown

West African History Before 1885

Course No: History 433

Department: History

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Course Description

This course is a survey of the history of West Africa from the earliest times to the imposition of colonial rule. Some of the major themes this course will examine are social, economic, religious, political developments and interactions, and the European scramble of Africa.

Students enrolled in this online course are required to do the following:

1. Complete assigned readings each week.
2. Complete an assigned quiz each week.
3. Post comments in the discussion thread each week.
4. Submit a book report and a term paper.
5. Complete a final exam.

The due dates for all assignments are strict. No extensions or make-ups will be granted.

Topics to be studied

Monday, August 20: Introduction (No Quiz, No Assigned Readings.)

Monday, August 27: Africa: Geography, Environment & Human Origins

Required Reading: Africa in World History, (1-24); Themes in West Africa's History, (11-32)

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday August 29, 8AM to Monday August 29, 8PM

Tuesday, September 4: Trans-Saharan Trade

Required Reading: Article - Trans-Saharan Trade before 1800 by John E. Lavers. Available on E-Campus.

Class discussion begins 8AM, Tuesday and ends 8PM Friday

Quiz: Tuesday, September 4, 8AM to Tuesday, Sept. 4 8PM

Monday, September 10:

The Atlantic Slave Trade

Required Reading: African History before 1885, (389-411)

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday September 10, 8AM to Monday Sept. 10, 8PM

Monday, September 17:

Sudanese Kingdoms: Ghana

Required Reading: The Ancient Empire of Ghana. Available on E-Campus

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday September 17, 8AM to Monday September 17, 8PM

Monday, September 24:

Sudanese Kingdoms: Mali

Required Reading: Africa in World History, (149-152); Themes in West Africa's History, (73-96).

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday September 24, 8AM to Monday September 24, 8PM

Monday, October 1:

Songhai Empire

Required Reading: African History before 1885, (112-115); Article -The Niger and the Songhai Empire. Available on E-Campus.

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday October 1, 8AM to Monday October 1, 8PM

Monday, October 8:

Kanem Bornu and the Hausa States

Required Reading: African History before 1885, (152-157); Book Chapter – Songhay, Borno and Hausaland. Students will receive a download link to download the required reading.

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday October 8, 8AM to Monday October 8, 8PM

Monday, October 15:

Kingdoms of West Africa: Oyo & Dahomey

Required Reading: Book Chapter: The Expansion of Oyo and the Rise of Dahomey. Students will receive a download link to download the required reading

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday October 15, 8AM to Monday October 15, 8PM

Monday, October 22:

Kingdoms of West Africa: Benin

Required Reading: Book Chapter – Great Benin. Available on E-Campus.

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday October 22, 8AM to Monday October 22, 8PM

Monday, October 29:

No class discussion, No Quiz. Read Sunjata: A West African Epic of the Mande Peoples and write a 4 Page book report. Report is due this Friday by 5PM.

Monday, November 5:

Kingdoms of West Africa: Asante

Required Reading: African History Before 1885, (161-189).

Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday

Quiz: Monday November 5, 8AM to Monday November 5, 8PM

- Monday, November 12: Non-Centralized Societies
Required Reading: African History before 1889, (275-294)
Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday
Quiz: Monday November 12, 8AM to Monday November 12, 8PM
- Monday, November 19: **Thanksgiving Recess. No Class discussion, No Quiz, No assigned reading. .**
- Monday, November 26: West African Jihads and the Spread of Islam
Required Reading: African History before 1889, (299-319)
Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday
Quiz: Monday November 26, 8AM to Monday November 26, 8PM
- Monday, December 3: The Scramble for Africa
Required Reading: Book chapter – Background to the Scramble. Available on Ecampus.
Class discussion begins 8AM, Monday and ends 8PM Thursday
Quiz: Monday, December 3, 8AM to Monday, December 3, 8PM.
- Monday, December 10: **Final Exam (Available online from 8AM to 11PM)**

Special Projects to be Included in Course

- A. There is a four-page book report assigned for this course. This report is due on Monday, October 29, 2012 at 5PM. This will replace your class discussion for the week. The book to read and write a report on is David C. Conrad's Sunjata. The font size for paper must be 12 pts with margins set at 1.00" for all sides. Font type must be Times New Roman. I can only read papers in Microsoft Word. Papers must be submitted on the due date. 1Point is subtracted for every day that the paper is late.
- B. Class Discussions: Students are required to do all assigned readings before the beginning of class. Class discussions constitute a significant portion of the class grade. Discussions

are important for exchanging ideas. The discussion thread opens at 8AM on Monday and closes at 8PM on Thursday. Students cannot post to the thread after 8PM on Thursday. The discussion thread opens with lead questions. Students are required to join in the discussion by responding to the questions asked. Every student must post a one-page response to the discussion questions; and two responses of about half a page each to posts made by fellow students. The one page response should be between 200 and 300 words and the half page responses should be between 100 and 200 words. In all, each student is required to make a minimum of three posts each week. The initial post in response to the questions raised, and two other posts in response to other students. The three posts must be on three different days. Use complete sentences and correct grammar when writing your posts. No extensions or make-ups are allowed.

- C. Term Paper: Each student must complete a five-page term paper on one of the topics discussed in the class. The five pages do not include the bibliography and cover page. Graduate students taking the class must complete a ten-page term paper. Term paper is due on Monday, December 3, 2012 at 9PM. The font size for paper must be 12 pts with margins set at 1.00" for all sides. Font type must be Times New Roman. I can only read papers in Microsoft Word. Papers must be submitted on the due date. 3 Points are subtracted for every day that the paper is late.

Methods of Student Evaluation

Class Attendance – 20 Points (Based on your contributions in the discussion thread. The more intelligent your posts, the better your grade.) Every student is required to participate in class discussions. If you must miss a class discussion, you must contact the instructor ahead of time and obtain permission. If it is an emergency such as a medical condition or the death of an immediate family member (i.e. spouse, sibling, parent, child), you must provide a verifiable written excuse. Our weekly class discussions are an opportunity for you to provide an analysis of the assigned reading, receive clarification from other students or the instructor and to learn from one another.

Class Quizzes – 20 Points (quizzes would be given at the beginning of every class session and are based on assigned readings. They are available on Ecampus from Monday at 8:00AM to Tuesday at 8:00AM). Quizzes test your ability to remember important dates, names, places and events. You have only 1 minute to answer each question. There are 10 quiz questions every week. The quiz is open-book and you are only allowed one attempt.

Book Report – 10 Points

Term Paper – 20 Points

Final Exam – 30 Points (Multiple choice questions, online and timed.)

Class Requirements

Access to a computer connected to the internet.

Access to a computer that can play YouTube Videos.

Microsoft Word & Microsoft Power Point

Ability to use WVU E-Campus.

Email Address

Required Books:

1. Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong (ed.), Themes in West Africa's History. Ohio University Press, 2006
2. Toyin Falola (ed.), Africa: African History Before 1885, Volume 1. Carolina Academic Press, 2000.
3. David C. Conrad, Sunjata: A West African Epic of the Mande Peoples, Hackett, 2004.
4. Erik Gilbert; Jonathan T. Reynolds, Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present, third Edition

Assessment of Outcomes

Student performance on examination and papers.

Class discussions and quizzes

Academic Honesty:

Work presented by students must be their own work. Plagiarism is absolutely forbidden. Students caught plagiarizing will receive a failing grade and I will also report them to the university.