

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
REGIONAL STUDIES 2710
SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent in the world. It is a continent of enormous size, significance and diversity. Yet, this land of 54 countries, three times the size of the United States, seven times the size of Europe, historically has received only cursory treatment in the American class room.

Given the size and diversity of the continent, this course is not intended to provide a detailed account of social, political, economic, and historical development for all of Africa. However, this overview will address significant themes that relate to all of Africa, such as early human origins, slave trade, colonialism, nationalism, family and kinship, religious beliefs, the role of women and environmental concerns. Each theme will be thoroughly and rigorously analyzed through research, readings, writings, and class discussions.

Of particular interest is women's national political representation. Women who have traditionally taken a back seat on African affairs are now breaking boundaries through social activism and political participation. Their recent emergence in the political arena is indicative of their determination to show relevance and resilience. This class will explore the circumstances that have led to the awakening of this phenomenon.

The Wright State Core

This course is part of the Wright State Core. The goals of this program relevant to this course are to teach students to:

- communicate effectively
- evaluate arguments and evidence critically
- demonstrate global and multicultural competence
- demonstrate understanding of contemporary social and ethical issues
- participate in democratic society as informed and civically engaged citizens

Within the Wright State Core, RST 2710 is part of Element Three (**Global Traditions**). Students in this class will be able to:

- a. Critically describe some of the political, social or economic systems; historical, cultural or spiritual traditions; and/or technological innovations around the world
- b. Demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of people or traditions in our world in ways that promote effective engagement, both locally and globally
- c. Use political, social, economic, historical, cultural, spiritual or technological knowledge to evaluate contemporary issues

Specifically, we will meet these learning objectives by using comparative analysis to understand some of the diverse experiences within Africa by employing a multi-disciplinary approach. We will use the lenses of history, political, and cultural analysis to gain an appreciation of life in this country.

Integrated Writing

RST 2710 is an **Integrated Writing** (IW) course that is designed to foster effective communication, meaning that students will use writing assignments as a way both to demonstrate their understanding of course content and explore connections between themes in the course and their own experiences. Students will complete a number of writing assignments, both formal and informal, in order to fulfill this requirement. Writing assignments will be returned with comments so that students can utilize the responses to improve their writing in subsequent assignments. Students will be expected to produce writing that

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

Course Objectives

This class will explore the following:

1. Africa's pre-colonial history and culture, including relationships forged among peoples of various ethnicities on the continent.
2. Africa's colonial experience, emphasizing its economic and political impact of this legacy on African traditions.
3. Post colonial experience and Africa's relationship with the rest of the world.
4. Africa's socio-cultural institutions and life such as marriage, kinship, communal life and individual fulfillment in harmony with society.
5. African cosmology. The concept of God, the relationship between Africans and their environment, the collective consciousness of the inseparableness of the living and the dead, the physical and the metaphysical.
6. The status of women and their entanglement in a mesh of controversial socio-cultural issues.
7. The cultures of traditional African peoples, as expressed in music, poetry, drama, and the arts.
8. African cultural survivals in North America, in spite of the hemispheric and geographic differences.

Course Requirements

Regular class attendance is mandatory. Where possible, the instructor should be notified ahead of time if a student is going to be absent from class. One unexcused absence is allowed during the quarter; any other absence must be authorized by a physician. More than one unexcused absence will result in grade reduction by one full letter in the final assessment. Three consecutive absences without official permission or failure to complete all the requirements for the course will result in an "F".

To pass this course, you must have successfully taken part in:

- Article review (2 pages), video critique (2 pages) and two short research papers (4 pages each)
- Group project/presentation: The class will be divided into groups. Each group is responsible for turning in the final project. Students will be provided detailed guidelines for the project.
- A midterm exam and a final exam, which demands that students remember much of what they have both learned and studied. Students' answers must reflect a fine grasp of the course.

- Fiesta al' Afrique: At the end of the course, each group will bring to class a menu native to the particular country the group researched during the quarter. That is, if a group studied Ghana, that group will bring a cuisine native to a specific ethnic group in Ghana to share with the class. The sole purpose of this is to demonstrate the importance of food in the socio cultural lives of African people.

Grading

Group project	10%
Midterm	20%
Video and article review	5% each
Research paper	15% each
Final exam	20%
Attendance	10%

The following grading scale will be utilized:

90%-100%=A

80%-89%=B

70-79%=C

60-69%=D

0-59%=F

Resources

WSU provides a number of resources that are designed to help you with your work and maximize your potential for learning and getting good grades, although of course these cannot make up for poorly written and researched work. These include but are not limited to:

Library Homepage. The library homepage has a guide for footnoting styles, which you should consult for your paper. See Quick Reference on the page and then Citing Your Sources. Through Quick Reference you can also access Dictionary and Thesauri, which are essential for writing excellent papers.

The Articles database is also helpful in finding secondary sources for your essays as are Electronic Journals. Both can also be accessed on the homepage. As far as the articles database is concerned, **JSTOR** is especially useful. To get to this, click on “**all databases**,” the letter “**J**” and then you’ll have access to the link. You can search by topic or author.

The Writing Center. The WC is located in the basement of Dunbar Library, and can assist you with regard to grammar and footnoting issues; all other inquiries can be addressed to either the Instructor for this course.

Web Sources

These are the only websites approved for use in this call and use of any other sites for your position paper must be approved by the instructor. ***Note that all sources used to formulate your response in papers must be cited, even internet sources.**

LeSoleil: <http://www.lesoleil.sn/>

Sud Quotidien: <http://www.sundunline.sn/>

Radio Stations

BBC Online radio – Network Africa

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/networkafrica/>

for the BBC World Service: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/>

AFRIBEAT: <http://home/worldonline.co.za/~afribeat/>

Africa Hit Music TV – Watch Pop Videos from Africa 24/7:

<http://www.africahit.com>

Gospel Music: <http://www.AfricanGospel/Rhythms.org/>

Pop Music:

<http://www.afrosoundsfm.com>

<http://www.afropop.org/>

<http://www.kitaa.fm>

Criteria for Evaluating Student Writing

Writing proficiency (50%)	A	No significant problems with grammar or style; this is a polished paper
	B	Some problems with grammar and/or style, but no significant problems; the paper is still highly readable
	C	Problems with grammar and/or style that impede the understanding of the author's argument
	D or below	Serious problems with grammar and/or style that make it impossible to understand the author's argument
Methodology (25%)	A	The student builds an argument from multiple sources of evidence; the student demonstrates the ability to use sources. There are no major citation errors (notes, bibliography)
	B	The student demonstrates the ability to use sources as evidence, but there are some errors of citation (notes, bibliography) but they are not major ones
	C	The student does not work competently with sources. There are many errors in documentation, and they include some major errors
	D or below	The student may omit citation altogether or handle it so clumsily that the reader may suspect plagiarism.
Critical analysis	A	The thesis is clearly stated and cogently argued, so

(25%)		that it is immediately persuasive
	B	An argument is present and sustained over the course of the paper, but it is not necessarily entirely persuasive; the argument may recede from view at times
	C	There is little attempt at analysis; the paper is primarily descriptive. The thesis is not clearly stated or persuasively argued
	D or below	Paper lacks any attempt at analysis and is completely descriptive or off-topic. Paper lacks a thesis altogether

Finally, please remember

1. All assignments must be completed in order to pass this class.
2. Written work must be submitted by hand to the instructor or the department office. Electronic submissions of assignments will not be counted as having been submitted. It is your responsibility to ensure that the instructor receives all written material at the appropriate time.
3. No makeup exams are given in this course unless under exceptional circumstances. You should notify the instructor if you have any scheduling conflicts.
4. It is your responsibility to make up work that has been missed as a result of a non-attendance.
5. Without exceptions points will be deducted from any work that is late without prior approval and/or supporting documentation (doctor's note, etc.) at a rate of ½ a grade point each day beyond the deadline.
6. Plagiarism is not tolerated in this class and all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate college authorities for investigation.
7. In regard to this you will keep copies of the papers that you write for this class and all material used in case questions should arise over authorship.

Textbooks

Gyimah-Boadi (ed.) *Democratic Reforms in Africa*.

Stock, Robert. *Africa South of the Sahara*.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A series of pretests and discussions

The map of Africa and Western Africa. *The Political Map, Levels of Development, Regional And Political Groupings, Physical Map. Pages: 15-27., VIGNETTE 1.1 A continent, Not Yet "Discovered" A British Map of Africa, 1807. P.16-17.*

Week 2 and 3

Imagining Africa: Roots of Western Perceptions of the continent. Orientalism. The Travelers Gaze. The White Man's Burden. Hollywood's Africa. The Western media's Tragic continent.
Alternate Images: New perspectives in Historical-cultural studies in the Arts. Alternate Images: New perspectives on Social Science and on Development. VIGNETTE 2.1 Megatransect National Geographic Africa,2000-2001 VIGNETTE 2.2 African History and culture in Western Museums. What Do We Know About Africa- video. **Review of video.**

Week 4 and 5

HISTORY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The African Past. The Agricultural and Iron Revolutions. Bantu Migrations African Empires. Example: of Empires- Eastern Africa, Western Africa, central and Southern Africa. The Slave Trades. Contemporary significance of African History. The Colonial legacy. Prelude to colonization. The scramble for Africa. The Colonial State. Colonial Economic Policy. Evaluating the colonial legacy. VIGNETTE 8.1 Leopold's Congolese Legacy. VIGNETTE 8.3 Resistance under colonialism: A Kenyan Example.

Independent Africa: The struggle continues. *The Struggle For Independence The Struggle for Responsible Government. The Struggle For Development. The Struggle Ahead.* VIGNETTE 9.1 From Organization of African Unity To African Union. VIGNETTE 9.2 A Democracy Dividend? P.159-140 Civil Society And Democratic Development Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress. **The Rise of African Nationalism. Bassil Davidson (video). Short paper on colonialism.**

Week 6 and 7

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMY

Mineral Resources *Mining in Precolonial Africa. Development of the Modern Mining Industry. Who Produces What Where? Africa's Minerals And The World Economy. Mining And underdevelopment.* VIGNETTE 22.1 Botswana's Mineral-Based Economy: Success or Illusion of success? VIGNETTE 22.2 Lethal Gems: Diamonds and Conflicts in Africa. VIGNETTE 22.3 Migratory Labor, HIV/AIDS and the Mining Industry in Southern Africa.

Africa in the World Economy. *The Role In World Trade of Africa South of the Sahara. Aid, Debt, and Adjustment: In one Hand and out in the other* VIGNETTE 25.1 If countries were companies: The wealth of African Nations. VIGNETTE 25.2 Wheat At what cost? An Assessment of the Tanzania- Canada Wheat Program. VIGNETTE 25.3 Investment and Human Rights: Talisman Energy in Sudan.

Mid-Term

Week 8

RELIGION COSMOLOGY AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

Religion in Africa. Religion: A definition/overview. 1) African Traditional Religions Components: Belief in the Supreme Being, Divinities and Spirits, Life After Death, Religion Leadership and Sacred Places, Witchcraft and Magic. 2) Christianity. 3) Islam. Commonalities and differences. Africa and Africans. pp. 116-125.

African Family. *African Family and Kinship. Family: A definition and functions. African Kinship, Marriage and Bride wealth. Widow Inheritance, Monogamy, Polygamy. Kinship of Descent, Groups, Matrilineal, Patrilineal, Unilineal, Double Unilineal and Bilineal. Africa and Africans, pp. 64-75.*

Week 9 and 10

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ISSUES

Democratic reforms

- a. *What “The People” Say about reforms.* Gyimah – Boadi, Democratic Reforms in Africa pp. 65-95
- b. *The Civil Society And Democratic Development.* Gyimah – Boadi, Democratic Reforms in Africa pp. 99-119
- c. *Corruption and corruption Control.* Gyimah – Boadi, Democratic Reforms in Africa pp. 121-139

Review of one of above articles.

Week 11

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL ISSUES

African Women And Development *The Double-Double Workload of African Woman. Social And Political Issues. Women And Development* VIGNETTE 19.1 Changes In The Gender Division of Labor in colonialism. VIGNETTE 19.2 The “Nanas-Ben’s” of Togo. VIGNETTES-19.3 Gender And Poverty: Why Poverty Alleviation programs Many Fail. Women In African Parliaments A Continental Shift? Pages 1-16

Aids and its Pandemic

General overview of AIDS pandemic in Africa. Changing Minds: Botswana beats back AIDS Taking Sides – Wiliam Mosley. Uganda: Abstinence and Faith. **Short paper on Aids.**

Female Circumcision and the Rites of Women

- 1) Should female genital cutting be accepted as a cultural practice?
- 2) Abandoning female genital cutting: prevalence, attitudes, and efforts to end the practice.

Week 12

GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

Week 13

GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

Week 14

FINAL EXAM /AFRICAN FOOD