

Christianity and Politics in African History

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Office hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:45-4:00 pm and by appointment

The tremendous growth of Christianity in Africa was one of the defining events of the 20th century. In 1910 a scant fraction—about nine million people—of the continent’s population were Christians. Today there are 516 million Christians in Africa, over 60 percent of the continent’s population. Nigeria alone has twice as many Protestants as Germany. Churches founded by Africans are now spreading to Europe, Asia and America; today, the largest church in Europe is led by a Nigerian pastor.

This course will explore how all of this came to be. The course is organized chronologically, beginning with the medieval Christian kingdom of Ethiopia and moving forward in time. We will explore the dynamics of the evangelical missionary movement of the 19th century, the role of Christianity in African nationalism, and the reasons for the explosive growth of Pentecostal churches in late 20th century Africa. The focus throughout will be on African theological and political initiative. We will spend a lot of time interpreting and discussing ‘primary’ sources, especially testimonies, newspapers and tracts composed by African Christian thinkers. The course will culminate in the writing of a research paper, which students will compose over the course of the semester in conversation with the professor.

Required Books (available at the bookstore and also on 4 hour reserve in Shapiro Library)

David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Ohio, 2006)

John Thornton, *The Kongolese St. Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian movement, 1684-1706* (Cambridge, 1998)

In addition, a number of required readings are posted to the course’s CTools site. The readings available on CTools are marked with a ** below.

Course requirements:

1. Attendance and participation: This class meets twice a week. Regular attendance is mandatory; if you must miss a class, do let me know in advance. The week’s readings are generally to be prepared for our Thursday meetings, which are labeled ‘Discussion’ on the reading schedule below.

2. Lead discussion. During two of the ten sessions during which we discuss a set of readings, you will (with a partner) lead the class. You should, together, prepare a joint set of reading questions on paper that will structure our conversation. These questions should be sent to me by 9:00 am on the day you are to lead class. During the class meeting you'll raise issues, point toward areas of controversy, and challenge your classmates to think more clearly.

3. Response papers. For both of the sessions during which you're leading discussion you should prepare a short, 3-4 page paper that synthesizes and criticizes the readings. These short papers are due at the start of the class.

4. Research paper. In dialogue with me, you'll prepare a research paper of 18 to 20 pages in length concerning an aspect of the history of Christianity in Africa. The key dates are as follows:

Thursday, 26 February: Meet with instructor to discuss questions and sources.
Due: 500 word proposal.

Thursday, 26 March: Meet with instructor.
Due: Bibliography, revised 500 word proposal and draft outline.

Thursday, 16 April and Tuesday, 21 April: Presentations of research in class.
Due: Abstract of your paper for circulation to classmates.

Thursday, 21 April. **Due:** First draft of paper

Tuesday, 28 April at 4:00. **Due:** Final paper

Marking scheme

Marks will be determined as follows:

Attendance and participation (inc. discussion leading):	20 points
Research paper:	40 points
Response papers (x2):	15 points each
Presentation:	10 points

Academic Integrity Policy

This course follows the academic integrity guidelines set forth by the College of LSA [<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/>] and the History Department [<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/history/undergraduate/courses/guidelinesandpolicies>]. Students should familiarize themselves with both of these documents, which explain the standards of academic integrity and clarify the prohibited forms of academic misconduct. Students in this course should utilize the Chicago Manual of Style Online for all issues of source citation, along with any specific guidelines provided in the course assignments. Clarifying the disciplinary standards of research ethics and source citation is part of the educational mission of this course, and students should consult the instructor regarding any questions. Any cases of academic

misconduct in this class will automatically earn a zero for the assignment (and may incur further penalties). All cases of deliberate academic misconduct that result in formal sanctions of any kind will be reported to the dean's office, as required by LSA policy, which also ensures due process rights of appeal for students.

Grading criteria:

Grading papers is not an exact business. I will not give or take off a fixed number of points for particular strengths or weaknesses. The following table, therefore, should be read as a guideline.

GRADE	ARGUMENT	EVDIENCE	STYLE	MECHANICS
A	Argument clearly stated at beginning and developed logically throughout the paper to a clear conclusion.	Extensive and varied evidence supports argument. No significant omissions, irrelevancies, or errors.	Excellent prose style; clear, elegant and persuasive.	No errors of grammar, spelling etc.
B	Argument generally clear, but some digressions or failures to develop fully to a conclusion.	Generally good evidence, but some lack of variety of sources or errors of omission, or some irrelevant data.	Clear and understandable prose, but less than elegant.	A few minor errors.
C	Argument is implied, but not explicitly states and/or not well developed to a conclusion.	Some evidence, but excessive dependence on a single source, substantial omissions or irrelevancies, and/or minor errors of fact.	Understandable writing, but sometimes vague, wooden, or choppy.	Substantial errors which detract from overall effect of the paper.
D	Argument is barely discernable and/or very poorly developed.	Very little or largely irrelevant evidence, and/or substantial errors of fact.	Writing is confusing, vague, and/or hard to understand.	Frequent and serious errors which make paper hard to understand.
F	No discernable argument or paper totally digresses from argument.	Virtually no relevant evidence and/or very serious errors of fact.	Writing is nearly unintelligible.	Massive errors which render paper nearly unintelligible.

***** Schedule *****

Thursday, 8 January

Introduction to the course; major themes

Screening: Richard Werbner, 'Holy Hustlers' (2009)

I. Ethiopia

Reading

Analysis

Donald Crummey, 'Imperial Legitimacy and the Creation of Neo-Solomonic Ideology in 19th-Century Ethiopia,' *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 28 (109) (1988), 13-43. **

Marilyn Heldman, 'Architectural Symbolism, Sacred Geography and the Ethiopian Church,' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22 (1992), 222-241. **

Primary Source

The *Kebre Nagast*, trans. E.A. Wallis Budge (Oxford, 1932), Ch. 19 (p. 14) to Ch. 63 (p. 87); and Ch. 84 (p. 123) to Ch. 92 (p. 139). **

Tuesday, 13 January

Lecture: Christianity and the Making of England and Ethiopia

Screening: 'Ethiopia' (BBC, 2010)

Thursday, 15 January

Discussion: The Making of Ethiopia

II. The Kongo

Reading:

Analysis

John Thornton, *The Kongolese St. Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Primary Sources

King Afonso I to King of Portugal, 1526 **

Alvare II and Alvare III, 'Relations between the Kingdom of Kongo and the Papacy,' 1613 & 1617 **

Tuesday, 20 January

Lecture: The slave trade and the making of the Kingdom of Kongo

Thursday, 22 January

Discussion: The Kongolese St. Anthony

III. The Evangelical Missionary Movement

Reading:

Analysis

Paul Landau, 'Explaining Surgical Evangelism in Colonial Southern Africa: Teeth, Pain and Faith,' *Journal of African History* 37 (2) (1996), 261-281 **

Paul Landau, 'When Rain Falls: Rainmaking and Community in a Tswana Village, c. 1870 to Recent Times,' *Int. Jo. Afri. Hist. Studies* 26 (1) (1993), 1-30 **

Primary Source

David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in Southern Africa* (1857), 19-25 **

Tuesday, 27 January

Lecture: British missionaries and the civilizing mission

Screening: 'The Bible and the Gun'

Thursday, 29 January

Discussion: Missionaries and rainmakers

IV. Translation

Reading:

Analysis

Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Orbis, 1989), Ch. 3 ('Vernacularization and Westernization') **

Paul Landau, 'Religion and Christian Conversion in Africa: A New Model,' *Journal of Religious History* 23 (1) (Feb. 1999), 8-30 **

Primary Source

John Mbiti, *African Traditional Religions & Philosophy* (Heinemann, 1969), Intro. and Ch. 2 **

Tuesday, 3 February

Lecture: African Traditional Religion: A History

Thursday, 5 February

Discussion: Translation and Cultural Innovation

V. Dissident Christianities in the Kingdom of Buganda

Reading:

Analysis

Neil Kodesh, 'Renovating tradition: The discourse of succession in Buganda,' *Int. Jo. Afr. Hist. Studies* 34 (3) (2001), 511-541 **

Fred Welbourn, 'Joswa Kate Mugema Against Medicine: The Society of the One Almighty God,' in *East African Rebels* (London, 1961), 31-58 **

Primary Sources

'The Butaka Lands Question, 1921-6,' in D.A. Low, *The Mind of Buganda* (Heinemann, 1971), 62-69 **

Kabaka Cwa, 'Education, Civilization, and Foreignization in Buganda,' 1935, in Low, *Mind of Buganda*, 104-108 **

Correspondence from Joswa Mugema and other Malakite Christians to Bishop Willis, late 1920s, from the Church of Uganda Archives **

Tuesday, 10 February

Lecture: Buganda's contestable history

Screening: 'Bunyoro and Buganda' (2012)

Thursday, 12 February

Discussion: Dissident Christianities in central Africa

VI. Christianity and Ethnicity

Reading:

Analysis

John Lonsdale, "'Listen While I Read": Patriotic Christianity among the Young Kikuyu', in Toyin Falola (ed.), *Christianity and Social Change in Africa* (Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 563-93 **

Primary Source

Excerpts from *Mwigwithania* **

Tuesday, 17 February

Lecture: Christianity and Identity

Thursday, 19 February

Discussion: 'The Reconciler'

VII. Photography

Reading:

Analysis

David Maxwell, 'Photography and the Religious Encounter: Ambiguity and Aesthetics in Missionary Representations of the Luba of South East Belgian Congo,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53 (2011) **

Primary Source

University of Southern California Mission Photography Archive

<<http://crcc.usc.edu/initiatives/impa/>>

Tuesday, 24 February

Meetings to discuss final research project

Thursday, 26 February

Lecture and Discussion: The Camera in Africa

Spring Break

Tuesday, 3 March

On break

Thursday, 5 March

On break

VIII. Revivals

Reading:

Analysis

Derek Peterson, 'Revivalism and Dissent in Western Kenya,' in Kevin Ward and Emma Wild-Wood, eds., *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (Ashgate, 2012) **

Primary Sources

Uganda Criminal Investigation Department, 'Balokole Report', 1949, from British National Archives **

Interview with Canon Bedan Ileri, 1988, from J. Murray archive **

Interview with Rev. Geoffrey Ngare, n.d., from J. Murray archive **

Heshbon Mwangi, letter, 1949, from Anglican Church of Kenya archive **

Interview with Juliana Mufuko, 2004 **

Tuesday, 10 March

Lecture: Conversion and the Powers that Be

Thursday, 12 March

Discussion: Bunyan in African Christianity

IX. Nationalism and Christianity

Reading:

Analysis

David Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History* (Ohio University Press, 2012), Chs. 4 to 7 **

Sources

International Missionary Council, 'The Alice Movement in Northern Rhodesia', 1958 **

Republic of Zambia, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Former Lumpa Church' (Government Printer, 1964) **

Tuesday, 17 March

Lecture: Building the Nation

Thursday, 19 March

Discussion: The Spiritual and the Secular in Zambia

X. Africa and the Pentecostal Reformation

Reading:

- Birgit Meyer, 'Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Post-colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse,' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 27 (1998), 316-349 **
- Sasha Newell, 'Pentecostal Witchcraft: Neoliberal Possession and Demonic Discourse in Ivoirian Pentecostal Churches,' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37 (20), 461-490 **
- James H. Smith, 'Of Spirit Possession and Structural Adjustment Programs: Education, Government Downsizing, and their Enchantments in Neoliberal Kenya,' *Journal of Religion in Africa* 31 (4) (2001), 427-456 **

Tuesday, 24 March

Lecture: An African Pentecost?

Screening: James Ault, 'African Christianity Rising: Stories from Ghana' (2013)

Thursday, 26 March

Meetings with instructor to discuss final paper

Tuesday, 31 March

Discussion: Toward an understanding of African Pentecostalism

XI. Transnational African Christianity

Reading:

- David Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) **

Thursday, 2 April

Lecture: African Christianity Abroad

Screening: Annalisa Buttici and Andrew Esiebo, 'Enlarging the Kingdom: African Pentecostals in Italy' (2012).

Tuesday, 7 April

Screening: James Ault, 'African Christianity Rising' (2013)

Thursday, 9 April

Discussion: Transnational African Christianity

Tuesday, 14 April

No class: work on your papers

Thursday, 16 April

Presentations

Tuesday, 21 April

Presentations