Understanding Contemporary Africa

This course addresses a selection of issues impacting Africa today, from the Rwandan Genocide to HIV/AIDS. It seeks to understand some of these challenges through the perspective of African History. Using case studies drawn from across the continent, it asks how Africa’s recent past – from colonial rule (or earlier) up to today’s independent states – can be used to understand these predicaments.

Required Texts
The following texts are available at the CU Bookstore (and are also on reserve at Norlin):

Philip Gourevitch, We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families (1998).
Martin Meredith, The Fate of Africa (2005).

Journal articles are available through Chinook, the University of Colorado library catalog. Other items are available on CULearn or as E-Books (through Chinook), where noted.

Assignments and Grading
Participation 20%
Response Papers (Due by 3/30/09) 25%
Research Paper (Due 4/27/09) 30%
In-Class Presentation (On 6, 13, 20 or 27 April) 25%

Response papers: a topic will be assigned each week between 2/2/09 and 3/30/09. You must write FIVE of these. You may only turn in ONE response paper per week – i.e. you cannot “catch-up” at the end by handing in four on 3/30/09!

* You MUST hand in assignments on time, otherwise I will not accept them. The only possible exception is in a documented case of illness or some other extraordinary circumstance. In this situation, please see me BEFORE the assignment is due. *
Disability Statement: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or at: http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/

Decorum Statement: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Additional information may be found at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html

Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information on the Honor Code can be found at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html

Religious Observance: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you have a potential class conflict because of religious observance, you must inform me of that conflict by January 31st. See policy details at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Sexual Harassment: The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or promises or create an environment that is hostile or offensive. Harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite gender and between any combination of members in the campus community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the OSH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe they have been sexually harassed can be obtained at: http://www.colorado.edu/odh/

Attendance: This course meets only once per week; attendance is therefore absolutely mandatory. You will be allowed one unexcused absence during the semester; each additional absence will result in your overall grade dropping by one half-grade (i.e. B to B-). The only acceptable excused absence is for a documented family or medical emergency.
Jan. 12th (Wk. 1)   Introduction
Readings:
http://www.granta.com/Magazine/92/How-to-Write-About-Africa?view=articleAllPages

Jan. 19th (Wk. 2)   No Class – MLK Day

Jan. 26th (Wk. 3)   The Rwandan Genocide
Readings:
1) Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (New York: Picador, 1998).

Feb. 2 (Wk. 4)   Mines & Migration in Southern Africa
Readings:
3) Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in *The Invention of Tradition,* 211-62.  [CU Learn]

Feb. 9 (Wk. 5)   “Comrade Bob”: Zimbabwe, Mugabe and the “Land Issue”
Readings:
1) Meredith, Chapter 33 (617-646).
http://www.lrb.co.uk/v30/n23/mamd01_.html

Feb. 16 (Wk. 6)   Kenya: Mau Mau, Memory, and the Politics of Ethnicity
Readings:
1) Meredith, 79-87.
Feb. 23 (Wk. 7)  
Congo and the Cold War
Readings:
1) Meredith, Chapter 6 (93-115).

Mar. 2 (Wk. 8)  
Liberia: Youth and Violence
Readings:
1) Bill Berkeley, *The Graves Are Not Yet Full*, 1-61. [CU Learn]

Mar. 9 (Wk. 9)  
“Developing Africa”
Readings:
2) Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 1-37. [CULearn]

Mar. 16 (Wk. 10)  
Arabs, Africans, Muslims and Christians: Sudan and Darfur
Readings:
1) Meredith, Chapter 31 (588-599).

Mar. 23 (Wk. 11)  
No Class – Spring Break

Mar. 30 (Wk. 12)  
HIV/AIDS and Politics in South Africa
In-class film: *6,000 A Day* (2002).
Readings:
1) Meredith, Chapters 21 & 34 (362-367, 647-675).
3) Stephanie Nolen, *28: Stories of AIDS in Africa* [selections].

Apr. 6, 13, 20, 27  
Class Presentations
(Wks. 13-16)