

# HISTORY OF ISLAM IN AFRICA

Associate Professor Timothy Cleaveland  
Spring 2011

HIST 4520  
321 LeConte Hall  
2:00- 3:15 T/R

Office: 340 LeConte  
Hours: T/R 11:00- 12:00  
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## Course Warning

This is a very rigorous course that requires attendance as well as abundant reading and study, including primary sources in translation. The teacher will penalize those students who do not meet the mandatory minimum attendance.

## Course Description and Philosophy

The primary purpose of this course is to provide the students with an historical framework for interpreting the current state of African Muslim societies and their relations with the rest of the continent and the World. In particular, this course will examine the historical roots of the contemporary conflict between the West and Islamic Africa. The second purpose is to help students develop their analytical skills and to express their analyses in verbal and written forms. To this end, the course emphasizes class discussions as well as lectures, and formal essays rather than exams.

This course surveys the history of Muslim Africa and examines in detail a few selected societies, mainly in West and North Africa. The first half of the course will focus on the rise and spread of Islam in Africa and its effect on African societies. The second half will examine the European conquest and occupation of Africa, and the reactions of Muslim Africans to European imperialism. The course will also examine Islam's effect on the development of African cultural attitudes about race, gender, and slavery. This course assumes no prior background in African or Muslim history, but it requires the students to master the historiography of several African societies and to analyze historical debates and primary sources in formal essays.

Primary sources constitute a significant portion of the course readings. They include translations of the *Quran*; medieval North African geographies and travel accounts; a seventeenth-century West African chronicle; a narrative commentary on Napoleon's invasion and occupation of Egypt; a nineteenth-century Muslim debate about jihad; and a twentieth-century West African epic. The course readings also include academic interpretations of African and Islamic history, a West African surrealist novel, and a survey of the history of Islam in Africa. Students will analyze these diverse course readings in three short essays and three Micro-Essays. Each essay and Micro-Essay should set out an analytical argument about one of the issues covered in the assigned readings. The teacher will provide more details about the essays in class meetings, and will be happy to advise students during office hours or by appointment.

Some students will find this course somewhat more difficult than comparable courses on American or European history, because of their lack of familiarity with the names of African peoples and places. This problem can be solved by carefully reading the texts when they are assigned, thus allowing time to absorb gradually the unfamiliar material. Although some history students habitually neglect weeks of reading assignments only later to read them hurriedly over a single weekend-- such a strategy is not suited to this course. The design of this course encourages daily reading, so that students come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Lively class discussions should help the students develop their own analyses, which they will express in essays. Therefore, in addition to learning about Islam and African history, the successful students in this course will develop skills. They will improve their abilities to read, to think analytically, and to express their ideas in verbal and written forms.

**Course Requirements** (The instructor may make changes to the course requirements as necessary.)

**Readings-** The required readings include a general history of Islam in Africa, a West African epic, an early nineteenth-century chronicle, a scholarly history of a colonial occupation, and a postcolonial novel, as well as several short primary source texts available on reserve. All but the last of these books are available at the University Bookstore or other bookstores in town. Students will likely have to obtain Yambo Ouologuem's book, *Bound to Violence*, from online used book dealers. The other course books may also be obtained online, but the students are responsible for getting them in a timely manner. In addition to these books, everyone should obtain an English translation of the *Quran*. Finally, the reserved readings will include short excerpts from primary sources such as medieval African geographies and early modern chronicles, all of which are available at the reserve desk in the Main Library or on electronic reserve.

Books for Purchase: Available at the University Bookstore

1) *The History of Islam in Africa*, edited by Levtzion and Pouwels  
Amazon List price: \$26.95, 20 used & new from \$13  
Publisher: Ohio University Press; (2000) ISBN: 0821412973

2) *The Epic of Askia Mohammed*, translated by Thomas Hale  
List Price: \$12.95, 17 used or new from \$3.00  
Publisher: Indiana University Press; (1996) ISBN: 0253209900

3) *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of Napoleon in Egypt*, trans. by Shmuel Moreh  
List Price: \$18.95, 10 used & new from \$9.94  
Publisher: Markus Wiener (1993 or 2005) ISBN: 1558760709

4) *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880-1920* (Western African Studies) by David Robinson  
List Price: \$26.95, 11 used & new from \$15.00  
Publisher: Ohio University Press (2000), ISBN: 0821413546

5) *Bound to Violence*, Yambo Ouologuem  
Used copies only, 10 used & new from \$4.80  
Publisher: Heinemann (1983) ISBN: 0435900994 (other editions acceptable)  
Original Publisher: Secker and Warburg (1971) ASIN: 0436349906

Books on Reserve

- 1) *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Hopkins and Levtzion
- 2) *Africa and the West*, Wolger et al.
- 3) *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, John Hunwick
- 4) *Bound To Violence*, Yambo Ouologuem

**Micro-Essays-** The students will write three two-page essays (about 600 words) analyzing a salient issue in specific assigned readings. Please do not exceed one page or use a font smaller than 12 point, and do include the word-count at the top of the page. The Micro-Essays should make a scholarly argument and refer to specific evidence and cite that evidence. The teacher will evaluate the Micro-Essays on the basis of grammar and style as well as content. Micro-Essays and essays should bear only the student's 810-identification number, typed at the top of the front page. Please do not write your name on your essay paper. The Micro-Essays and other essays must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date due. Do

not put late papers in my department mailbox and do not slide them under my office door. Do not submit Micro-Essays or other essays electronically unless you obtain permission beforehand, and the teacher will only grant permission in exceptional circumstances. One letter grade will be deducted from late Micro-Essays for each class meeting after the due date. The Micro-Essays count as 25% of the course grade.

**Short Essays-** The students will write three analytical essays, each about four pages in length (about 1,500 words). These essays must analyze evidence and ideas derived from the course, including readings, lectures/discussions, and films, and require no research beyond the course materials. The essays grades will be based on content, grammar, presentation, and style. The teacher will distribute written guidelines for the style and grammar of historical writing, and the grading of Micro-Essays and essays will be based on these guidelines. The rules for submission of Micro-Essays also apply to essays. The essays should bear only the student's 810-identification number, typed at the top of the front page. Please do not write your name on your paper. The essays must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date due. One letter grade will be deducted from late essays for each class meeting after the due date. The three analytical essays constitute 50% of the course grade.

**Final Exam-** The students will write a comprehensive final exam on May 5th, which will count as 25% of the course grade. This exam will consist of a short answer section and an essay, each counting as 50% of the exam. The teacher will distribute a study guide for the final exam in early April. Students should bring a composition booklet or 'blue book' to the final exam, as well as two blue or black pens.

**In-Class Presentations-** The teacher reserves the right to assign group presentations if the class enrollment is substantially less than 20 students. In such a case, the class would be divided into groups of two or three for the purpose of preparing special written reports (about 5 pages), which would be distributed to the rest of class electronically and would be summarized in group-presentations. The instructor would assign each group a primary source text or theoretical statement, which the rest of the class would not be required to read. Each individual would independently produce his/her own interpretation and written analysis of the assigned text, but the group members would present their findings jointly in a presentation lasting about 45 minutes. Each student's written report or essay would be graded as the other written assignments and would count as one of the three assigned short essays. The teacher would not assign a grade to the oral presentations. The teacher would guide the students in the preparation of their presentations in class and in two scheduled office meetings.

**Class Attendance-** Instruction in this course will consist of lectures and discussions. The teacher expects students to attend class and participate in discussions, but will not ascribe a grade for attendance or participation. However, attendance is mandatory and the teacher will automatically drop any student who accumulates five absences before the midpoint withdrawal deadline (March 24) regardless of the reasons for the absences. Thereafter, the teacher will deduct five points from the student's course average for every absence after the fifth. Excessive tardiness (more than 10 minutes) or early departure without permission from the instructor will count as a half or full absence, as will sleeping in class. Attendance will be recorded on sign-in sheets, and every student is responsible for signing the sheet. If a student does not sign the attendance sheet the instructor will count the student absent. Students are also responsible for keeping track of their own absences, and should not expect to be warned when they reach the limit. Attendance is important because those students who are occasionally absent and fall behind in the readings will almost certainly perform badly on the essay assignments. Students who maintain excellent class attendance and participation will receive extra-credit points toward their final course averages—3 points for no absences, 2 points for one absence and 1 point for two absences. Students with 4 or fewer absences may also qualify for 1 or 2 points of extra-credit for excellent class participation. Assignments missed because of illness or the like may be submitted without penalty if the documentation is acceptable to the teacher and within university guidelines, but the absence still counts against the student's maximum

allowance of five. Students should contact the teacher by email in advance of missed assignments. Students who suffer a major illness or a series of minor illnesses during the semester should request a medical withdrawal from the Registrar.

**Email-** All students are required to check their UGA email account regularly in order to receive messages regarding assignments. The teacher will occasionally send emails bearing advice regarding the assignments or changes to the schedule, and for this reason, students should check their UGA email at least once a day. Students should also be careful to keep their in-boxes safely within the quota limits, as the teacher has often had messages to students bounce back because of overloaded in-boxes.

**Electronic Devices-** Students sitting at the front of the classroom may use computers to take notes, and on occasion to do a course-related internet search. Any other use of a computer or other electronic device in the classroom is a class distraction, as well as a clear indication of the student's disinterest. Therefore the teacher will drop any student found misusing an electronic device during class. Students who are parents and need to be contacted in the case of an emergency may bring cell phones to class, but they should be set to vibrate or ring silently, and calls must be taken outside the classroom. Otherwise, students should turn off their cell phones and other electronic devices during class.

**Academic Honesty-** This course has "zero tolerance" for cheating. Any work that infringes the University's academic honesty code (see web address below) will at a minimum receive a grade of "0". The consequences for what I consider significant plagiarism on an essay in this course can also include suspension or expulsion. For a definition of plagiarism please refer to my general writing guide, which I will distribute early in the semester. My policies regarding plagiarism conform to the History Department recommendations. Similar penalties apply to cheating on exams or falsifying an attendance sheet. ([http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic\\_honesty/academic\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/academic_honesty.htm))

### **Grading Scale**

100-90= A = 4.0	74-70= C = 2.0
89- 85= B+ = 3.3	69- 60= D = 1.0
84- 80= B = 3.0	<59= F = 0.0
79-75= C+ = 2.3	

**Schedule of Assignments** (all assignments and due dates are subject to change)

### **Week One: Introduction**

Jan. 11- Introduction to the Course and African History

Jan. 13- African History and Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations': online text

### **Week Two: African History, Religions and Theory**

Jan. 18- Introduction to Islam in Africa: (The Cow, Ch 2), Levtzion, 1-18

Jan. 20- Introduction to Islam: (The Family of Imran, [3]; Women, [4]; The Confederate Tribes, [33])

### **Week Three: The Quran and Shariah Law**

Jan. 25- Analyzing the *Quran*: (She Who Pleaded, and Divorce- Chs. 58 and 65) (**Micro-Essay #1 due**)

Jan. 27- Trade and the Early Muslim Expansion in Africa: Levtzion, 21-28, 63-68, 373-380

### **Week Four: The Spread of Islam in Africa**

Feb. 1- The Kingdom of Ghana: Al-Bakri in the *Corpus*, on electronic reserve

Feb. 3- The Kingdom of Mali: Ibn Battuta in *Corpus*, on electronic reserve

### **Week Five: The Geographers and Islam in Medieval West Africa**

Feb. 8- Racism and Theories of Race: Ibn Khaldun (photocopy)

Feb. 10- Mysticism and Sufism in Africa: Levtzion, 397-405, 441-43, 477- 88 (**Micro-Essay #2**)

### **Week Six: Mysticism and Gender in Islamic West Africa**

Feb. 15- Songhay and the Griots: Levtzion, 68-73, *The Epic of Askia Mohammed*, 1- 30

Feb. 17- Slavery, Race, and the Rise and Fall of Songhay: Ahmad Baba & *Askia Mohammed*, 31- 47

### **Week Seven: A Griot's view of Gender and Slavery in Songhay**

Feb. 22- The Griot's View of the Fall of Songhay: *Askia Mohammed*, 48- 66

Feb. 24- A Cleric's View of Songhay: *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire* on Reserve, Chs. 12 &13

### **Week Eight: The Cleric's View of Songhay**

March 1- A Chronicler's View: *Timbuktu & Songhay Empire* on Reserve, Chs. 21- 22 (**1st Essay due**)

March 3- Napoleon and the French Invasion of Egypt: Al-Jabarti, 3- 65

### **Week Nine: Early European Imperialism in Islamic Africa**

March 8- Egyptian Resistance: Al-Jabarti, 66-101

March 10- The Occupation Collapses: Al-Jabarti, 101-165

### **Week Ten:**

March 15- Spring Break

March 17- Spring Break

### **Week Eleven: Imperialism and Orientalism**

March 22- Orientalism and Writing History: Al-Jabarti, 169- end

March 24- West African 'Jihad': Levtzion 28-33, 131-152, 169-187, 380-95, 443- 53 (**2nd Essay due**)

### **Week Twelve: Sufism, Jihad and the Shadow of the West**

March 29- Debating Islam & Society: Al-Kanemi (photocopy) & Cleaveland, (JSTOR)

March 31- Introduction to Senegal and Mauritania: *Paths of Accommodation*, 1-57

### **Week Thirteen: Islamic Identity on the Eve of European Conquest**

April 5- Islam and Colonialism in Senegal and Mauritania: *Paths of Accommodation*, 58-116

April 7- Accommodation and Islamic Legitimacy: *Paths*, 117-177

### **Week Fourteen: French Colonialism and Islam in West Africa**

April 12- The Four Shaykhs: *Paths*, 178-227

April 14- Analyzing Accommodation: *Paths*, 227-240 (**3rd Essay due**)

### **Week Fifteen: Between Resistance and Collaboration**

April 19- Islam, 'Jihad', and Servility: Yambo Ouologuem, Chs. 1- 2, Levtzion, 189- 208, 349-69

April 21- Love and Servility in the Time of Colonialism: Ouologuem, Ch. 3, parts 1-5

### **Week Sixteen: Islam, Tradition, and Westernization**

April 26- Colonialism and Collaboration: Ouologuem, Ch. 3, parts 6- 10

April 28- Westernization and Triple Consciousness: Ouologuem, Ch. 4, (**Micro-Essay #3 due**)

**Final Exam**

Thursday, May 5th, 3:30- 6:30pm

(Please bring one composition booklet and two black or blue pens.)