History 214 (Spring 2019)

Africa in World History
(Tentative Syllabus)

Tuesdays 3:00 –5:50 in Rolfe 3115

UCLA Department of History - Professor Ghislaine Lydon (lydon@history.ucla.edu)

Office hours: T & Th 11:00-12:30 (or by appointment)

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The African continent has been central to the major currents of world history, and this since the beginning of humankind. Yet for centuries, both the centrality of Africa and the contributions of Africans have been ignored, misrepresented, minimalized or derided. This predicament is in large part due to a long-drawn history of the “othering” of African societies by various foreign groups dating back to Antiquity. In this seminar we will discuss Africa’s place in world history, from the earliest to more recent times, through a selective review of the literature. The course will introduce you to some of the principle debates, methods and approaches in world history scholarship. We will examine the Afrocentric debates about the origins of civilizations, the state of the literature on global Africa, and several studies dealing with Africans’ connections across seas and oceans, to several areas of the world. The seminar is designed as a reading seminar with a research component.

Learning Objectives

- Gain expertise in the joint fields of African and world history and associated methodological and theoretical approaches
- Gain insights into the art of historical inquiry and the historical profession
- Develop analytical abilities to think critically and comparatively
• Perfect research and interpretation of primary and secondary material, and the crafting of written assignments
• Improve oral communication skills through participation in guided discussions and in-class presentations

Requirements
Class participation, leadership and presentations (50%) – Exploratory Research Paper (50%)  
Your seminar grade is based on both your oral and written participation. You will be expected to do the following:

1. Come to seminar with questions and prepared to actively discuss the common readings.
2. Formulate the agenda and lead discussion during one seminar meeting.

Readings:
We will read several monographs and the sampling of other literature. Many works are available in digital format, including some through YRL. Other readings will be hyperlinked to the syllabus on the course webpage.


SEMINAR SESSIONS

Week 1. Introductions & Seminar Overview
Reading: Frederic Cooper, “*African History/Global History.*” *Perspectives on History* (December
Week 2. Africa and the World


Week 3. African Origins and the Black Athena Debate

**Readings:**


Week 4. African and World Historiography

**Readings:**


Week 5. Africans in Medieval Europe

**Readings:**


Week 6. Global Connectivity in the Longue Durée
**Reading:**

**Week 7. Atlantic Africa**


**Week 8. Indian Ocean Africa and Global Consumers**


**Week 9. Afro-Europe in Recent History**

**Readings:**
Darlene Clark Hine et al. (Eds.), *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Introduction and select chapters).

TBA

**Week 10. Paper Presentations**