Cocoa and Gold: Ghana’s Development in Global Perspective

Class code | TBA
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Instructor Details | Dr. Kofi Baku
| Kofi.baku@gmail.com

Class Details
Cocoa and Gold: Ghana’s Development in Global Perspective
Mondays: 10:00am -1:00pm
Classroom 1

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course explores Ghana’s development in historic perspective from the colonial era to the recent postcolonial period. It provides an interdisciplinary history that is attentive to political economy, social relations, geography, and politics as they congeal in particular ways throughout Ghana’s development trajectory. It traces the key forces at play in Ghanaian development through time, paying particular attention to the transformations prompted by the region’s encounter with and incorporation into a global economy. Key historical moments will include the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the colonial era in light of their attendant reconfigurations of land, labor, and natural resources—as well as landscapes of power and politics. In the postcolonial period, the course will examine the central epochs in the country’s development trajectory, in relation to its rich political history and shifting global discourses of development and geopolitics. This will include attention to dynamics such as Asian investment, urbanization, international development aid, and the discovery of oil. The goal of the course is to explore theories and debates in development through deep engagement with the specific trajectory of Ghana, as a sort of intensive case study. Field visits (for instance to gold mines and cocoa fields) will be used to complement class discussions and to take advantage of the location of the course in Accra. Ghana’s specific development trajectory will, in turn, be located alongside wider African and global South development trajectories as well as development debates and discourses whenever possible.

Themes:
Classes will proceed by way of the following themes:

1. Colonial society in Ghana in the 19th century;
2. The rise of cocoa and gold as export commodities;
3. Migration and labor in cocoa and gold production; and

**Teaching philosophy**

Student and Teacher interaction in this course is underpinned by the philosophy of Confucius, the Chinese philosopher who lived from 551 BC to 479 BC, which says that:

Tell me and I’ll forget  
Show me and I will remember  
Involve me and I will understand.

As such you will be expected, **at the minimum**, to read and take notes on the weekly materials in this syllabus before class.

**Desired Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

1. Identify and explain the significant and key historical events and developments that shaped Ghana’s social and economic development after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade;
2. Understand the integration of Ghana into the global economic system after the end of the Atlantic slave trade as a primary producer of cocoa and gold; and
3. Understand the consequences and legacies of colonialism for Ghana’s post colonial development.

**Assessment Components**

1. The course is organized around lectures with discussions in class.
2. Students are 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. There will be no make up for unexcused absence from class. Students who frequently absent themselves from lectures will not be eligible to take the end of semester examinations.
3. You are expected to read the materials before lectures, take notes of the readings, and be prepared to discuss them in class. The notes should be a brief summary of the readings for the week. It should be at least 2 typed written pages and should include:

- The thesis/theses (argument/arguments) of the reading;
- The types of sources and evidence that the author uses to support the argument;
- Your assessment of the author’s interpretations (are they convincing? how would you construct the arguments differently?);
- Questions that the reading raised for you, including points of agreement and disagreement; and,
- New lessons that you learnt or the take away lessons.

These notes will be taken by me after the class and it would, addition to hearing you in the class, assist me to determine your contribution to the discussions in class. It will also be evidence of attendance. Each note will be assessed on 4 grades making 36 grades and will represent 36% of the total grade. You will lose marks if you submit your notes to me on a day later than the day of the class.

Notes will be expected for the classes in:

- Week 2
- Week 3
- Week 4
- Week 5
- Week 9
- Week 10
- Week 12
- Week 13
- Week 15

4. There will be three (3) take away assignments, each of which will be graded over 8% making a total of 24%.

- The 1st assignment will be due in week 6. The assignment will be an assessment of:
  
  

The second assignment will be due in week 11. The assignment will be an assessment of:

  
  ii. Frederick Cooper: “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking African Colonial

- The third assignment will be due in **week 14**. The assignment will be an assessment of Walter Rodney: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington: Howard University Press, 1982

5. There will be 3 field trips and you will be expected to write a reaction paper to each field trip. Each reaction paper will graded over 8% making a total of 24%.

6. There will be a movie on the Ghana’s economic history. You will be expected to write a reaction paper to the movie. It will be graded over 6%.

7. There will be a final sit-in end of semester examination, which will be graded over 10%.

**Summary of grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes on class readings</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away assignments</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Semester Examinations</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Creativity, evidence of independent research for references and theories, outstanding analysis and interpretation of texts, active participation in class discussions and assignments. A good grasp of the English Language.

**Grade B:** Evidence of independent research, proficient analysis of references and texts, active participation in class discussions and assignments. A good grasp of the English Language.

**Grade C:** Minimal creativity, efficient interpretation of references, passable analysis, indifferent participation in class discussions and assignments. An average grasp of the English Language.

**Grade D:** Lack of creativity, no evidence of independent research for references, passable analysis, poor participation in class discussions and assignments. A poor grasp of the English Language.

**Grade F:** Poor grasp of topics, inability to interpret texts, evidence of poor reading habits, low participation in class discussions and assignments, very poor grammar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Conversion</th>
<th>GRADE CONVERSION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100 Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93 Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89 Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86 Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83 Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79 Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76 Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73 Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-69 Concessionary Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65 Fail</td>
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Grading Policy

Attendance Policy
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

Late Submission of Work
You will lose marks if you submit your notes to me on a day later than the day of the class.

Plagiarism Policy
As the University's policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.
Readings:


- Rhoda Howard: *Colonialism and underdevelopment in Ghana*, London: Croom Helm, 1978


Required Equipment

Session 1
Introducing the course and getting started – expectations etc

Session 2
The aftermath of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Integrating Ghana into the Global Economic System

Readings:


Session 3
Colonial Economic Development: Some of the Debates

Readings:


Session 4
The Rise of Cocoa: Land

Readings:


Session 5
The Rise of Cocoa: Labour


Session 6  
Tour of Ghana National Museum (First assignment due)

Session 7  
A 4-day tour of Cocoa Research Institute, Tafo and cocoa growing areas in the Eastern Region of Ghana

Session 8  
Mid-Semester Break

Session 9  
Traditional Gold Mining in Ghana and the European Gold Rush

**Reading:**


Session 10  
Gold Mining in Ghana: Technology and Labour

**Reading:**


Session 11  
A 4-day tour of gold mining areas in the Western Region of Ghana  
(Second assignment due)

Session 12  
Health and Social Issues of Gold Mining in Ghana

**Readings:**


- Emmanuel Akyeampong: “Wo pe tam wom pe ba (You like cloth but you don’t want children) Urbanization, Individualism and Gender Relations in Colonial Ghana, 1900 – 39”, David M. Anderson & Richard Rathbone: *Africa’s Urban Past,*
Session 13
The New Frontiers: Asian Investments and Exploitation of Oil

Reading:


Session 14
Movie: Ghana’s Economic Development
(Third assignment due)

Session 15
Colonialism and Ghana’s Development: An Assessment

Readings:

- Rhoda Howard: Colonialism and underdevelopment in Ghana, London: Croom Helm, 1978

Session 16
Final Examination

Classroom Etiquette
Use of mobile phones in lectures in any form (i.e., making or receiving calls and sending or reading text messages etc) is STRICTLY forbidden. You will be severely sanctioned if you use a mobile in lectures.

Required Co-curricular Activities
Field trips to other regions in Ghana

Suggested Co-curricular Activities