

**HISTORY 243.001**  
**The United States and Africa**  
Spring 2017  
TTh 12:30-1:45, Kenan Labs B121

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12-1pm, Thursdays, 3-4pm, and by appointment

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*Interested in Africa? They were too!*  
(and by the end of this class, you will know who these people are)

In History 243, we will examine the long history of American involvement with Africa. Under what circumstances have various Americans identified with Africa? How have Americans sought to do good in Africa? How have Americans sought influence or profits in Africa? To what effects?

We will approach these questions through such topics as:

- The United States and the Atlantic slave trade
- Back-to-Africa movements in the 19th and 20th centuries
- US government policies toward Africa, from the Cold War to the War on Terror
- American businesses and economic policies in Africa
- American activism around Africa

This course is intended to 1) familiarize you with some of the connections between African and American history; 2) challenge you to consider how Americans have thought about Africa at different points in time, and what that means about America as well as Africa; and 3) introduce you to some of the major American foreign and economic policies that have affected Africans, as well as how Africans have influenced, or attempted to influence, the United States. In addition, this course is designed to give you practice in critical reading, thinking, and writing, and in using historical insights to understand contemporary issues and actions.

**Format and Activities:**

Since people learn best through multiple senses and activities, this course is organized around a mixed format of mini-lectures, discussions, film viewings, readings, writing, and research. Class meetings will feature a mix of the first three; you will be responsible for the others with guidance from me. Here is some more information on your responsibilities:

**Readings:** Please come to class having read and carefully considered (see below) the assignment listed for that day, and having brought the text(s) with you. Readings will be drawn from the following books, which are available for purchase at Student Stores and on reserve at the Undergraduate Library:

Curtis Keim, *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind* (3rd ed., 2014)

James Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*

Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: from the Cold War to the War on Terror*

Rye Barcott, *It Happened on the Way to War: A Marine's Path to Peace*

In addition to these books, we will read articles and other documents available either on the internet or on the class Sakai site. You can get to the internet documents on your own or via links provided on Sakai version of this syllabus or under "Resources" on Sakai.

### **Other Assignments:**

1. Class participation: At a bare minimum this means attendance in class; it also includes active involvement in class discussion. By taking part in our class discussions, you will deepen your understanding of the ideas and phenomena we study and you will gain practice and confidence in presenting your thoughts orally. Missing class more than once, using your laptop for something other than class work, and listening passively without adding anything of your own will all adversely affect your participation grade.

In order to encourage participation and minimize distractions, I ask that you **use your laptops only to consult online readings or when specifically asked to do so**. You will participate better and retain more if you take notes by hand and avoid the distraction of your and your neighbors' screens.

2. Reading quizzes: In advance of most class meetings, there will be a brief quiz on Sakai consisting of 5-10 questions; these can be completed at any time up to relevant class meeting at 12:30pm. The purpose of these quizzes is to help make your reading more productive and efficient by giving you guidance about what themes and issues to focus on and to prepare you to fully engage in discussions. If you miss the deadline for a quiz you will not be allowed to make it up, but the lowest two quiz grades will be dropped.

3. Two analytical essays: At the end of Part II and Part V of the course (see below), you are responsible for writing short (3-4 page) essays analyzing the reading in its historical context. The essays should be

double-spaced in 12-point font, with page numbers for quotations given in parentheses in the text. The purpose of these essays is to give you practice in using your knowledge of history to make interpretations, and in translating your analysis into coherent, well-crafted writing.

4. Interview and historical contextualization: By the end of the semester, you are to conduct an interview (by email, phone, Skype or Facetime, or in person) with someone involved with connections between Africa and the United States. This could be a person affiliated with a government organization or NGO dealing with Africa, someone doing business in or with Africa, someone involved in missionary enterprises in Africa, someone who has lived in Africa for significant time, an African immigrant to the US, or someone else who seems relevant (check with me). You will be provided with a list of possibilities, but you are also encouraged to figure out your interview subject on your own, in relation to your own interests. The purpose of the interview is to find out this person's, or her/his organization's, goals in relation to Africa, how they have pursued those goals, challenges and/or opportunities they have identified, and what they see as the outcome(s) of their endeavors. In a 5-7 page paper, you are to describe the interview and then compare your subject to others we have studied who may have been engaged in similar work. How does your subject reflect or differ from historical trends? The final paper will be due after classes end, but the interview must be conducted before the last day of class, when everyone will be called upon to share briefly who they interviewed and what they learned from that person.

For this and other written assignments, deadlines are firm and lateness will result in a reduction of your grade.

5. Final exam: Your final exam will include a selection of questions from the Sakai reading quizzes as well as an essay in which you are asked to reflect on the relationship(s) between the United States and Africa.

You should be aware that plagiarism will not be tolerated, and all suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Court for assessment. Remember that when writing, taking exams, or performing other assignments you are bound by the Honor Code. For details, see

<http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html> and <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>.

Your final course **grade** will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	10%
Reading quizzes	25%
Two analytical essays	30%
Interview contextualization	20%
Final exam	15%

Academic Support Services: The College of Arts and Sciences has developed several support programs

to assist students. Accessibility Resources & Service provides individual support to students with learning or other challenges (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/>, 919-962-8300). The Learning Skills Center offers free instruction in a variety of academic learning strategies (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>, 962-3782, 962-6389). The Writing Center--which fills up quickly--provides free tutorial services (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>, 962-7710, 962-4060).

**Schedule:** (Please note that I reserve the right to change this schedule as necessary and with advance warning.)

### Part I: Overviews

Th 1/12: Introductions to the course and each other

- What are the ways that Americans have engaged with Africa?
- What do we (and other Americans) think about Africa?

Tu 1/17: The United States and Africa, 1619-the present: A Chronological and Intellectual Overview

- Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, chapters 1 and 3
- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, pp. 4-12

### Part II, People: Back to Africa?

Th 1/19: The Atlantic Slave Trade

- Campbell, prologue, "Ayuba's Journey," pp. 1-14 in *Middle Passages*
- Class activity: using the Slave Trade Database, at [www.slavevoyages.org](http://www.slavevoyages.org)

Tu 1/24: American Slavery, African Freedom? The Founding of Sierra Leone and Liberia

- Campbell, *Middle Passages*, ch. 1, "Windward Coast," pp. 15-56
- In-class video: part of "Liberia: America's Stepchild" (Nancee Oku Bright, 2002)

Th 1/26: Race, Reconstruction, and the Image of Africa in the late 19th century

- Campbell, *Middle Passages*, ch. 3, "Emigration or Extermination," pp. 99-126
- Sakai: Rev. Bishop H.M. Turner, "The American Negro and His Fatherland" (1895) and WEB DuBois, excerpt from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
- Booker T. Washington, "Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are" (1895), at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/88/>

Tu 1/31: The Pan-African Visions of WEB DuBois and Marcus Garvey

- Campbell, *Middle Passages*, ch. 6, "The Spell of Africa," pp. 226-250

- Sakai: Universal Negro Improvement Association, *Declaration of the Rights of the Negro People of the World* (1920), in David Northrup, *Crosscurrents in the Black Atlantic, 1770-1965: A Brief History with Documents*, 90-95
- In-class video: part 2 of "WEB DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices" (30 mins.)

Th 2/2: "The Politicals" in 1950s Ghana

- Campbell, *Middle Passages*, ch. 8, "Black Star," pp. 315-329, 334-36, 341-352
- Sakai: Maya Angelou, *An African American in Ghana* (1963), in Northrup, *Crosscurrents*, 162-165

Tu 2/7: Back to Africa today?

- Sakai: Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007), Prologue and chapter 1, pp. 3-48
- First analytical essay due: Why did Hartman go to Ghana? How did her outlook and experiences compare to other Americans she met there and to other Americans who traveled to Africa in the past? What impression does this comparison give you about the meaning of "return" to Africa for African Americans?

### Part III, Politics: The Cold War and Africa, 1945-1994

Th 2/9: US Policies and Africa after WWII

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, chapter 1, pp. 18-29

Tu 2/14: The Congo Crisis: What happened?

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, chapter 3
- In-class film excerpt: *Cuba: An African Odyssey*, part 1 (2007, 30 of 90 minutes)

Th 2/16: The Congo Crisis: What was the role of the US?

- Stephen R. Weissman, "U.S. Role in Lumumba Murder Revealed," (July 22, 2002) at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200207220024.html>
- Stephen R. Weissman, "Congo-Kinshasa: New Evidence Shows U.S. Role in Congo's Decision to Send Patrice Lumumba to His Death," (August 1, 2010) at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008010004.html>
- Read the Church Commission report (1975) sections on the Congo, pp. 13-70 (you can stop at p. 20 if necessary), on Sakai or at [http://historymatters.com/archive/church/reports/ir/html/ChurchIR\\_0014a.htm](http://historymatters.com/archive/church/reports/ir/html/ChurchIR_0014a.htm)

Tu 2/21: Interlude--Back to Africa meets Mobutu's Zaire

- Alan Cowell, "Mobutu's Zaire: Magic and Decay," *New York Times Magazine* (April 5, 1992), at <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/05/magazine/mobutu-s-zaire-magic-and-decay.html?pagewanted=1>
- In-class film excerpt: *When We Were Kings* (Leon Gast, 1996)

Th 2/23: Apartheid in South Africa

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, ch. 5, pp. 103-115
- Sakai: African National Congress, “The Freedom Charter,” 1955
- Sakai: Steve Biko, “American Policy towards Azania” (1976) in *I Write What I Like*, pp. 138-142

Tu 2/28: The Cold War turns hot in Angola

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, pp. 79-83, 88-89, 92-98, 121-133
- In-class film excerpt: *Cuba: An African Odyssey*, part 2 (2007, about 45 of 90 minutes)

Th 3/2: Americans and the anti-Apartheid Movement

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, review pp. 113-115 and read pp. 133-135
- Sakai: Oliver Tambo, “Make South Africa Ungovernable” (1985) and “Strategic Options for International Companies” (1987), pp. 151-163 and 245-255 of *Oliver Tambo Speaks*
- In-class film excerpt: *Apartheid and the Club of the West* (Connie Field, 2007, 89 mins.)

Tu 3/7: Cold War and the Horn of Africa

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, ch. 6 and pp. 203-205

Th 3/9: Looking ahead to activism – Live Aid and the image of Ethiopia

- Douglas R. Egerton and Leigh Fought, “Globalizing Protest in the 1980s: Musicians Collaborate to Change the World,” *History Now*, at <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/age-reagan/essays/globalizing-protest-1980s-musicians-collaborate-change-world>
- Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, ch. 5, “Where is the Real Africa?”
- Watch some youtube videos from the 1985 Live Aid concerts
- In-class video, about 10 minutes of “Give Us the Money: How Do You Change the World?— Why Poverty?” (Films Media Group, 2012), at [fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102632&xtid=55237](http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102632&xtid=55237)

Tu 3/14 and Th 3/16: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

#### **Part IV, Money: Africa, the International Economy, and the US, 1950-almost now**

Tu 3/21: Neocolonialism

- Sakai: Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1968), read the Introduction and then skim chapter 6

Th 3/23: Is this neocolonialism?

- Sakai: David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy* (2007), ch. 12, “The Volta River Project” (also available through the UNC Library’s online catalog at <http://site.ebrary.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/lib/uncch/detail.action?docID=10448535>)

- Sakai: Kwame Nkrumah, "Inauguration of Volta River Project, 22 Jan. 1966," in *Africa Report* 11, 4 (1966), 21-22

Tu 3/28: No class – identify your interview subject and begin research

Th 3/30: Structural Adjustment

- Keim, ch. 6, "We Should Help Them," pp. 83-88
- Sakai: excerpts from chapter 5 of Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940* (read pp. 91-93, 99-103, 105-107, 115-118, and 130-131)
- and if you want to know about the situation today, see this article and the links within it: Maria Hengeveld, "Africa's Austerity Apocalypse" (July 10, 2016), [at africasacountry.com](http://africasacountry.com), <http://africasacountry.com/2016/07/africas-austerity-apocalypse/>

Tu 4/4: Austerity, wars, and international trade in the 1990s and beyond: Rwanda, Congo

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, 193-198 and 208-212
- Colin Kinniburgh, "Beyond 'Conflict Minerals': The Congo's Resource Curse Lives On," *Dissent* (Spring 2014), at <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/beyond-conflict-minerals-the-congos-resource-curse-lives-on>
- Optional: Campbell, ch. 9, "Counting the Bodies," pp. 365-67, 375-382, 391-404

Th 4/6: Austerity, wars, and international business in the 1990s: Liberia revisited

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, ch. 8 pp. 198-203
- Watch (before class) the first 55 minutes of PBS Frontline: "Firestone and the Warlord" (2014, 83 minutes), at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/firestone-and-the-warlord/>. We will finish it in class.
- Optional: Campbell, Epilogue, "The Language We Cry In," pp. 412-421

## Part V, Activism: Invasion of the NGOs

Tu 4/11: Why NGOs?

- Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, ch. 6, pp. 88-103
- Barcott, *It Happened on the Way to War*, pp. 1-55
- Check-in on progress of interviews and papers

Th 4/13: NGO case study from close to home - Carolina for Kabira

- Barcott, *It Happened on the Way to War*, pp. 56-80, 95-109, 118-141, 161-170

Tu 4/18: Assessing NGOs

- Barcott, *It Happened on the Way to War*, pp. 304-335
- Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa," *Granta* 92 (2005) at <http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1>

- Second analytical essay due: How did Barcott and his allies try to avoid some of the missteps of other NGOs and humanitarians in Africa? How successful do you think they were? What do you think that Wainaina would say about the way Barcott wrote about, and operated in, Africa?

### **Part VI: The US and Africa Today--Two Themes**

Th 4/20: Emigration from Africa

- Sakai: Ira Berlin, "Global Passages," ch. 5 of *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (2010), pp. 201-229
- Sakai: Barak Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (1995), ch. 19

Tu 4/25: The US and Africa since 9/11

- Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, pp. 213-222 and "Conclusion"
- Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, ch. 12

Th 4/27: Wrap Up and share highlights from interviews

**Final Papers Due: Monday, May 1, by 12:00pm**

**Final Exam: Friday, May 5, 12:00-3:00pm**