

**History 611 – Fall 2015**  
***History of Modern Africa***  
**Dr. Trevor Getz**



The railway station at Thies, Senegal, a key location in Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*



The Kingdom of the Cats and the Kingdom of the Mice, an Ethiopian image of colonialism

**History 611 – 3 Units**  
**---- Fall 2016 ---**

---

Dr. Trevor Getz  
Office: Science 220  
Class Hours: T/Th: 12:35-1:50  
Office Hours: T/Th 11-12:30  
Classroom: HSS 151  
[tgetz@sfsu.edu](mailto:tgetz@sfsu.edu)

---

**Course Description**

History of Modern Africa focuses on three defining moments in Africa's history: the advent of global capitalism in Africa, the imposition of colonialism, and the struggle for independence. Throughout, the stress is on African agency and the African voice. Thus from 1700-1890 we ask the question "what were African efforts to develop strategies to maintain their independence as alternatives to colonialism?". When addressing the struggle for independence we seek to understand how the multitude of African cultural and political perspectives, as tempered by world event as well as by the experiences of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, led to the development of unique modes of liberation. This year, there will be something of a focus on four African women as vehicles for discussing deeper topics.

Throughout these periods we will also develop a view of Africans as actors on the world scene – victims and agents of globalization, actors in geopolitics, cultural contributors, and vital participants in the world economic cycle. Because of the size and breadth of the topic, we will be focusing in particular on two regions: the Gold Coast/Ghana and South Africa, with periodic emphasis on Kongo/Congo and Abyssinia/Ethiopia.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Construct critical narratives interweaving the conflicting trends of state-building and foreign intervention in African affairs that culminated in a continental crossroads in the nineteenth century.
- Describe a range of African lived experiences and social systems of the immediate pre-colonial period.
- Analyze and debate factors leading to the occupation of Africa by Europeans.
- Trends of continuity and transformation in African cultures through the industrial revolution and during the colonial period.
- Explain African strategies of collaboration, resistance, evasion, infiltration, negotiation, and survival under colonialism.
- Critically interpret factors behind the rise of nationalist movements and independence of Africa states in the period 1957-1990.

**Show up, do your work on time, succeed**

Instructor reserves the right not to admit students more than 10 minutes after class officially starts. Instructor will periodically take roll, and reserves the right to penalize students up to 10% of Final grade for missing classes. Student will normally be given a

warning first. Instructor does not normally accept late papers or assignments, unless an agreement is individually reached with instructor PRIOR TO submission of materials. Testing and evaluation will be conducted on the basis of materials from text and lecture. Failure to complete readings or to attend lectures will probably cause low grades!

## **Office hours**

I take pride in my close relationship with many former students and I look forward to having you visit me. I also understand that many of you have children (as I do) and jobs and may encounter problems – talk to me about them and I'll help you solve them. You may text or e-mail me questions as well. Occasionally I will have to change my office hours due to my university service and other outside activities.

## **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given a "0" grade. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

## **Student disclosures of sexual violence**

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe\\_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/)

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

## **Texts**

### **Textbooks**

- Dennis Laumann, *Colonial Africa*, 978-0199796397
- Trevor R. Getz, *Cosmopolitan Africa*, 978-0199764709
- Jonathan Reynolds, *Sovereignty and Struggle: Africa in the Era of the Cold War*, 978-0199915125
- Ousmane Sembene, *God's Bits of Wood* (any version).

### **Sources available through iLearn:**

The course iLearn site will be operational. You will receive instructions on using it. Can be viewed on-line;

- Oral traditions collected by William Gqoba..
- “The Kingdom of the Cats and the Kingdom of the Mice”, Haddis Ademayu, translated from Amharic by Tim Carmichael.
- Selection from *The Battle of Adwa: Reflections on Ethiopia's Historic Victory against European Colonialism*, edited by Paulos Milkias and Getachew Metaferia including the “*Treaty of Wichale*”

### **Also online:**

- Jonathan Reynolds, “So Many Africas, So Little Time: Doing Justice to Africa in the World History Survey”, *World History Connected*, 2004 (2):  
<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiuc.edu/2.1/reynolds.html>

- Binyavanga Wainaina, “How to Write about Africa”, *Granta*, 92, 2008:  
<http://granta.com/How-to-Write-about-Africa/>

H611 History of Modern Africa		Professor Getz
<i>Interrogating the colonial gaze on Africa</i>		
August 25	Introduction/ how do we 'do' African history	Jonathan Reynolds, "So Many Africas"; Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa"
August 30	The world from <b>Beatrice Kimpa Vita's</b> view, 1706	
September 1	Discussion/response to Reynolds & Wainaina	<b>Written response (required but not graded).</b> Comments will come back from TA and instructor.
<i>The industrial system and Africa</i>		
September 6	Africa at the crossroads : the early 18 <sup>th</sup> Century African setting	Getz chapters 1 & 2
September 8	Africa and the Industrial Revolution	Getz chapter 4
September 13	The Gold Coast; Analyzing the Mankessim Posuban	
September 15	Economic transformation: From slaves to oilseeds in West Africa	Getz chapter 3 & 5
September 20	South African state and societies in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	
<i>Focus: Three stories of the coming of colonialism</i>		
September 22	The Great Cattle Massacre	Getz, Chapter Gqoba's oral histories (available on iLearn).
September 24	The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom	Zulu Kingdom debate (available on iLearn)
September 27	Victory at Adwa	Selection from Milkias and Metaferia
<i>Colonialism: policy, practice, perspective</i>		
September 29	Midterm exam	<b>Midterm</b>
October 4	Conquest and partition	Laumann Chapter 1
October 6	Forms of rule/Colonial response	Laumann chapter 2
October 11	4 responses to colonial rule in Ghana	
October 13	The " <b>Kingdom of the Cats and the Kingdom of the Mice</b> ": A view from Ethiopia ( a workshop)	Carmichael translation of Haddis Ademayu
October 18	Religion and colonialism	Laumann Chapter 3
October 20	South Africa from unification to apartheid	
October 25	World War II and Africa/Prep for Sembene	
October 27	No class (instructor giving paper at William & Mary)	Optional reading will be available
Nov 1	Discussion and debate:" <b>God's Bits of Wood</b> ", Senegal, 1940s	Sembene Ousmane, <i>God's Bits of Wood</i>
Nov 3	Decolonization and nationalism	Lauman Chapter 4 Reynolds Chapter 1.
Nov 8	South Africa under apartheid	
<i>Post-colonial Africa</i>		
Nov 10	Legacies of colonialism: political and economic	Reynolds Chapter 2, <b>Sembene assignment due</b>
Nov 15	The Cold War and Africa	Reynolds Chapter 3
Nov 17	Language, literature, religion	Reynolds chapters 4 and 5
Nov 29	Rhodesia to Zimbabwe (Keegan Medrano)	
Dec 1	Apartheid and its demise/ The architecture and meaning of the <b>Constitutional Court of South Africa</b>	
December 3	The problem of persistent poverty	
December 8	Research presentation by Keegan Medrano, SF State grad student (will be included on final)	
Dec 10	<i>Review for final: TBD</i>	

### **Assignments and grading**

I will be grading on a simple non-curve model with 90% being the cut-off for an A, 80% for a B etc. Having said that, I've given A's to students with 88% before, due to participation and extra credit.

You will be graded on three assignments. Two are exams. One is a take-home paper (4-5 pages).

Long written assignment (Sembene)	25%
Midterm	25%
Final	50%

### **Exams**

You will be informed of all of the topics covered on the midterm and final prior to the exam. The exams will consist of identifications and essay questions, covering course content, methodology, *and* theory.