HIST/AFST 345: Modern Africa
GLAS 008, Spring Semester 2013, 9:35-10:50 AM

Dr. Larry W. Yarak
Office: 106A History Building (located opposite the entrance to Evans Library) Office
Hours: T-Th 2:15-3:00 PM; or by appointment
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Course Website: http://people.tamu.edu/~yarak/345/hist345.html

Course Description: This course will examine selected topics in the history of Africa since
1800. The principal aim of the course is to provide students with a historical foundation for
understanding contemporary Africa. Much of what is reported in the popular media about
events and trends in Africa today lacks historical context and is rooted in hoary American
stereotypes about Africa and Africans. In an effort to correct these misperceptions and to
expand our knowledge of the people of this fascinating continent, we will examine Africa’s
history during three crucial periods: the 19th century up to about 1880 (that is, the period
prior to the European conquest and “partition” of Africa); the colonial period (roughly
1880 to 1960); and the post-colonial or “national” period (1960 to the present).
Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the great diversity of Africa’s historical
experiences over the last two centuries.

Prerequisites: Junior or senior classification.

Core Objectives for Language, Philosophy and Culture Foundational Component Area

Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation and
synthesis of information).

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas
through written, oral and visual communication)

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic
responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global
communities)

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and
consequences to ethical decision-making)

Student Learning Outcomes:

Through this course, students will be able to:
1) evaluate and synthesize primary and secondary historical writings related to the history of Africa since 1800.

2) express their own ideas effectively in written and oral form.

3) identify historical and social contexts that created diversity in the African past and in human cultures more generally.

4) identify ethnocentric and racist American images of Africa and Africans and assess critically their impact on popular American conceptions of African history.

5) apply knowledge about the human condition in Africa’s past and present to their personal lives and studies.

Texts: The following paperback books are required and are available for purchase at the campus bookstore, other bookstores in town, and online:


In addition, several articles and documents have been assembled for this course. They are available for download on the course website. These materials are required reading and will be covered in the scheduled examinations and class discussions.

Evaluation: Grading in the course will be based on the following:

1. A map quiz, scheduled for January 31 – 5% of the student’s final grade.
2. An in-class examination, scheduled for February 19 – 20% of final grade.
3. A second in-class examination, scheduled for April 2 – 25% of final grade.
4. A 5-8 page essay, due in class on April 16 – 25% of final grade.
5. A non-cumulative final examination, scheduled for May 3 – 25% of the final grade.

Specific information regarding the map quiz and the essay assignment will be provided later in class. The examinations will include terms for identification, short answer questions and an essay question, which will be announced in the class meeting immediately preceding the exam date. Please bring a blue book to all three examinations
(but not to the map quiz). Success in the course depends on careful study of the assigned reading material. The grading scale (in percentages) is as follows: 90-100 – A; 80-89 – B; 70-79 – C; 60-69 – D; 59 and lower – F.

**Attendance Policy.** Attendance in class is strongly encouraged. Students will be penalized after more than three absences, except in the case of university-excused absences. For each unexcused absence in excess of three, your final grade will be dropped by three percentage points. Assignments that are submitted late will be penalized by a grade reduction of 10% for every 24 hour period, except in the case of university-excused absences or by prior arrangement with the instructor. Please see [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07) for current policy on university-excused absences. I will handle all absences and work related to them in accordance with this policy.

**Classroom Etiquette and Student Conduct.** The classroom is a space of intellectual engagement which has as its goal the production and acquisition of knowledge. Students must conduct themselves in a manner that enhances active participation in a learning community. Recording of lecture and discussion is not permitted. Computers may be used only for note-taking. In order to avoid disruption, cell phones must be switched off and stored off the desk prior to the start of class. No eating is allowed during class. Physical or verbal abuse, sexual misconduct or harassment will not be tolerated.

**Schedule of Course Readings and Lectures:** Reading assignments should be done as much as possible **before** the Tuesday of the week for which they are assigned.

**Week 1:** Introduction: American misperceptions of Africa. Reading: Keim, “Changing Our Mind about Africa” and “Our Living Ancestors” (download from course website).


**Map Quiz: Thursday, January 31.**

**Week 4:** Late precolonial Africa: Islamic reform and revolution. Reading: B. Mack and J. Boyd, *One Woman's Jihad,* “Usman dan Fodiyo explains the reasons for jihad,” (course website).

Week 6: European imperialism and the partition of Africa. Reading: Boahen, ch. 2; view videos, "Africa," Program 6: "This Magnificent African Cake" and "King Leopold's Ghost," both available online through mediamatrix or in Evans Library EDMS.

First Exam: Tuesday, February 19.

Week 7: Colonial rule in Africa: an overview. Reading: Boahen, ch. 3-4; F. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, ch. 1.

Week 8: The experience of colonialism on the ground. Reading: J. Vansina, *Being Colonized*.

Spring Break: March 1-15.

Week 9: Freedom regained: varieties of African decolonization. Reading: Cooper, ch. 2-4; view video, "Africa," Program 7 "The Rise of Nationalism," available online through mediamatrix or in EDMS.

Week 10: Southern Africa's late "decolonization." Reading: Cooper, ch. 6; J. Herbst, "South Africa After the Age of Heroes" (course website).

Week 11: Postcolonial Africa: social and economic change. Reading: Cooper, pp. 85-90 and ch. 5; T. Callaghy, "Africa and the World Political Economy" (course website).

Second Exam: Tuesday, April 2.


Essay due in class on Tuesday, April 16.


Third (Final) Exam: Friday, May 3, 12:30-2 PM.

Please Note:
1) The handouts and presentations in this course are copyrighted. By "handouts and presentations" I mean all instructional materials generated for this class, including, but not limited to, syllabi, quizzes, exams, in-class materials (such as computer presentations), and review sheets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy them for any purpose other than your individual use in this class, unless I expressly grant permission, and under no circumstances are you to give copies to persons who are not students in this class.

2) Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.


4) Careers in History: History majors who wish to explore career ideas are encouraged to contact the History Department Undergraduate Advisors, Dr. Philip Smith (pms@tamu.edu) or Ms. Robyn Konrad (robyn-konrad@tamu.edu), in Room 105, Glasscock Building, or the Career Advisor for Liberal Arts, Tricia Barron (patriciab@careercenter.tamu.edu) in 209 Koldus for more information.