

HISTORY 3753  
CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN HISTORY  
FALL SEMESTER, 2015

**Instructor:** Professor Amii Omara-Otunnu, D.Phil. (Oxon)  
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**Purpose and Objective of the Course:**

To situate the developments which have taken place in Africa since about 1880 in the wider context of global events, and to show how factors internal as well as external to the continent have influenced the course of history in modern Africa and how circumstances in Africa (as elsewhere in the Third World) impinge upon developments; and to cultivate a balanced appreciation of African peoples and the dynamics which mould their collective historical existence.

**Description of course**

Survey of the interaction between Africa and the West in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> and most of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; the establishment of colonial rule and its impact on the course of African history; and the modes and objectives of colonial administration in Africa; types of African response to European imperialism; social and economic changes under colonialism; the development of nationalism and the struggle for independence; Africa's emergence on the international scene and its experiences since Independence — focusing in particular on the issues of democracy, the rule of law neo-colonialism, military rule and instability.

**Course requirements**

- 1) Participation in class discussions based on reading required material and thinking.
- 2) Students may be asked to write occasional reflection papers based on reading and videos.
- 3) Mid-Term and Final (Probably take-home). And term paper.

**Required Reading**

1. Basil Davidson, *Modern Africa: A Social & Political History*
2. Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination*

**General Suggested Reading**

1. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*
  2. Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa* (Third Edition)
  2. Ali Mazrui (ed.) *UNESCO General History of Africa Volume VIII, Africa Since 1935*
  3. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*
- Those who wish to have further in-depth appreciation of the various aspects of African History, which will be covered in the course, may consult the appropriate volumes of: Cambridge History Of Africa (Cambridge University Press)

## Week 1

We will consider background to modern African history. In particular, we will survey the impact of the momentous and devastating human trafficking in Africans known as Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Reading: Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

Video: Video: Davidson, "Bible and Gun." TBD

Comedy: Trevor Noah reminds a British audience of their Colonial past:

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=Manuel+Noah+comedy+on+British+colonial+history&ei=UTF->

## Week 2

We will provide an outline of some of the dominant themes in contemporary Africa and a sketch of the background to modern African history. We will focus in particular on those themes or factors that have exercised enduring impact on Africa, e.g. the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade.

Reading: Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination*: Preface, Description of Project, and chapter 1

## Weeks 3, 4, 5

A discussion and appraisal of the impact of the indigenous movements and initiatives on the eve of European partitioning of Africa, focusing on the Jihad movements in West African region. This is followed by an examination of the precursors to the New European Imperialism and an exploration of the dynamics of the new European Imperialism; the Scramble for Africa; the significance of the 1884-5 Berlin Conference; the partition of the continent; and the imposition of colonial rule, c. 1885-1914. In discussing the precursors to European Imperialism, we will focus on the activities and the impact of explorers, traders, and missionaries from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. The discussion in this section will conclude with a review of African reactions to the European occupation in the East and West Africa, 1880 to 1920, and an exploration of some of the reasons why some African societies resisted colonial penetration while others collaborated with colonial forces.

## Reading

Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination*, relevant chapters: 2-11

Basil Davidson. *Modern Africa* (Part One: chapters 1-4)

Video: Mazrui, "New Gods" TBD

Video: B. Davidson, "This Magnificent Cake." TBD

## Weeks 7, 8 and 9

Appraisal of colonial methods, institutions and modes of control and administration of African territories and peoples, officially designated as Indirect Rule, Assimilation, and

Direct Rule; and the colonial economy. We will compare and contrast these methods and attempt to determine in what ways reality differed from doctrine. In addition to the political aspects of colonial rule, we will also discuss economic changes in sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial period, such as the introduction of a cash economy and taxation. In considering colonial economy, we assess some of the critical impact of the changes on African societies and the linkages to the international system.

Reading: Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination*, chapters, 13-18  
Basil Davidson, *Modern Africa* (Part Two: chapters 5-8)  
Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, chapters 1-2  
Ali Mazrui, *Africa Since 1935*, chapters 1-4

Video: Mazrui, “Tools of Exploitation” TBD

#### Week 10 and 11

Examination of the development of nationalism and nationalist movements in sub-Saharan Africa, the struggle for and progress toward independence. We will place African Nationalism in the context of international events, such as the first and second World Wars and the Cold War, as well as outlining the internal dynamics of particular African countries in so far as they pertained to the growth of nationalism. We will also survey some of the dominant themes and phases of South African history, and highlight some of the contrasts with the rest of Africa.

Reading : Adu Boahen, *Africa Under Colonial Domination*, chapters 19- 30  
Ali Mazrui, *Africa Since 1935*, chapters 5-14  
Basil Davidson, *Modern Africa* (Part Three: chapters 9-16)

Video: Davidson, “Rise of Nationalism” TBD

Video: “Witness to Apartheid” or similar theme TBD

Recommended reading: Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa* (for those interested in the history of South Africa)  
M. Crowder, *West Africa*, Chs. 22, 23, 24  
E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, *A History of East Africa*, chapters: 19 & 20 )

#### Week 12 and 13

Exploration of the “New Africa” and “Neo-Colonialism” (post-colonial Africa). In particular, we will discuss issues such as: economic changes since independence; regional cooperation through, the example, the East African Community, ECOWAS, and the OAU; military coups: the observance and violation of Human Rights; etc.

Reading: Ali Mazrui, *Africa Since 1935*, chapters 15-30 and Postscript  
Basil Davidson, *Modern Africa* (chapters 17-20)

Videos: Davidson, “Legacy “. TBD  
“Lumumba” TBD  
Mazrui, “In Search of Stability”. TBD

Review