

**Historical Perspectives on Contemporary Crises in Africa**  
**History 14 – Fall 2009 – 10:30-11:45 Monday / Wednesday**  
**Syllabus**

**Instructor Contacts:**

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**Penvenne Office & Office Hours:**

**Office:** East Hall 105  
Mondays, 1:30 – 2:30  
Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00  
and by appointment

**TA Office & Office Hours:**

**Blackboard Platform Course**

**Introduction:**

Western press coverage of Africa highlights "democratization," human rights, atrocities, slavery, corruption, famine, civil war and HIV/AIDS. This course implicitly interrogates press coverage of the continent by seeking historical perspectives on the contemporary situation. African experiences are centered, but lectures also raise international interests on the continent, including those of the United States.

Lectures, meshed with visual texts (maps, slides, terms, portraits) provide an overview. Scheduled class discussions encourage students to participate in rigorous consideration of all course materials. Readings include two interpretive texts, scholarly essays, popular history, novels, documentary films, and an analysis of contemporary humanitarian interventions on the continent. The first interpretive text, by Frederick Cooper, explicitly probes the past of the present. The second, by Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, argues that we need new frameworks of analysis. The required readings structure our approach to African history through thematic overviews and detailed case studies. The continent is enormous and complex. This course barely scratches the surface.

We begin with the continent's physical and human geography. We briefly recall the experience of intensified contact among African, Middle Eastern, Asian and European peoples in the late nineteenth century. We invest more in the colonial era, the decolonization process, independent Africa and the early twenty-first century. Our case studies begin with the multiple interests that brought about armed conquest of African peoples in the 19th and early 20th centuries-- considering in greater depth the colonial origins of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya. Hochschild's study of the Congo suggests that global links, international lobbying, concerns for human rights, corruption and violence are not new. African novelists and film-makers enrich our perspective on colonial experiences. The so-called Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya is our case study for the return to armed resistance and decolonization. Algeria is our one case study from North Africa. Sembene Ousmane's novel, *God's Bits of Wood* combines with a specific consideration of its historicity to underpin our investigation of decolonization and changing patterns of family life and work in French West Africa.

Cooper opens his analysis of the late 20th century with the 1994 juxtaposition of hope and horror, South African elections and the Rwandan genocide. Each carried

implications for the continent's contemporary history. Key themes include accommodation of developing settlement and production patterns and changing political / military configurations. Gendered perspectives on historical agency are central to our analysis throughout the course, with special attention to the key roles played by women and youth in the changing relationships between African environments and production processes. Since neither Cooper nor Chabal & Daloz particularly draw out gendered perspectives, we seek them in fiction, film and supporting essays.

Finally, we confront violence and humanitarian aid in contemporary Darfur and in general. Julie Flint and Alex De Waal's book *Darfur* and Peter Walker and Daniel Maxwell's book *Shaping the Humanitarian World* frame our efforts to understand complex political and humanitarian dilemmas. Can we interrogate contemporary crises from the conflicting perspectives of local people and international development and aid workers? What is the appropriate context and conduct of global citizenship?

### **Student Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their written work and contribution to quality discussion according the following formula.

Map exam, 5%

Five Scheduled Discussions with Antes 20% (**Handout 1**)

First hour exam, 25%

Second hour exam, 25%

Third hour exam 25%

### **Clarification of Evaluation and Options:**

Evaluation methods and options are designed:

to be challenging

to encourage reflection

to accommodate skill and preference differences among students

to spread student evaluation evenly throughout the course

to be fair.

All students are expected **to complete all required reading** in advance of **scheduled class discussion** so that we all have the benefit of each other's insights. Discussion classes are indicated on the syllabus. As per **Handout 1**, all students must bring their "discussion ante" to scheduled discussions and turn them in at the end of class. Students are **NOT** allowed to submit discussion antes after discussion class unless they were absent.

### **Uniform Standards, Ethics & Discipline :**

**NO student will be allowed to submit extra work for extra credit.** Except for extraordinary circumstances, confirmed through the office of the Dean of Students, all students will be evaluated according to the above formula and guidelines. We will have a scheduled review prior to every exam. The Prof. and TAs will hold scheduled office hours weekly. We will afford students every opportunity to succeed. We will not do damage control after the fact. Any student who is apprehended in any form of academic or personal dishonesty in the course will be subject to the fullest university sanctions.

## **Required Course Readings**

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. Purchase at iupress.indiana.edu  
with STDT code for 20% discount

Frederick Cooper. *Africa since 1940; The Past of the Present*. New York: Cambridge  
University Press, 2002.

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism  
in Colonial Africa*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Julie Flint & Alex De Waal. *Darfur: A New History of a Long War (Revised & Updated)*  
New York: Zed, 2008.

Peter Walker and Daniel Maxwell. *Shaping the Humanitarian World*. New York:  
Routledge, 2009.

Sembene Ousmane, *God's Bits of Wood* (any edition)

Buchi Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood* (any edition)

## **Digital Resources & Recommended Readings**

Digital resources for African news, analysis, and cultural production in general  
and specific recommended readings are posted on Blackboard for the information of  
students who might want to explore weekly topics more fully.

## **Schedule of Classes**

### **Week One – Conceptual and Continental Challenges**

Sept 9 – Lecture & Introduction - Perspectives on the Past of the Present

#### **Required Reading:**

Cooper, Ch.1

Chabal & Daloz, xv – 2

Hochschild, Ch. 1-5

### **Week Two – Contestations -- Hearth-hold to Empire**

14 Sept - Lecture - People, Earth, Air & Water

18 Sept - Lecture - Tools of Empire / Gendered Transformations

#### **Required Reading:**

Hochschild, Ch. 6-10

Cooper, Ch. 2

### **Week Three –Conquest, Confiscation, and Colonialism**

21 Sept. FILM White Man's Country –Black Man's Land

23 Sept. **Map Exam** & Lecture - Colonialism and the Creation of Natives

#### **Required Reading:**

Hochschild, Ch.11 -15

Cooper, Ch. 3

### **Week Four –Belgium's Congo & Economic Change**

28 Sept. – Lecture – Farmers, Wives & Workers on an Agrarian Continent

30 Sept. – DISCUSSION - Hochschild

**Required Reading:**

Hochschild Ch.16-19 complete for discussion 30 September

Cooper Ch.4

Emecheta begin

**Review for Exam One**

Wednesday 30 Sept. 4:30 – 5:30PM & Tuesday 6 Oct. 1 – 2 PM

**Week Five : High Colonial Era**

5 Oct. Lecture – Characteristics of the High Colonial Era : Regional Perspectives

7 Oct. **First Hour Exam**

**Required Reading:**

Emecheta complete for Discussion 14 Oct.

Cooper Ch. 5

Hochschild, pp. 235-306 – complete by 14 February for discussion.

**Week Six: Seeking Gendered Perspectives**

13 Oct. SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILM: – With these Hands

14 Oct. DISCUSSION: Emecheta' *Joys of Motherhood*

**Required Reading:**

Sembene, *Gods Bits of Wood*, begin

Frederick Cooper, “‘Our Strike’: Equality, Anticolonial Politics and the 1947-48 Railway Strike in French West Africa,” *Journal of African History*, 37 (1996):81-118. (JSTOR)

**Week Seven: Decolonization Kenya and Senegal**

19 Oct. Lecture – Characteristics of Decolonization Era

21 Oct. Lecture - Politicians, Labor, and Pan-Africanism

Mboya, Kenyatta, Odinga / Senghor

**Required Reading:**

Sembene, *Gods Bits of Wood*, complete

Lonsdale, John, “Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya,” *Journal of African History* 31 (1990):393-421. (JSTOR)

Presley, Cora Ann. " Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Fall 1988 (JSTOR)

**Week Eight – Politics, Workers and Peasants in Struggle**

26 Oct.- DISCUSSION – Sembene, God's Bits of Wood & Cooper's 'Our Strike'

28 Oct - FILM / Discussion – Mau Mau.

**Required Reading:**

John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: the origins and development of a nation* (Indiana University Press, 2005 2d ed. Ch. 6 “The War of Independence, 1954-1962,”pp. 156-194. Chabal & Daloz, Ch.1

**Week Nine – Freedom as Chaos? Decolonization as Disorder?**

2 Nov- Lecture –France in Algeria

4 Nov – Decolonization as Disorder?

**Review for Exam Two**

Wed. 4 Nov. 4:30 – 5:30, Tuesday 10 Nov. 1:00 -2:00 PM

**Week Ten - Challenges of Reconfiguration**

9 Nov.- FILM / Discussion Algeria: Women at War

11 Nov.– **Second Hour Exam**

**Required Reading:**

**Required Reading:**

Cooper, Ch.6.

Chabal & Daloz, Ch.2 & 3

**Week Eleven – White South & New Political Models**

16 Nov.- Lecture - Southern Africa 1960 - 1994

18 Nov.– Lecture – What is a Gatekeeper State?

**Required Reading:**

Cooper Ch. 7

Chabal & Daloz Ch.4-6

Flint & De Waal First third

**Week Twelve – Which.Economy?**

23 Nov- Lecture - Irredentist Linkages, Informal Economies, Patrimonial Authority

25 Nov – No Classes – Happy Thanksgiving

**Required Reading:**

Cooper, Ch. 8

Chabal & Daloz, Ch. 7-9

Flint & De Waal Second third

Walker & Maxell, first half

**Required VIEWING:**

**Film:** All about Darfur - Group Screening but also on reserve for individual viewing

**Week Thirteen - Genocide: What is it and why does it happen?**

30 Nov. Reworking Paradigms & Re-Mapping the Present

2 Dec. DISCUSSION: Darfur

**Required Reading:**

Flint & De Waal complete for Discussion 2 December

Walker & Maxell, second half complete for discussion 7 Dec.

**Required VIEWING**

**Film :** Heart of the Congo - Group Screening but also on reserve for individual viewing.

**Week Fourteen – Twenty- First Century Africa**

7 Dec. Lecture - Beyond Death, Disease and Disasters – Africa through its own Prism

9 Dec. DISCUSSION Shaping the Humanitarian World & Heart of Congo

**Review for Third Exam**

Two review sessions scheduled during reading period

**Third Hour Exam – Wednesday 16 December 3:30 to 5:30**