

Syllabus for African History, HY 262
Dr. Michael Thomason
Fall Semester, 2001

My office hours are on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., or by appointment. My office is in HUMB 350, phone 460-6210. Email Jawal@zebra.net. You are expected to come to class regularly, and once each week deliver a 3-minute oral report on the African country you are studying, using the web sources we will discuss on the first day and other traditional materials. Each Thursday I will tell you the topic I want you to focus on for the following week—for instance, the geography of your country. You are to turn in a written (preferably typed) report when you give your report.

There will be two hour-long tests, the first on September 21 and the second on October 22. The final is on December 10 at 8 a.m.

This course will emphasize historical themes concerning the origin and evolution of non-Western civilization in Africa, including patterns of social and political development, cultural diffusion, conflict, and cooperation. It will also examine non-Western African cultures in a chronological and spatial setting.

Your two textbooks are listed below, and you will be expected to use the Internet to prepare weekly 3-minute oral reports on the African country you have selected to study for the semester. You are to examine social, historical, and cultural information, using the Internet and traditional printed library material to prepare your report which will be given each week. You must submit a brief report in typed form on the day it is due to be presented orally. By August 29, everyone must have selected a country to work on, submitted their request in writing with at least three proposed sources of information, and had it approved by the professor. Don't wait until August 29 to make your selection.

You are expected to attend class, but I will not penalize you solely for not doing so. You are adults and I expect you to behave in an adult fashion, which includes doing what you are supposed to do...and getting to class on time. It is inconsiderate of others, your fellow students and I, to wander in late. If you do this routinely I reserve the right to speak to you in words of one syllable about your lack of common courtesy.

The texts are Joseph Harris, *Africans and their History* (second revised edition, Meridian, 1998) and Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.

The Harris text is a chronological history of Africa which traces the origins and development of the continent's many societies while discussing common themes of ethnicity and state building, relations with other peoples, the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and the challenges of the post-colonial world. Dr. Harris weaves the threads of Africa's diverse historical experience into a story which American college students can understand and relate to.

On the subject of the two tests and the final (which will be comprehensive): The two hour exams

and the final will focus on the cultural, social, political and historical development of Africa viewed in a chronological framework. To see that you develop the skills to analyze Africa from these perspectives, I will ask you questions in a variety of formats. I will ask you to write one or two (on the final) essays, always giving you a choice of two or three. I will also ask identification questions to see that you learned the important people, places, things, or events we have discussed in class, and in your texts. Also, I will ask you a brief essay on the specific country you are studying on these hour tests and there will be either a short essay or a couple of IDs from the Spindel book. I give make-up exams for good reasons, such as illness or a serious family crisis. I require that you contact me within 24 hours of the exam to explain why you did not or can not take the exam. I will not give you a make-up if you wander into my office or class a week or so after the fact and ask for a make-up. If you can't reach me within 24 hours of the exam, find someone who can! You must do a typed report of a minimum of five pages on Things Fall Apart which is due November 19.

Any work submitted late is subject to a late penalty which will depend on why it was late, how late it was, and how often you have done this before.

Your final grade is determined in the following way. Each hour test counts 20%, the oral reports given weekly count 25%, the book review counts 10%, and the final is 25%. You can get one point extra credit for every article on Africa published in the newspaper or a general circulation magazine, up to a maximum of 10 points for the semester. You must bring the article in within 48 hours of its appearance (in other words, you can't bring in a handful of clippings on the day of the final and get any credit!) The article you submit must be the original, not a copy, and have source and date. You must also write your name on it somewhere so I can keep track of who does what. Grade scale is A=90 and above; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=below 60.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations. In my experience this office does its work well and if you are eligible, or think you might be, go see them!

African History

*Probable special assignment

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Text Assignments</u>	<u>Weekly country report subjects</u>
Aug 20 22 24	Harris, Preface-48 *	
Aug 27 29 31	Harris, 49-77	Location, size
Sep 5 7	Harris, 78-99	Physical geography
Sep 10 12 14	Harris, 100-121	Ethnic composition, religions
Sep 17 19 21	Harris, 133-144 1 st TEST	Principal economic activities, resources
Sep 24 26 28	Harris, 145-156	Pre-colonial history
Oct 1 3 5	Harris, 157-170	Pre-colonial history
Oct 8 10 12	Harris, 171-182 *	First contacts with Europeans
Oct 15 17 19	Harris, 183-202	Reactions to imposition of colonial rule
Oct 22 24 26	2 nd TEST Harris, 203-230	Colonial experience
Oct 29	Harris, 231-268	Independence movement

	31		
Nov	2		
Nov	5	Harris, 269-278	
	7		
	9	*	
Nov	12	Harris, 269-278	Contemporary scene; problems, potentials
	14		
	16		
Nov	19	Review of <u>Things Fall Apart</u>	
Thanksgiving			
Nov	26	Harris, 279-286	Leaders; important organizations,
	28		economic forces
	30	Review	
Dec	3		
Dec	10	FINAL EXAM 8 - 10 A.M.	