Course Description

This course is the first survey of African history and has two basic goals. One is to introduce students to various aspects of Africa’s history and to improve their understanding of Africa, the continent, and Africans, its peoples. Africa is usually in the news when there is a large-scale crisis such as famine or violence, or often explained in the media through such stereotypes as “ancient tribal animosities” which may have little relation to the actual situation. Most of what happens in Africa does not make news, however, because it concerns people going about their everyday lives and incremental achievements rather than participation in traumatic events. The second goal of this course is to explore African civilizations and pre-colonial societies, and to their encounter with European colonialism around 1850. The course examines the following themes: the continent’s earliest history and evidence suggesting that Africa is the “cradle of humankind”; early African kingdoms and empires, including Ancient Egypt, Ghana Kingdom, Mali Empire, Songhai Empire, Kongo Kingdom, Luba, Ancient Zimbabwe; the shapes of African cultures and societies; the rise of Islam in Africa; production systems in pre-colonial Africa; the Trans-Saharan trade that linked sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East; the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on Africa; the status and role of women, including Queen Njinga of Matamba (Angola) and Black female warriors of Dahomey; and the basic conditions of life before the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of this survey class, students will be expected to have gained greater familiarity with pre-colonial African societies and global context, and increased their understanding of diversity, equity, and global realities. In addition, students will be able to combine and integrate the sum of knowledge learned in Hist. 230 with knowledge and skills gained in other courses, notably in classes focusing on CO1 (Effective Composition and Communication), CO3 (Critical Analysis and Use of Information), CO5 (History and Culture), and CO6 (Cultures, Societies, and Individuals).

Disabilities statement:
The History Department is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented learning disabilities. If you have a documented disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations and then contact me.
Academic Success Services (1)
Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

Academic Success Services (2)
The Department of History Writing Center is also available to all students enrolled in history courses at UNR to provide help with assignments and to hone writing skills. The Center is open Monday-Wednesday from 9:00am to 1:00pm; Thursday from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, and by appointment. To set up an appointment, contact: Tim Smith (tpsmith@unr.edu).

Statement on Audio and Video Recording:
Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Skills-Based Curriculum
The history program at UNR helps students to develop proficiency in broadly applicable skills while mastering specific subject areas. In addition to learning about the major events and people that have influenced modern African history, students will have opportunities to practice and improve the following skills in this course:

- critical thinking (through reading and analyzing written documents and cultural sources, formulating arguments supported by historical evidence, and organizing information in a clear and logical manner)
- historical research (through finding information about historical topics in short assignments and a research project)
- written communication (through writing short assignments, a research presentation, and an integrative essay)
- primary source analysis (through reading and identifying the key points, meaning, and significance of arguments and ideas presented historical documents and cultural artifacts created during the time periods we are studying)
- secondary source analysis (through reading and identifying the key points, meaning, and significance of arguments and ideas presented in books and articles written by scholars about the time period we are studying)
- cultural text analysis (through thinking about the significance of cultural texts such as news reports, magazine articles, music, and films and placing them in historical context)
- oral expression (through small group and whole class discussions and student presentations)
- using the internet (through research assignments and guidance on how to evaluate internet sources)
This course develops CO 10 and satisfies CO11 of the Silver Core Curriculum:

**CO10. Diversity and Equity:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

**CO11. Global Contexts:** Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

Hist. 230 will also help students develop skills such as “Effective Composition and Communication” and “Critical Analysis and Use of Information” described respectively in **Core Objectives 1** and **3**. Students will be exposed to those skills in this class and in other courses they take to fulfill core and major requirements:

**CO1. Effective Composition and Communication:** Students will be able to effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes.

**CO3. Critical Analysis and Use of Information:** Students will be critical consumers of information, able to engage in systematic research processes, frame questions, read critically, and apply observational and experimental approaches to obtain information.

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**Student Learning Outcomes for Hist. 230:**

Students who have completed “Hist. 230: History of Africa I (African Civilizations),” will be able to:

1) Analyze and understand the African past from early prehistory to the continent’s encounter with European powers around 1850 (CO1, CO3, CO10, and CO11).

2) Analyze and understand the rise and fall of early African kingdoms and states, including Ancient Egypt, Ghana, Mali, etc. (CO1, CO3, CO10, and CO11).

3) Analyze and understand the complexity of the Trans-Saharan Trade that connected Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, goods that were exchanged, and the impact of the trade on pre-colonial African economies (CO1, CO3, CO10, and CO11).

4) Analyze and understand the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on Africa, countries and people involved in the trade, its impact on world economy (CO1, CO3, CO10, and CO11).

5) Compare and contrast the role played by pre-colonial African women such as Queen Njinga of Matamba (Angola) and Black female warriors of Dahomey, with that of contemporary African women (and other women across the globe) (CO1, CO3, CO10, and CO11).

6) Write a short essay whose thesis is supported by evidence from an assigned reading (CO1, CO3, CO10 and CO11).

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Course requirements

Class Attendance:
1. Students are required to attend class on a regular basis. They should come to class on time and keep any scheduled appointment. Students who for extraordinary reasons cannot meet a deadline or come to class should discuss the situation with the instructor beforehand.

2. There will be no excuses for absence unless justified with prior notification to the instructor by telephone or by email. Excuses will be accepted for the following reasons: serious illness (witnessed by a doctor’s note), observed religious holidays, family emergency, excused university absences. But remember: no student is entitled to an unlimited number of absences. In order to be excused following an illness, it is the student's responsibility to present a doctor's note to the instructor.

3. Since your attendance is part of your grades, it's the student's responsibility to make sure to sign the attendance sheet for every class. This is the only way to allow your discussion leader to know that you were in class. Don't come and tell us that you had to leave class early and were unable to fulfill your student obligations or that you forgot to sign the attendance sheet.

4. Please note that any students with an excessive number of unexcused class absences equal to a third of the course length may be failed. Final grades for students with 3 or more unexcused absences or who have missed a quarter of the course length may be dropped by one letter grade.

5. Copying and plagiarizing will also be sanctioned by an F (see section of the syllabus for additional information).

6. Besides attending all class sessions, the student's main tasks consist in actively responding to and discussing class materials (both orally and in writing). Students are expected to read selected primary and secondary materials indicated on the class syllabus and introduced globally to them on the first day of class. Reading these materials ahead of each session is important for discussion and for developing a clear understanding of concepts. Frequent, unexcused absences will lower your grade, and you won’t be allowed to make up missed quizzes or written assignments unless you have a valid excuse.

7. All required readings for the course are available at the University bookstore. Each student should purchase and read according to the schedule dates the books required. We strongly recommend that you read the sections assigned at least twice before coming to class. Make notes in your texts or on a separate sheet of paper and highlight or underline the specific passages you want to discuss.

Class Participation: The following guidelines will help students to prepare for the class discussion.

1. At the start of the semester, I suggest that you exchange contact information with your classmates. Exchanging addresses and remaining in contact with three or four other students will help you work together in several ways. Not only does cooperative learning help you grow to esteem and respect fellow students, but it also allows you to receive useful feedback that can be incorporated into weekly assignments. In addition, in case of absence, students connected to each other can share important information about the day missed.

2. Spend time before each class preparing for discussion by making notes in your texts or on a separate sheet of paper pertaining to specific passages from the readings that you want to discuss.
3. During class discussions, when raising a question or point about the assigned readings, make specific references to texts, authors and page numbers in question.

4. When responding to the questions or comments of fellow students try to listen carefully to your interlocutor’s question/position. Try not to make assumptions about your interlocutor’s intentions or motivations. When necessary, ask your interlocutor to clarify or restate her/his position. If you intend to refute or challenge the position of your interlocutor, try to support your own position by referring to the assigned readings and other course materials.

5. Class environment/Controversial material: the classroom is an environment of learning par excellence. It is an intimate and ever-changing space where students are constantly asked to share opinions and critically analyze issues that the instructor and fellow students present. Participation in class discussions is instrumental in the student’s ability to analyze and assimilate information. Certain ideas to be discussed are controversial. You are not asked to agree with them, but you are expected to understand them and be able to discuss them academically in a civil manner.

6. Students must show respect for one another at all times. You may not agree with another’s position; you may not even respect some of the viewpoints offered by others; but you must respect your classmates as contributing members of this class.

Disruptive Behaviour: Coming late to class, leaving early, sleeping in class, and talking to other students during class are a distraction not only to the instructor but to your classmates. If you are having difficulties getting to class on time or need to leave early, please inform the instructor in advance. Using your cell phone and eating in class are also considered disruptive and, as a result, are not allowed in the class discussion.

Assessment for Hist. 230

1. There will be a total of eight short weekly assignments (1-2 pages) or quizzes (based on the preceding lectures). Writing assignments and quizzes are based on the critical thinking and questioning to stimulate class discussion.

2. Weekly assignments are only accepted on the day that they are due and must be handed in during class. There are no weekly assignments due the weeks that essay papers are assigned or when the midterm is given. Weekly assignments are not optional.

3. Each assignment will be scored out of a maximum 100 points, so the score that you receive will reflect a percentage of that total.

4. Weekly assignments will be posted on Web Campus one week prior to their due dates; and essay papers will be posted at least two/three weeks before they are due. Students are thus advised to complete work early in order to avoid computer or printer mishaps. No extensions will be given for computer/printer issues.

5. Late assignments are not accepted. [The instructor reserves the right to accept late assignments in special cases such as a student’s hospitalization. Nevertheless, even in special cases, the instructor may
apply the following penalty: less than 10% of the points off per late day.] Each student is strongly urged, therefore, to turn in assignments by the due date.

6. **Attendance and participation in class discussion**: 10%; weekly assignments (or quizzes): 15%.

7. **Three essay papers**: #1 @ 8% (Due date: Thursday, February 19th); #2 @ 10% (Due date: Thursday, March 26th); #3 @ 12% (Due date: Thursday, April 30th). In place of paper #3, students have the option of doing alternative projects [Details will be given at the time paper #3 is posted].

8. **Two exams**: a mid-term exam (20%), and a final exam (25%).

9. Changes to Hist. 230 (including the assignments) may be introduced throughout the semester.

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**Grading Policy**

I have created a fair grading system that will allow students, from the first day of class, to know exactly how to organize their semester efforts. This system enables students who make an honest attempt, i.e. keep up with their readings, to succeed in this class. As a result, “extra credit” assignments will not be offered to students who may find themselves in trouble towards the end of the semester. I believe that special treatment towards students who have not kept up with readings and/or assignments is not fair to those who have worked conscientiously and consistently throughout the semester to study the basic material for this course.

**Essay Quality Guidelines**

I believe that a grade is less a reward for or a penalty against the student’s intelligence than a reflection of the student’s proficiency to write clearly and persuasively a paper on a given topic. Organization and importance of ideas, as well as grammar and clarity, are among some the chief criteria I use in grading a paper. With this in mind, students are evaluated/graded according to the following criteria:

A [90-94% (A--) and 94-100% (A)]: means that the paper is written with grace and clarity. The student has demonstrated mastery in writing clearly and organizing ideas methodically on a given topic. Ideas are not randomly thrown here and there but are complementary and cohesive elements of a well-organized paper.

B [80-83% (B--); 84-86% (B); 87-89% (B+)]: is above average. Ideas flow well. Grammatical errors are minimal.

C [70-73% (C--); 74-76% (C); 77-79% (C+)]: is for an average paper that complies with the topic assigned or chosen. The student has done just what I asked for. Grammar is fair and content is intelligible.

D [60-63% (D--); 64-66% (D); 67-69 (D+)]: is for a paper written with a level of grammatical errors that sometimes hinders the comprehension. Ideas exist but are arranged without a clear logic. Some of them are obscure and unintelligible. Sentences are confusing…

F [less than 60%]: is for a paper quickly and poorly written, with incomplete sentences, and often off-subject. This grade signifies an unacceptable performance in writing a specific assignment. Usually the content can hardly be grasped because of a lack of clarity and organization. Copying and plagiarizing will also be sanctioned by an F (see section X of the syllabus for additional information).

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Meeting after the Midterm
At this crucial period of the year, I am offering each of my students the possibility to meet with me at my office. At this time, I will individually discuss each student's progress in class, etc. This meeting is also the occasion, for each student, to tell me about any difficulties and/or questions that they may be having in class. Despite busy schedules, I encourage all students to see me individually during my office hours or make an appointment. Of course, these meetings at mid-term time will be in addition to any other regular meetings during my office hours and by appointment.

Academic Integrity
A strong policy against cheating and plagiarism will be enforced in this course. According to the University’s policy as indicated in the “UNR General Catalogue, Section IV: Academic Standards”:

- **Plagiarism** is defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one’s own’ or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion.
- Plagiarism does not just mean copying someone else’s entire paper or article. **The work of another** includes any material used in your assignments and essays that was written by others. Copying brief phrases or sentences from books, articles, internet sites, documents, or other sources without letting your reader know where they came from is a form of plagiarism. You must properly acknowledge your use of other people’s words by placing them in quotation marks and citing all sources used in your paper. Even if you paraphrase someone else’s ideas and do not quote them directly, you still must acknowledge your source. Citations should also be given for little-known facts and statistics (Source: http://www.unr.edu/cla/ch/5-avoiding_plagiarism.htm).

- **Cheating**: is defined as (1) obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual or unauthorized use of books, notes, text and other materials; (2) obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination; (3) taking an examination for another student, or arranging for another person to take an exam in one’s place; (4) altering or changing test answers after submittal for grading, grades after grades have been awarded, or other academic records once these are official.

- **Instructions for all assignments in this Hist. 230 class**: A) Students are expected to cite specific passages from our assigned readings to support their arguments. They should demonstrate that they have not only done the reading, but also that they have been thinking about its meaning and significance in relation to the themes of the course. Therefore, students are not allowed to use any unauthorized sources (i.e. online sources and/or sources that were not assigned in this class). Only sources provided by the instructor will be accepted. Students using unauthorized sources may face a charge of academic dishonesty. B) Students are expected to submit original assignments written exclusively for this class. Students may not recycle old papers (from former or other classes) for submission to this History course.

- **Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following**: (1) Filing a final grade of “F”; (2) reducing the student’s final course grade one or two full grade points; (3) awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question; (4) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper.

- **Students caught cheating and/or plagiarizing in this class will be failed in the course without regard to length of assignment or time during the semester**.

- **The Office of Student Conduct will be notified and a notation made on your academic transcript**.
Web Campus/E-mail Account:
This class will make frequent use of UNR’s Web Campus system and/or students’ regular e-mail addresses. Homework, handouts, and information about the class will be transmitted to students via the Web Campus system and/or ordinary e-mail. Each student enrolled in the class is therefore encouraged to have an e-mail account. If you do not have an e-mail address, please contact the Computer Help Desk on the main floor of the Knowledge Center for help creating one.

Required texts (available for purchase at the University Bookstore):
Textbooks

Suggested readings (selected articles, chapters and books) (on course Web Campus site)
Films:

Other films and videos will be screened on several evenings (times) during the term and occasionally in the lecture meeting. A separate schedule for the evening screenings will be available. If you cannot see the film or video at the time scheduled, you may screen it individually at the Multimedia Center of the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center.

**Schedule of Classes:**
Note: this schedule is subject to change
Changes to Hist. 230 (including the assignments) may be introduced throughout the semester.

**Week 1: African History: Sources, Methods and Theories**

**Tuesday, January 22nd: General Introduction to the Course // Purposes of the course // The Geography of Africa**
Read:
This is an opportunity to begin to become familiar with the geography of Africa. Explore the atlases in the library and online at:
- [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/CIA_Maps/menu_CIA.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/CIA_Maps/menu_CIA.html)
- [http://www.africaguide.com/afmap.htm](http://www.africaguide.com/afmap.htm)

**Thursday, January 24th: African History: Myths and Realities/Representations of Africa**
Read:

**Week 2: Early Prehistory of Africa -- The Cradle of “Humankind”**

**Tuesday, January 29th:**
**Later Prehistory: Farming and Pastoralism in Tropical Africa**
Read:

**Thursday, January 31st: Ancient Egypt**
Read
Week 3: The Impact of Iron in North and West Africa

Tuesday, February 5th: The Spread and Impact of Early Metal-Working
Read:

Thursday, February 7th: The Early Iron Age in Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa
North and North-Eastern Africa to 1000 CE
Read:

Week 4: Islam in Africa -- The Trans-Saharan Trade -- Ancient Ghana

Tuesday, February 12th: Trans-Saharan Trade in Medieval Africa // Ghana Kingdom
Read:

Thursday, February 14th: Kingdoms and Empires of the Western Sudan: The Almoravids, Mali, and Songhai
Read:

Week 5: Eastern African States to the Sixteenth Century -- The Swahili (Trading) States of the East African Coast and the Indian Ocean World

Tuesday, February 19th:
Read:
The Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia, 850-1550
Pastoralists and Farmers of the East African Interior

Thursday, February 21st: The Swahili City States: An African Mercantile Civilization
First Essay Paper due
Read:
Week 6: Later Iron Age States of Central Africa -- Great Zimbabwe

Tuesday, February 26th: States and Societies of Central and Southern Africa to 1600 AD
Read:

Thursday, February 28th: Great Zimbabwe
Read:

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Week 7: Europe in Africa: The Idea of an Atlantic World (1) // Slavery and the Atlantic Slave Trade // Theories and Debates

Tuesday, March 5th:
Read:
**Slavery and the Atlantic Slave Trade**
Movie:
☐ *Amistad*.

Thursday, March 7th: The Ending of the Slave Trade
Read:
☐ Movie: *Amistad* (cont’d).

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Week 8: Review / Midterm Exam

Tuesday, March 12th: Review
Review—No readings assigned.

Thursday, March 14th: Midterm Exam

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Week 9:
Week of March 19-23: Spring Break: No Classes

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Week 10: Southern Africa: Historical Overview

Tuesday, March 26th:
Read:

The Cape-Xhosa Wars of the Late Eighteenth Century

State-Building and Destruction: The Mfecane / Difaqane and its Effects

Thursday, March 28th: South Africa: The Roots of Apartheid // The British at the Cape / The Boers Trek and African Resistance
Essay Paper #2 Due
Read:

Week 11: North and North-East Africa to the Eighteenth Century // Women Status and Role in Pre-Colonial Africa (1)

Tuesday, April 2nd:
Read:

Thursday, April 4th: West African States and Societies, to the Eighteenth Century
Read:

Week 12: Central and Eastern Africa // Women Status and Role in Pre-Colonial Africa (2)
Tuesday, April 9th: Central and Eastern Africa to the Eighteenth Century
Read:
Thursday, April 11th: Central and Eastern Africa in the Nineteenth Century
Read:

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Week 13: Muslim Revolutions (Islamic Jihads) of the 19th Century

Tuesday, April 16th: Causes and Nature of the Jihads
Read:

Thursday, April 18th: Consequences of the Jihads
Read:

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Week 14: North and North-East Africa in the Nineteenth Century -- The Scramble and Partition of Africa

Tuesday, April 23rd:
Read:

Thursday, April 25th: The Partition of Africa
Read:

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Week 15: European Colonialism in Africa

Tuesday, April 30th:
Read:

Thursday, May 2nd: Essay Paper #3 Due
Read:

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Week 16: Conclusion and Final Exam

Tuesday, May 6th: Review & Conclusion
No readings assigned

Final Exam: Thursday, May 8th; Room: XXX; Time: 12:30pm-2:30pm