This syllabus may be modified as needed over the course of the term; you will be notified of any changes and they will appear on the course Canvas site.

Instructor
Prof. S. Smallwood
211 Mary Gates Hall
ses9@uw.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

Course Grader
Alexandra Ritsatos
aritsat@uw.edu

Description
This course will introduce you to the history of Africa across most of the second millennium of the Common Era—we will cover roughly 900 years from about c. 1000 CE to the end of the 1800s CE. The period encompasses the rise and decline of powerful kingdoms and city-states as well as the proliferation of less hierarchical chiefdoms and “stateless” societies. Another major theme of Africa’s history in this period is engagement with global trade networks that carried things, people, and ideas across the Sahara Desert and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Our period ends with the encroachment of European colonial rule throughout the continent at the close of the nineteenth century. Many of the modern myths about Africa and Africans emerged in this period, and one of our major goals will be to challenge lingering notions that Africa and its peoples are static and unchanging, primitive and simple, and best understood in terms of racial difference.

Student Responsibilities
I expect you to conduct yourself with professionalism, courtesy and respect in all interactions (whether in person or online) with one another and with me. This means you should:

- Plan to attend all class meetings and come prepared to participate in classroom activities.
- Our classroom time will include in-class participation activities and assignments that will occasionally be collected, so please come prepared to produce and share writing (either in hard copy or digitally).
- This should go without saying, but I’ll say it anyway! Do not nap, read the paper, check email, send texts, surf the net, etc. during class. Turn cell phones off or set to vibrate. Use laptops or tablets only for class-related activities—i.e. note taking and completing in-class assignments.
Learning Goals
Your goal should be to not just earn a “good” grade, but to grow intellectually: to end the quarter better able to knowledgeably engage questions about Africa’s history than at the start of the term; with improved abilities in the tools of scholarly historical inquiry; and with deeper understanding and awareness of yourself as a learner. In addition to learning new things about African history, you should aim to:

- Strengthen your analytical reading skills by synthesizing content and evaluating interpretations in assigned materials.
- Deepen your mastery of the key tools of persuasive writing: formulating solid arguments, developing analysis and interpretations supported by evidence, and presenting your work in clear, well-organized prose.
- Improve your skills as a productive collaborator—being able to learn with and from others, share ideas, and communicate effectively, especially about sometimes difficult and disturbing topics.
- Advance your understanding of yourself as an individual engaged in what is (hopefully) the lifelong power of learning itself—your awareness of the things that matter to you as a learner and why.

All of the above are invaluable skills that will serve you well in your lives professionally and personally beyond your time here at UW.

Course Requirements & Grading
Your grade for the course will reflect your work in the five components listed below; more details about the assignments will be provided in Canvas. Please note that you must have a record of engagement in each of the five course components to receive a passing grade.

Reflection Writing (20%)
Throughout the quarter, and beginning with the Week 1 Concept Map assignment, you will complete writing assignments that ask you to reflect on your learning. As noted below, you are required to select at least two items in this category for inclusion in your Portfolio Project. These will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis.

Annotate & Discuss Assignments in Hypothesis (25%)
With the exception of Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart, you will complete all assigned readings using the Hypothesis collaborative annotation tool (it is embedded in Canvas and you do not need to create an account or take any additional steps to access or use the app). Your task for these assignments will be to make at least 3 annotations and at least 2 replies to classmates’ annotations. These will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis.

Short Essay (10%)
In lieu of a midterm exam, you will write a short (5pp) essay due Friday, May 3.

Weekly In-Class Participation (15%)
Our Tu/Th class time will include participation activities and assignments. To receive credit for these you must be present in class and complete the activity or assignment—these will not otherwise be graded, though they will be collected occasionally.
Portfolio Project (30%)
In place of a final exam, you will work throughout the quarter to create a portfolio project that you will complete and submit as your capstone summation of your learning at the end of the quarter. We’ll talk more about this through the quarter, but as a beginning point of reference, think of the portfolio project as a collection of “artifacts” that you assemble to demonstrate the content and scope of your work for the course together with your substantive reflections on what you’ve learned, how you’ve learned, and what your learning has contributed to your intellectual and personal growth. In short, you should approach the portfolio project as an opportunity to be an active creator of your own learning experience and outcomes.

You are required to include the following:

- Introduction
- Week 1 Concept Map assignment
- At least 12 (but not more than 18) additional artifacts (text, image, video, audio) from the course: at least three items of assigned reading; at least 3 primary source documents; at least two Reflection Writing assignments; and because much our best learning takes place through engagement with others, up to two of your artifacts may come from the writing classmates have shared in Annotate & Discuss assignments. The remainder of your Portfolio artifacts can be additional course materials or items discovered through your own research.
- Portfolio Essay (8 pages) that revisits your Week 1 Concept Map and connects the dots between the artifacts you’ve chosen to assemble in your portfolio by using them as evidence in support of your analysis of up to three themes or topics you regard as having contributed the most to your understanding of Africa in the era of the Atlantic slave trade.

You can create your portfolio in text format (e.g. Google doc, MS Word doc, or PDF) or as a website (e.g. the ePortfolio tool in your Canvas account, Google Sites, Weebly, Squarespace, Wix, or StoryMaps).

Your completed Portfolio Project is due Thursday, June 6.

Required Reading
There is one required book for the course: Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (New York, 1994 ISBN 10: 0385474547 ISBN 13: 9780385474542). It is widely available for purchase from Barnes & Noble, Abe Books, and other independent booksellers (including the one named after a river in South America). We will read Part I of the novel in Week 2 so please obtain a copy as soon as you can. All other required reading and viewing materials are provided in Canvas as digital files.
COURSE CALENDAR

UNIT I (WEEKS 1-2): 
“Africa” and “History”

Week 1
Tu March 26: Introduction & Syllabus Overview
Th March 28: Visualizing the Continent’s Physical Geography


Week 2
Tu April 2: Africa’s Past as a Subject of History (Part 1)
Th April 4: Africa’s Past as a Subject of History (Part 2)
Read: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York, 1994), 1-57 (Part 1)

UNIT II (WEEKS 3-4) 
Africa at the Start of the 2nd Millennium CE (c. 1000 CE – 1400 CE)

Week 3
Tu April 9: Premodern African Societies in Global Context
Th April 11: Premodern African Societies in Regional Context

Week 4
Tu April 16: Islam, Trans-Saharan Trade, and West African States
Th April 18: “Slavery” in Premodern Africa
Assignment for short essay due Fri May 3 will be posted this week.

UNIT III (WEEKS 5-7):
Africa & European Overseas Colonizing (c. 1400-c. 1800 CE)

Week 5
Tu April 23: No class meeting
Th April 25: No class meeting


Week 6
Tu April 30: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Workshop


Short Essay due Fri May 3 by 10:00 pm.

Week 7
Tu May 7: European Colonizing in Southern Africa in the 17th Century CE
Th May 9: The Dutch Cape Colony (South Africa) in the 18th Century CE


UNIT IV (WEEKS 8-10):
Africa & Modern Western Imperialism (c. 1800 CE - 1900 CE)

Week 8
Tu May 14: The Impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on African Societies
Th May 16: Europe’s Slave Trade Abolition, the Shift to “Legitimate” Commerce, and Invention of “Dark Africa”


Week 9
Tu May 21: The Zulu Kingdom and European Settler Colonialism in early-19th Century Southern Africa

Th May 23: Expanding Frontiers of Slavery and Slave Trading in 19th-Century East/Northeast Africa


Week 10
Tu May 28: Toward the “Scramble” for Africa: New Incentives for Colonization and European Rivalries in the Late 19th Century

Th May 30: Africa Partitioned
