

HIST 300-002: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN COLONIAL AFRICA

Spring 2009

W 7.20-10 pm

Robinson A, Room 105

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces history majors to the techniques of the historian: reading historical texts, methods of research, historiography (the history of history), and analytical writing. This course has a special focus on writing, and the main product will be a long historical essay that each student will produce.

The topic of the course is African history in the nineteenth century. This was a time of great change and cultural encounters, both between Africans, and between Africans and the rest of the world. European explorers piggy-backed on African and Arab traders' knowledge and settlements to "discover" the source of the Nile, establish missionary stations, and claim territories for their home countries. Thus the kinds of relations and connections within Africa that prefigured the European arrival and persisted despite Europeans efforts to transform them are crucial fields of inquiry for nineteenth century Africa. Long-distance trade routes, the cross-roads they created, and shifting frontiers in Africa encouraged new social processes and provided settings for interactions between different cultures. The geographic focus of the course is eastern, central and Nilotic Africa, though the processes we will address are similar to those in other areas of Africa.

This seminar has two primary objectives: 1) to introduce students to some of the defining issues in African history and the current academic debates around them and 2) to help students refine the critical thinking, interpretive, and writing skills they need to produce excellent essays. The course highlights debates among historians, showcases the methods that historians of Africa employ (including oral histories and "against the grain" readings of sources), and teaches students to use primary source material available in area libraries. These include autobiographies in translation, missionary society reports, early colonial records, and explorers' accounts. Indeed the nineteenth century marks a period in which Africa became more visible in European sources as explorers and missionaries ventured beyond coastal enclaves, and these European writings remain important primary sources for African history. This seminar focuses on the ways that we can interpret these writings and use them well by considering the practices of producing and presenting knowledge about Africa.

REQUIRED TEXTS

These titles are available at the GMU Bookstore.

- A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)
- Michael Galgano et al, *Doing History: Research and Writing in the Digital Age* (Wadsworth Publishing, 2007)
- Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Mariner Books, 1999)
- Alan Moorehead, *The White Nile* (Harper Perennial, 2000)

In addition to the titles above, readings on the course syllabus marked with an asterisk (*) are available through the GMU's Blackboard system. Go to <http://courses.gmu.edu>, and follow the link to the course content.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course and to participate in every discussion. This course is a seminar driven by student participation. Come to class prepared to ask questions, share your opinion, and think critically about the material. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the group or have trouble contributing to the discussion, please see me after class and explain your situation. *Note: I reserve the right to fail any student who misses more than one meeting of the seminar.*

Reading: The readings for this class include two popular histories, a book of essays, scholarly articles, and first-hand accounts of historical moments. This is a reading intense course during the first part of the semester. In that period, the amount of reading varies each week, but the average week's reading is between 100 and 125 pages. As a general rule of thumb, students should plan to spend at least two hours studying and reading outside of class for every hour they spend in it. Thus for this course, students should allocate a *minimum* of five and a half hours per work to complete their reading assignments. Later in the course, there is no assigned reading.

Weekly Assignments: Students will have small weekly assignments to help them develop their reading and research skills. These will be announced in the class the week before they are due.

Short Paper: In the fifth week of the semester, students will use a primary source reading they select to write a short paper (3-5 pages) about African peoples, "Arab Slave Traders," or a specific location. This is an opportunity to practice close readings and interpretation of sources, and to clear up any confusion about citations.

Final Paper: All students will research and write a 12-15 page paper. The second half of the class will be devoted to the research and writing of this, and there will be several steps along

the way that students must complete, including an annotated bibliography, a complete draft, and a presentation to their classmates.

Writing Intensive: This course fulfills part of the Writing-Intensive requirement in the History major. It does so through the short paper (3-5) pages due in week 5 and the final paper due at the end of the course. The historical research paper will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. The first draft will be due April 10. I will provide commentary on the draft, and the revised draft will be due on May 6.

GRADING

Final course grades will be calculated according to the following rubric

Participation	15%	Based on contributions to class discussion
Weekly assignments	15%	
Short Paper	10%	
Annotated Bibliography	10%	
Draft of Final Paper	15%	
Presentation of Paper	10%	
Final Paper	25%	

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule indicates themes, topics, readings (📖), assignments (✍️), and deadlines (🕒). Those readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on Blackboard: <http://courses.gmu.edu>.

Week 1: Jan 21: Introduction and Overview

Week 2: Jan 28: The Source of the Nile and Questions of History

- 📖 1. Alan Moorehead *The White Nile*, Part I (chapters 1-7)
- 2. Galgano et al., *Doing History*, chapter 1, pp 1-15
- ✍️ Writing assignment on the person you selected in class.

Week 3: Feb 4: The Sources of the Sources of the Nile; Library Orientation

- 📖 1. Alan Moorehead, *The White Nile*, Part II (chapters 8-10)
- 2. Excerpt from W.H. Whitely, trans. *Maisha ya Hamed bin Muhammed el Murjebi, yaani Tippu Tip, kwa maneno yake mwenyewe*. [The Life of Hamed bin Muhammed el-Murjebi, called Tippu Tip, in his own words]. East African Literature Bureau, 1966 [1905]. *
- 3. Galgano et al., *Doing History*, chapters 2-4, (pp. 17-80)
- 🕒 Library Session with Librarian Melissa Johnson, Fenwick Library. We will meet in our normal classroom for a short discussion before walking over to Fenwick.

- 🕒 Feb 4: Last day to drop with no tuition penalty
- 🕒 Feb 10: Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty

Week 4: Feb 11

- 📖 1. Alan Moorehead, *The White Nile*, Part III & IV (chapters 11-18)
- 2. Excerpt from H.C. Jackson, trans. *Black Ivory or the Story of El Zubeir Pasha, Slaver and Sultan. As Told by Himself*. al-Zubayr. Negro Universities Press, 1970 [1913].*
- 3. A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), chapter 1
- ✍ Presenting a primary source: you must bring an appropriate primary source to class

Week 5: Feb 18: Evaluating Primary Sources; Understanding Points of View

- 📖 1. Selection from Fabian, Johannes. *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa*. University of California Press, 2000.*
- 2. E.A. Alpers, "The Story of Swema: Female Vulnerability in Nineteenth-Century East Africa." In *Women and Slavery in Africa*, edited by Claire Robertson and Martin Klein. University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.*
- ✍ Short paper on primary source due by Friday, February 20 at 5 pm.
- 🕒 Feb 20: Last day to drop/ Last day to drop with a 67% tuition penalty

Week 6: Feb 25

- 📖 1. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 1-100
- 2. James White, "The Sanford Exploring Expedition," *Journal of African History* 8, 2 (1967)*
- ✍ Read "Analyzing Sources: Official Documents" and complete the exercise "Be the Historian" on the Decree of King Leopold (links to both at on the course Blackbaord site)

Week 7: Mar 4

- 📖 1. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 101-181
- 2. Robert Harms, "The End of Red Rubber: A Reassessment," *Journal of African History* 16, 1 (1975) *

SPRING BREAK (very good chance to get ahead on research for your paper)

Week 8: Mar 18:

- 📖 1. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 185-291
- 2. Any two of the following newspaper articles
 - "Hopes the President Will Aid Congo Reform." New York Times 17 Oct. 1904: 5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.*
 - Morel, E. D. "Reform in the Congo: Mr. Morel Says England Has No Selfish Motives." The Washington Post 3 Oct. 1904: 9. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.*
 - "Secretary Morel to Speak in Boston." Boston Daily Globe 30 Sept. 1904: 5. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.*
- ✍ Assignment

Week 9: Mar 25: Thinking About Historiography

-  1. A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*, Chapters 2-4
-  2. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, pp. 292-318
-  3. Alan Moorehead, *The White Nile*, Epilogue
-  Annotated bibliography due
-  Mar 27: End of Selective Withdrawal Period

Week 10: Apr 1:

-  To be assigned
-  To be assigned

Week 11: Apr 8: Individual Meetings with Students

-  First draft due by Friday, April 10 at 5 pm

Week 12: Apr 15: : Individual Meetings with Students

Week 13: Apr 22: Individual Meetings with Students

Week 14: Apr 29: Class Presentations

-  Half the class will make ten-minute presentations
-  May 5: Last day of classes

Week 15: May 6: Final Class Presentations

-  The other half the class will make ten-minute presentations

COURSE POLICIES

Class absences: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course. In the event that you must miss class, you are responsible for the contents of the lecture or discussion. Furthermore, if you miss class on the day of quiz, you will not be permitted to make it up without prior arrangement with the instructor.

Email: Electronic mail is a valuable tool. I will, from time to time, send emails to the class, and I am happy to respond to your email messages provided you bear in mind the following points. In academic and professional settings, all emails should have a descriptive subject line ("Question about HNRS 230 assignment"), begin with a respectful salutation ("Prof. McDow"), and conform to standard English with proper punctuation and capitalization. All correspondence should take place via your GMU email account. If you have not activated your GMU email account, go to <https://mail.gmu.edu/>, and select "activate account."

Cellular Telephones: During class all cellular telephones must be switched completely off or set to silent (not vibrate) mode. Students are not to compose, read, or respond to text messages. Students who use their telephones in class will be asked to leave. If you are an emergency responder (such as an EMT) and must receive pages, you must notify the instructor within the first week of the course.

Laptop Computers: Students who wish to use laptop computer for note-taking are welcome to do so in compliance with the following rules. 1) Students using laptops sit in the front row of the class. 2) All internet connections, audio, and video components are switched off. 3) As a courtesy to other students, computers that make noise when switched on should be powered up before entering the class room. *Students who use laptops for purposes other than taking notes (i.e., email, instant messaging, internet browsing) will be asked to leave.*

Sleeping: Sleep is a vital part of the human life cycle. Students who get enough sleep think more clearly and perform better than those who do not. I encourage you to practice good sleep hygiene outside of class. Sleeping in class is not permitted. It is a distraction to me and to your classmates. If you are too tired to stay awake in class, you should not be there. If you are drowsy—and we've all been there—feel free to stand up against a wall or in the back of the class. Those who fall asleep in class will be asked to leave.

Submission of Work and Late Work: All written work is due at the beginning of class in hard copy on the day indicated on the syllabus. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font. Your name should be on the first page only, and all pages should be stapled and numbered. Certain assignments, as indicated in the syllabus, may be submitted electronically. You are responsible for making sure that the attachment is included and can be opened. For all assignments, retain electronic copies of your work, and in some instances, I may ask for an electronic copy of your paper in order to use it as an example in teaching (good!) or to submit to a plagiarism detection site like Turnitin.com (bad!).

All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized one-half grade per day (i.e. a paper that would earn a B+ but comes in one day late would earn a B; two days late, a B-). The only exceptions to this will be when you have explicit, advanced permission from me. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact me in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from me, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work. *The penalty for late work is one-half grade per day, including weekends and holidays.*

Extra Credit: Opportunities for extra credit may arise in the course of the semester. These will be announced in class or via e-mail. If extra credit assignments are made, they will be evaluated as other work and graded with extra credit points. Extra credit points can be used for two purposes: extensions on papers (one day extension per two points earned) or points at the end of the semester (one point at the end of term for each five points earned).

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: This class and all of your work as an undergraduate are governed by GMU's Honor Code: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, or sequence of arguments as your own without attribution. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources properly in this course. If at any point, however, you have a question about this, please ask. If you are tempted to plagiarize or find yourself using material from the Internet or any other

source and trying to pass it off as your own, stop working on the assignment and contact the instructor. It is better to submit work late than to break the Honor Code. It is my duty to report all violations of the Honor Code, and I take this duty quite seriously. When I report cases of plagiarism to the Honor Committee, I recommend that the penalty be failure for the course or suspension from George Mason. Such drastic outcomes are avoided through proper citations and good communication with your instructor. To read more about the Honor Code, the Honor Committee, and its procedures, see go to <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>.

Disabilities, Academic Accommodations and Religious Observances: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students who must miss class for religious observances must notify the instructor of their absence.

Late adds: If you join the course late you must meet with the instructor as soon as possible. You will not be permitted to submit assignments that you have missed without special arrangement with the instructor. With permission, such assignments must be received within five days of joining the course.

Final disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements will be made at our class meetings or via GMU email accounts. If necessary, a revised syllabus will be posted on Blackboard (<http://courses.gmu.edu>). Students are responsible for being aware of any changes.