

AAS 337/HIS 337/HON 201 AFRICA SINCE 1800

Kenneth J. Orosz
Spring 2026
Class Meetings: Tech 258
TR 9:25-10:40

Office Hours: T 1:30-2:30
W 10:00-12:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys the sweep of African history from the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the end of the 20th century. Topics will include the Mfecane, the 19th century Fulani jihads, European exploration, the partition of Africa, changes wrought by the European colonial presence, African reactions to these changes, the rise of nationalism, decolonization, and the problems facing newly independent Africa. While we will of necessity be focusing the bulk of our attention on political phenomena, social and cultural events will also receive attention.¹

OFFICE HOURS

While I will be available in my office for face to face meetings during office hours, I am also available for virtual meetings. To take advantage of virtual office hours click on the appropriate menu button in Brightspace to reveal the Zoom link. Contact me via email if you cannot make regularly attended office hours so that we can set up an appointment.

TUTORING SERVICES

Buffalo State offers a wide variety of free tutoring services, including a Writing Center. For more information go to the [tutoring website](#).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Academic misconduct (including cheating, plagiarism, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to do your work for you) will not be tolerated. Buffalo State College policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, are outlined in the college catalog. **Please note that the minimum penalty for cases of academic misconduct will be an F on the assignment.**

Reading assignments are to be completed by the dates given. There will be three exams. Please note that in order to earn more than a B on the essay portion of the exams you must make use of the relevant assigned readings and historical documents. In addition students will write two 5 page analysis papers of assigned texts (Mitford and Oyono novels) and a 10-12 page paper on a topic of their choice. All topics for the research papers must be authorized by me and must conform to the geographic and temporal confines of this course. As part of this process students are required to submit their paper topics in the form of written proposals no later than **March 10**. Failure to submit a passing proposal means that your paper will not be accepted and you will earn an E for that portion of the course. All papers and reviews must conform to the [History Style Sheet](#). Detailed [instructions](#) on

¹ Learning Outcomes: Student demonstrates knowledge of a) a broad outline of world history or b) at least one other world civilization/multi-cultural region in one or more historical period, including cultures, geography, institutions, societies, politics and economies; analyzes ways of thought in one or more historical period including at least two foundational fields of thought; classifies an era in terms of historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in the development of a non-western civilization or multi-cultural region; identifies information and ideas from at least one other world civilization/multi-cultural region and applies them to other world civilizations/multi-cultural regions (critical thinking). Students will also demonstrate broad knowledge of African history since 1800, understanding of cause and effect, distinguish and assess recent trends and historiographical controversies, analyze and assess primary and secondary sources, and develop research and writing skills.

the writing assignments, including the style sheet, can be found in Brightspace or by clicking the syllabi and course materials links at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. Help for Brightspace can be found at <https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/learners/learners.htm>.

Please note that in order to pass this course you must make a good faith attempt to complete all components and requirements. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR ARRANGEMENT**. Incompletes will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor and require a written application outlining the rationale for granting an incomplete, a list of outstanding assignments and a timetable for their completion. This application must be signed and, if granted, will constitute a formal contract for the completion of the course.

While there is no formal attendance policy, students are responsible for all material covered. How you learn that material is up to you. Experience has shown, however, that students who do not regularly attend class have gaps in their knowledge and tend to earn poor grades.

At the collegiate level grades are based on mastery of content, methodology, and presentation, regardless of how hard you feel you worked on an assignment. Grades will be computed as follows:

Midterm	25%	Final	25%
Mitford analysis	15%	Research Paper	20%
Oyono analysis	15%		

COURSE POLICIES

1. Students must complete all work on their own. There are no group projects other than the online discussions.
2. **The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly forbidden and will be considered cheating since it is a computer, rather than the student, completing assignments. As with other cases of academic misconduct, the minimum penalty will be an F on the assignment.**
3. Except for cases of documented emergencies, I do not accept late work without prior arrangement. It is your responsibility to keep track of what is due each week by checking the syllabus.

RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS

Use of AI to write your paper is cheating and will be dealt with as such. All topics for the research papers must be authorized by me and must conform to the geographic and temporal confines of this course. Proposals must be submitted in writing and should consist of a sentence or two outlining your topic followed by a preliminary bibliography of 8-10 scholarly sources in which you provide complete publication information. The use of encyclopedias and websites beyond those already assigned are not allowed. Do not restrict yourself to what is present in our library, since our collection in African history is incomplete and often dated. To find books you will need to make use of the library's Worldcat Discovery database; if we do not own the text, you will then need to order it via interlibrary loan. You can find peer reviewed journal articles by using the library's JSTOR and Project Muse databases.

The bibliography of passed proposals can be amended via a simple email to your instructor. While proposals are due **March 10**, you can change your topic by submitting a new proposal for approval until the day the paper is due. This is the only assignment with this kind of flexibility. Please note that if I do not have a passed proposal on file when I begin grading, I will not read your paper and

you will receive an F on the assignment. If you choose to gamble by turning in your revised proposal with your paper on **May 7** you run the risk that your proposal will fail and your paper will be rejected unread.

SUBMITTING PAPERS

Submitting papers requires a 3 part process:

1. You must pass a quiz confirming that you have read and followed the directions before the Dropbox will appear. This quiz will become under available the Course Activities tab 2 weeks before the assignment is due and can be retaken as needed.
2. If you have successfully completed the quiz, then the Dropbox will appear in the Assignments section of the Course Activities tab. You must upload your paper as a word document (.doc or .docx only) to the Turnitin dropbox by **9:30 AM** on the due date.
3. You must bring a printed and stapled copy and turn it in during class time on the due date. **I will not grade any papers that have not been submitted to the dropbox and for which I do not also have a paper copy.**

Note: You may submit revisions of your paper up until the due date. Among the things you should check is the Turnitin Originality Report to help guard against plagiarism. To see the report click on the colored rectangular icon next to your submission. If the icon is gray, your report is still being processed; check back within the next 24 hours.

BOOKS: The following books are required reading and are available in the bookstore:

David Birmingham, <u>The Decolonization of Africa</u>	978-0-121-41153-7
A. Adu Boahen, <u>African Perspectives on Colonialism</u> , rev. ed.	978-0-966-02014-4
Collins & Burns, <u>Historical Problems of Imperial Africa</u> , 3 rd ed	978-1-558-76584-9
Frederick Cooper, <u>Africa Since 1940</u> , 2 nd ed	978-1-108-72789-1
Richard Reid, <u>History of Modern Africa</u> , 3 rd ed.	978-1-119-38177-8
Bertram Mitford, <u>The White Shield</u>	978-1-934-55563-7
Ferdinand Oyono, <u>Houseboy</u>	978-1-577-66988-3

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Any reading listed on the syllabus that does not come from a required textbook is either a website or has been posted to Brightspace. To further help you identify them, supplemental readings are in italics. They can be accessed in one of 3 ways: 1) If it is a website, there will be a link to it from the syllabus in Brightspace or on my web page at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. 2) Materials highlighted in blue have been uploaded to weekly folders in the Supplemental Readings section of Brightspace. A) If the item is a PDF, simply click on it to open and read. B) If it is a PowerPoint, click the down arrow next to the file name and select download from the menu (files are large, so do on WiFi only). Navigate to your download folder and open the file. Follow the directions on the first slide to get it to play.

A. E. Afigbo, "Revolutions and Wars," in The Nineteenth Century, vol 1 of The Making of Modern Africa (London: Longman, 1986), 80-114.

Ngwabi Bhebe, "Mzilikazi c. 1795-1968," in Black Leaders in Southern African History, ed. Christopher Saunders, (London: Heinemann, 1979), 31-44.

- Bronwen Everill, "'The Colony has made no Progress in agriculture': Contested Perceptions of agriculture in the Colonies of Sierra Leone and Liberia," in *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, ed. Robin Law et al (Oxford: James Currey, 2013): 180-202.
- John Hargreaves, "British and French Imperialism in West Africa" in *France and Britain in Africa*, ed. Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 261-284.
- Elizabeth Isichei, "The Western Sudan in a Time of Jihad," *A History of African Societies to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 291-312.
- Robert July, "Religion and Empire in Western and Central Sudan," in *A History of the African People*, 5th ed (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1998), 188-208.
- Robert W. July, "Early Nationalist Stirrings in West Africa," in *A History of the African People* 5th ed (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1998), 322-344.
- Djibril Tamsir Niane, "Africa's Understanding of the Slave Trade" *Diogenes* vol. 45 no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 75-90.
- Rudolf von Albertini, "French West and Equatorial Africa," in *European Colonial Rule, 1880-1940*, ed. Rudolf von Albertini, (London: Greenwood Press, 1982), 343-373.
- Rudolf von Albertini, "The Belgian Congo," in *European Colonial Rule, 1880-1940*, ed. Rudolf von Albertini, (London: Greenwood Press, 1982), 374-387.
- John Williams, *From the South African Past* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997)
- Albert Wirz, "The German Colonies in Africa," in *European Colonial Rule, 1880-1940*, ed. Rudolf von Albertini, (London: Greenwood Press, 1982), 388-417.
- Rob Turrell, "Diamonds and Migrant Labour in South Africa, 1869-1910," *History Today*, 36, no. 5 (May 86): 45-49.
- Michael Crowder, "The Impact of Two World Wars on Africa," *History Today* 34, no. 1 (January 1984) 11-18.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- January 27 **Introduction and Pre-colonial Political Systems**
 Read: *The Nature of History*; *How to Write History Papers*
- January 29 **Trans-Atlantic and East African Slave Trades**
 Read: Boahen Ch 1; Reid pp. 1-34; *Africa on Eve of Colonialism Broadcast*
 [*Eyewitness to Slave Trade*](#)
- February 3 **Abolition of the Slave Trade**
 Read: Niane, "Africa's Understanding of the Slave Trade"; *Abolition of Slave Trade*;
 Slavery to Abolition [Part 1](#); [Part 2](#); [Part 3](#); [Part 4](#); *Sierra Leone and Liberia*
 Everill, "Colony has made no Progress;"
- February 5 **The Fulani Jihads**
 Read: Reid pp. 103-110; July, "Religion and Empire"; Afigbo, "Revolutions and Wars;"
 Isichei, "Western Sudan in time of Jihad"
- February 10 **The Era of "Legitimate" Trade**
 Read: Reid pp. 34-53, 127-137; *Black Explorers*; *White Explorers*
- February 12 **The Yoruba Wars and Dahomey**
 Read: *Ashanti and East Africa*

- February 17 **The Mfecane and the Rise of the Zulu Nation**
 Read: Reid pp. 71-78; [Mfecane Broadcast](#)
- February 19 **The Difaane**
 Read: Mitford novel; [Bhebe, "Mizilikazi"](#)
- February 24 **Settlers in South Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 78-82; [Williams, South African Past](#), pp. 69-78, 82-86, 121-129
- February 26 **North Africa: Napoleon to Suez Canal**
 Read: Reid pp. 85-101, 121-126, 148-151; [Death of Gordon](#);
- March 3 **The Scramble for Territory**
 Read: [New Imperialism](#); Collins & Burns Ch 1; [White Man's Burden](#)
 Mitford analysis paper due
- March 5 **British Africa: Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, and Gold Coast**
 Read: Reid pp. 53-64, 112-119; [British Egypt](#): [July, "Early Nationalist Stirrings"](#)
- March 10 **British Africa: South Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 164-174; [Turrell, "Diamonds and Migrant Labour;"](#)
[Establishment Basutoland](#) [Rhodes and Lobenguela](#)
 Paper topics due
- March 12 **French Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 159-164; [Ferry on French Expansion](#);
[Hargreaves, "British and French Imperialism"](#)
[von Albertini, "French West and Equatorial Africa,"](#)
- March 17 **Midterm**
- March 19 **The German, Belgian and Italian Empires in Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 64-68, 174-184; [Wirz, "The German Colonies in Africa;"](#)
[Black Man's Burden](#); [von Albertini, "The Belgian Congo;"](#) [Italian Africa](#)
- March 24 **No Class**
- March 26 **No Class**
- March 31 **Colonial Systems**
 Read: Reid pp. 199-213; Collins & Burns Ch 2, 6; [British, German & Belgian Systems](#)
- April 2 **Colonial Culture and Society**
 Read: Reid pp. 137-145, 152-157, 214-226; Boahen Ch 2-3; Collins & Burns pp. 171-191;
- April 7 **African Society and Culture under Siege**
 Read: [Life under Colonialism Broadcast](#); [Newspapers](#); [Tax and Trade](#); [Railways](#)
 Oyono novel
- April 9 **African Resistance, Complicity and Collaboration**
 Read: Collins & Burns Ch 3; [Religion and Resistance](#); [Political Resistance](#)

- April 14 **World War I and Inter-war Colonialism**
 Read: [Recruitment](#); [Aftermath](#); [Radio](#); [Air and Road](#); [Resistance & Rebellion](#)
 Reid pp. 184-189, 193-198, 230-245; Collins & Burns pp. 159-170, 190-201
Oyono analysis paper due
- April 16 **The Rise of Colonial Nationalism**
 Read: Cooper Ch 1-2; Collins & Burns Ch 5; [Early Nationalism](#); [Négritude](#)
- April 21 **World War II and Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 248-257; [Crowder, "Impact of World Wars;"](#) [African Homefront](#);
[African Soldiers in Burma](#) [White's Only Liberation](#);
- April 23 **Decolonization**
 Read: Reid pp. 259-272; Cooper Ch 3-4; [Towards Independence](#); [Guinea and Algeria](#);
- April 28 **Decolonization: Settlement Colonies**
 Read: Reid pp. 273-304; Birmingham Ch 1-conclusion; [Belgian Decolonization](#)
[Kenya and Congo](#); [Nkrumah Speech](#)
- April 30 **Apartheid in South Africa**
 Read: Reid pp. 305-308; Boahen Ch 4; Cooper Ch 6; [Apartheid](#); [Colour Policy](#);
[Case for Apartheid](#); [South African Aggression](#);
- May 5 **Africa Since Independence**
 Read Reid pp. 311-357; Cooper Ch 5 & 7; [Cold War](#);
- May 7 **Conflict and Genocide at Century's End**
 Read: Reid pp. 359-378; Cooper Ch 8; [AIDS in Kenya](#); [Tragedy & Triumph](#);
[Genocide and Regional War](#);
Research papers due
- May 12 **Final Exam 7:40-9:30 AM**

Instructions for Papers

Students in this course are required to do their own original work, hence **the use of artificial intelligence (AI) constitutes cheating and is strictly forbidden** because it is a computer, rather than the student, doing the assignment. **The minimum penalty for violating this policy is an F for the assignment, but in most cases students will also receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Academic Misconduct Committee for possible additional penalties.**

While your papers will be graded primarily on content and the strength of your arguments, grammatical accuracy, style, presentation and organization will also be taken into account. As with a medical diagnosis, your arguments will be stronger if you can offer second opinions, hence your papers should, wherever possible, include supporting evidence drawn from more than one source. All papers are required to adhere to the History Style Sheet which is available in Brightspace and on my web site. Failure to follow the style sheet will result in significant penalties; these consist of at least the loss of a full letter grade for each category of violation (i.e. use of contractions will cost you a letter grade, reducing an A paper to a B). This includes paper length, non-standard fonts, margins and line spacing. Please note that a

short paper is not necessarily a bad paper; I am primarily interested in what you have to say, how well you say it and if you have developed your thesis and argument sufficiently.

As you write your papers, you may paraphrase or quote suitable passages that illustrate your points. However, if you do quote or paraphrase, you must cite the relevant passage. You must also cite detailed information (i.e. statistics or items that are not common knowledge). The only exception to this rule is material gleaned from my lectures; you may assume that this is public knowledge and requires no citation. Proper citation formats can be found in the History Style Sheet. Please note that in addition to enforcing Buffalo State College's policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, **the minimum penalty for plagiarism is an F on the assignment.**² For more information on plagiarism, how to footnote, or how to write a research paper consult the relevant sections of Benjamin's A Student's Guide to History. If you are still unclear about when or how to cite please come see me during my office hours. That is why I am there.

Since much of what is out on the internet is of dubious quality, **the use of web pages as source material is strictly forbidden** unless authorized by me in writing. The only exceptions to this rule are the individual web sites that I have assigned as required reading material. On a similar note, **the use of encyclopedias is also forbidden**. While they may be useful reference tools or for providing an overview of a particular topic, encyclopedias have no place in college level work. Articles in historical encyclopedias (i.e. *The Encyclopedia of European Social History*) may be acceptable, but must first be cleared by me in writing.

I am obviously a firm believer in written assignments since they help develop organizational, analytical and communication skills, all of which are things you will need in the workplace. Consequently, I expect you to treat all graded assignments (in this or any other class) as preparations for your future career. Turning in business reports that are filled with grammatical errors, failures in logic, poor argumentation and lack of evidence portrays a degree of incompetence, even if it is undeserved, and will probably get you fired. Get in the habit now of proofreading your work to catch typos, misspellings and nonsensical statements. Read your papers aloud to see how they sound. Better still, have a friend or roommate read your work since they are more likely to notice any problems. Most of you will be writing your papers on wordprocessors. No matter what program you use, they all have spell checkers. It is silly and self-defeating not to make use of them.

While I do not allow rewrites once papers have been graded, I will read and comment on rough drafts if I am given enough time. Alternatively, you may want to consult either the campus writing center or some of the history tutors for help or advice. Keep your notes and copies of your paper to facilitate rewrites and to safeguard against loss, computer errors, random destruction by pets and similar catastrophes. Finally, and most importantly, if you are having any problems in this course come see me.

Book Analysis Papers

All students will write 2 five page (1500 word) historical analyses of Mitford's *The White Shield* and Oyono's *Houseboy*. Since these are historical analyses and not "book reports," I am not interested in plot summaries, symbolism, language, or character development. Similarly, I am not interested in whether you liked the book or found it interesting. Your analysis paper should analyze and critique the author's portrayal of some of the historical events or themes covered in this course. As you analyze the books use the following questions as a rough guide: How do the authors portray historical events or issues covered

²Buffalo State College, *Undergraduate Catalog 2025-2026*, [Academic Misconduct](#).

elsewhere in the course? For example, how do they depict the impact of European colonial rule on indigenous societies? How was African culture, religion, politics and social structure affected by the arrival of the Europeans? What insights do the novels provide on historical issues like the Mfecane, Fulani jihads, the rise of colonial nationalism or the onset of the world wars? How accurate are these depictions? Have they added to your understanding of African history? You will need to be selective in choosing which elements to include in your reviews since both works are very complex and illustrate many historical trends. Your analysis must draw upon and cite specific examples from the novel as well as corroborating historical evidence drawn from other class materials in order to support your points.

As you will discover, 5 pages provides barely enough room to introduce a topic, let alone go into much detail. Hence, your papers should have a narrowly defined thesis and must be very selective in both their use and presentation of supporting evidence or examples. Since these papers are so short keep quotations to a minimum so that you will have more room to develop your own thoughts and arguments. To strengthen your argument(s), however, your analyses must draw upon and cite specific examples from the novel as well as corroborating evidence from more than one source. **There is ample material on which to base your book analyses papers in assigned course materials (lectures and readings); if you wish to use outside materials, you must first obtain permission from me in writing.**

Research Paper

In addition to the book analyses, all students will write a 10-12 page (3000-3600 word) paper on a topic of their own choice. While the actual topics for your papers are up to you, they must remain within the geographical and temporal confines of this course. The paper should analyze some facet of modern African history in detail. To that end, and to help you identify sources, all paper topics must be cleared with me first in the form of a written paper proposal due no later than **March 10**. Complete proposals will outline your topic, the specific issues you intend to address, and must include a bibliography. If, after you have begun researching and writing your paper, you choose to use additional sources, you must submit an amended bibliography to me in writing. **Papers that use unauthorized materials will not be accepted. Similarly, papers that deviate significantly from your research proposal will also not be accepted.** This does not mean, however, that you are permanently locked in to a particular paper topic; if you change your mind and opt to pursue some other topic you must submit a new paper proposal which may or may not be accepted at my discretion. In order to find suitable research materials you will need to go beyond what is in our library catalog by making use of the JSTOR, Project Muse, Worldcat Discovery and Academic Search Complete databases. Other critical library databases to use are ACLS Humanities E-book, E-Book Central, Ebsco eBook Collection, and the Digital Public Library of America. External databases to check for e-books, mostly older editions, are the Hathi Trust Digital Library and the Internet Archive's Open Library for copies of e-books. Completed papers are due in class on **May 7**.

Possible paper topics include

Usman dan Fodio and the Fulani Jihads
African Reactions to Missionary Education
Mungo Park and the Exploration of Niger
Stanley & the Creation of the Belgian Congo

The Fashoda Incident
The Chilembwe Uprising
The Algerian War of Independence
The Herero Revolt