NYU - Ghana

A Survey of West African History from the 16th Century

Spring Semester, 2009/2010 Academic Year

Meeting Place: NYU-Ghana Campus, Accra
Meeting Time: Thursday 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Course Instructor: Dr. D.E.K. Baku
Office: Thursday, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm
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Course Description

The course provides an introduction to the history of West Africa in the period of the Atlantic slave trade and since the abolition of the slave trade. Instead of presenting a comprehensive survey, covering every country in the vast West African sub-region, the course takes a topical approach by focusing on a selection of themes and issues that are crucial to developing an understanding of modern West African history. Themes to be discussed in the course include the land and peoples of West Africa, the Atlantic slave trade, explorers, missionaries, settlers and cross-cultural encounters; expansion of European power after the abolition of the slave trade; European conquest and resistance; West African aspects of Pan-Africanism and contacts between African nationalists and pan-African leaders in the Diaspora, nationalism and struggles for independence; developments in post colonial West Africa.

Throughout the course, attention will be paid to the importance of culture in West African history, including religion, music and art as well as the role of women in West African societies. Select case studies will allow us to gain an understanding of the historical experiences of West Africans as they developed their societies and encountered European colonizers and cultures. This course is designed for all students wishing to learn about West Africa’s fascinating history.

Requirements

1. The course is organized around lectures and tutorials discussions.

2. Students will be required to attend all lectures. Attendance at lectures is NOT optional and the roll will be taken at random and excuses will not be accepted for absence from lectures unless prior permission has been sought. Students who
frequently absent themselves from lectures will not be eligible to take the end of semester examinations.

3. To ensure that students attend lectures, snap (not previously announced or programmed) tests would be conducted and answer sheets would be evidence of attendance in class.

4. Tutorial discussions will be part of weekly lectures. Students will be expected to contribute actively to tutorial discussions and will be expected to show understanding of assigned readings and the lectures. Tutorial discussions will not follow a set pattern; they may follow or precede a weekly lecture.

5. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before lectures, take notes of the readings, and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Grades

(a) Attendance in class will account for 10% of the end of semester grade. Attendance at lectures will be taken at random and dates on which attendance will be taken will not be announced ahead of time. Absence from lectures will lead to deduction of grades. Snap (unannounced) tests will be conducted in class and participation in the test will be evidence of attendance in lectures.

(b) There will be 4 in-class tests each of which will be graded over 10 making a total of 40. This will represent 40% of the final score for the semester.

(c) The remaining 50% will be earned in the end of semester examinations.

The end of semester examinations will be sit-in examinations. There will be five questions and you will be expected to answer 3. The end of semester exams will have adequate instructions and information on grading.

Use of Mobile Phones in Class

Use of mobile phones in lectures in any form is STRICKLY forbidden. You will be severely sanctioned if you use a mobile phone in any form (receiving or making calls, making or reading text messages) in lectures.

Seeking Assistance outside Course Instructor’s Office Hours

Ensure to contact your Course Instructor during his office hours. Do not call him on the phone and do not seek assistance outside his office hours. You are, however, permitted to send him e-mail to seek assistance or clarification.

Readings
You will understand the course better if you read the recommended books and the assigned readings. Failure to read extensively will reflect in your performance in class, in-class tests and end of semester examinations.

**Academic Dishonesty**

In keeping with NYU-Ghana policies, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possessions of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, tempering with the academic work of other students or signing any name other than your own to the attendance sheet. Where you are found guilty of any act of academic dishonesty, you will be given an F grade for the course and you will, in addition, be reported to NYU-Ghana for further disciplinary sanction.

**Week 1 (21 January 2010)**

**Introductory class**

Getting to understand what the course is and what is expected of students.

**Week 2 (28 January 2010)**

**Overview of the land and peoples of West Africa**


**Week 3 (4 February 2010)**

**West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade**


**Week 4 (11 February 2010)**

1st in-class (open book) test.

**Source:**

Readings for week 3.

**Week 5 (18 February 2010)**

**Islamic Jihads in West Africa in the 19th century**


**Week 6 (25 February 2010)**
Prelude to European Conquest of West Africa: Case Study of the Gold Coast (Ghana)


**Week 7 (4 March 2010)**

2nd in-class (open book) test

**Source:**


**Week 8 (11 March 2010)**

European conquest and African response


**Week 9 (18 March 2010)**

Mid-semester break

**Week 10 (25 March 2010)**

Political Economy of Colonialism in West Africa


**Week 11 (1 April 2010)**

3rd in-class open book test

**Source:**


**Week 12 (8 April 2010)**

**Nationalism in West Africa and Contact Between West African Nationalists and Blacks in the Diaspora and Independence in West Africa**


**Week 13 (15 April 2010)**

**The Independence of the Gold Coast: The success of the independence revolution in West Africa**


**Week 14 (22 April 2010)**

*4th in-class open book test*

**Source:**


**Week 15 (29 April 2010)**

**Colonialism – An assessment**


**Week 16 (6 May 2010)**

**Post colonial West Africa**


