Violence, War, and Militarism in Modern Africa  
Spring 2012

History 361  
Time: Tu/Th 10:30-11:45  
Location: University Hall 201

Professor Alicia C. Decker  
Office: University Hall 308  
Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:00-3:00  
E-mail: acdecker@purdue.edu

Course Listserv Address  
To send a message or query to the entire class, please use the following e-mail address:  
spring-2012-hist-36101-001@lists.purdue.edu

Course Description  
Why do African countries always seem to be at war? Is this because Africans are inherently  
more violent than the rest of the world? Or might there be another set of explanations? This  
course seeks answers to these troubling questions by examining some of the myths and realities  
about violence, war, and militarism in Africa. Although these issues are not in any way “new” or  
“modern,” our historical gaze will be focused primarily on the last 125 years. Students can  
expect to engage with a variety of primary sources including films, memoirs, graphic novels,  
music, and speeches, as well as an array of scholarly literature from various academic  
disciplines.

Course Objectives  
By the end of the course, students will have a general understanding of contemporary African  
history as it relates to violence, war, and militarism. In addition, they will learn how to interpret  
historical texts from a number of different epistemic positions (i.e. paying attention to race, class,  
gender, sexuality, nation, and other axes of “difference”). Students can also expect to develop  
stronger writing skills, as well as to improve on critical thinking and oral articulation.

Required Texts  
7. Journal articles and book chapters are available as PDF documents on Blackboard.
Course Policies

- Students wishing to use a laptop computer to take notes must sit in the front row. If I find that you are using your computer for any other activity, you will be asked to leave the class. You then forfeit your “right” to use your computer in class from that time forward.
- Cell phones, Ipods, and MP3 devices are prohibited. Please leave them turned off and out of sight for the entire class. If I see you using them, you may be asked to leave.
- Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.
- If you have a university-recognized disability that requires an accommodation, please make an appointment with Professor Decker to discuss your needs.
- In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Changes in this course will be announced by e-mail.

Grading Policies

- All written work must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. Everything must be paginated and properly cited using Turabian or Chicago-style formatting. Grammar and presentation count, so please use the Writing Lab!
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class. No late papers will be accepted for full credit and will be penalized by one letter grade for every 24 hours late.
- All assignments must be submitted in hard copy—no online attachments!
- Hold on to all graded material until you have received your final grade. If there are any grade discrepancies at the end of the semester, you must have the original document in order for me to consider a grade adjustment.

Course Evaluation

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is crucial to your success in the course. You are allowed two absences, after which your grade will decline. If you miss more than 30% of the classes, you will automatically fail the course unless you have a documented serious illness. In addition, you are required to attend one evening film screening on February 15 at 7:00 p.m. (location TBA). You are expected to attend class having done the readings and ready to participate. Please note that you will be evaluated on how well you are able to engage with the course material. This means that you should come to class having thought about the authors’ main points and the relevance of the material to the course. I expect that everyone will participate actively in every class. Simply showing up does not constitute class participation! Your contributions must be thoughtful and based on the assigned readings. I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes if I think that you are not prepared for class. Active engagement counts for 150 points or 15% of your final grade.
• **Map Quizzes:** Africa is not a country. It is a vast continent with 55 countries (as of today). To understand African history, you must understand its basic geography. Therefore, you will be given map quizzes on three separate occasions: February 16, March 20, and April 19. See the following website: [www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/afrquiz.html](http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/afrquiz.html). Map quizzes will be worth 50 points each for a total of 150 possible points. They count for **15%** of your final grade.

• **Media Reports:** Does history repeat itself? This exercise will allow you to determine whether this adage is indeed true. During the semester you are required to pay close attention to the news, particularly as it relates to Africa. You will turn in four media reports (February 2, February 23, March 22, and April 24). Each report should be no more than two pages in length and should discuss a major current event concerning war, conflict or peace in Africa. Using three media sources—at least one coming from the country where the event is taking place—discuss what you are able to learn about the event. Be sure to pay attention to how the event is described by each of the news agencies. For example, does the local press have a different interpretation than the international press? Why might this be the case? Useful websites include [http://allafrica.com/](http://allafrica.com/), [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/) or [http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/](http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/). Be sure to cite your three sources at the top of your media report. They should be no more than two weeks old. Each report will be worth 25 points (100 points total). This activity counts for **10%** of your final grade.

• **Analytical Essays:** In lieu of exams, you will be required to write three analytical essays over the course of the semester. Each essay should be five pages in length. They will require you to draw from the readings, films, and lectures, so be sure to take good notes. They will be due on February 9, March 29, and May 1. (You will receive the questions in class one week before they are due.) Each essay is worth 200 points. In total, they comprise **60%** of your final grade.

**Grading Scale:**

- A 930-1000 points
- A- 900-929
- B+ 870-899
- B 830-869
- B- 800-829
- C+ 770-799
- C 730-769
- C- 700-729
- D+ 670-699
- D 630-669
- D- 600-629
- F 599 and below
# Lecture and Reading Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 10</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
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<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>“Knowing” Africa</td>
<td>Africa Action article</td>
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<td>Keim article</td>
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<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>Theorizing African violence</td>
<td>Donham article</td>
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<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Militarism in Africa</td>
<td>Volman articles (#1 and #2)</td>
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<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Africans and WWI</td>
<td>Akurang-Parry article (#1)</td>
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<td>Lunn primary source</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Africans and WWII</td>
<td>Akurang-Parry article (#2)</td>
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<td>Kenyatta primary source</td>
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<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Origins of war in Kenya</td>
<td>Elkins, xi-90</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Detention camps in Africa</td>
<td>Elkins, 91-191</td>
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<td>Media report #1 due</td>
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<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Film: “The Kitchen Toto”</td>
<td>Elkins, 192-274</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>Discussion of book</td>
<td>Elkins, 275-368</td>
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<td>Essay #1 due</td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Algerian Revolution</td>
<td>Seferdjeli primary source</td>
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<td>Guest lecture by Dr. Holden</td>
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<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>Mandatory film screening of “The Battle of Algiers” (7pm; location TBA)</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Anti-colonial resistance</td>
<td>Oyebade article</td>
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<td>Map quiz #1</td>
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<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>Origins of war in Sudan</td>
<td>Hari, 183-192; vii-47</td>
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<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>Film: “Lost Boys of Sudan”</td>
<td>Hari, 48-105</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[Or] “All about Darfur”</td>
<td>Media report #2 due</td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Discussion of book</td>
<td>Hari, 106-180</td>
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<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>Origins of war in Uganda</td>
<td>Dysart, Issue 1-2</td>
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Mar. 6  Magic and warfare  Dysart, Issue 3-4
Mar. 8  Film: “Grace, Milly, Lucy”  Dysart, Issue 5-6
Mar. 13  Spring Break
Mar. 15  Spring Break
Mar. 20  Militarism and women’s liberation  Sankara, 7-67
         Map quiz #2
Mar. 22  Origins of war in Sierra Leone  Campbell, xiii-78
         Media report #3 due
Mar. 27  Film: “Liberia: An Uncivil War”  Campbell, 79-164
Mar. 29  Discussion of book  Campbell, 165-226
         Essay #2 due
Apr. 3   Origins of war in DRC  Stearns, 3-92
Apr. 5   Rape in warfare  Stearns, 93-180
Apr. 10  Film: “The Greatest Silence”  Stearns, 181-249
Apr. 12  Discussion of book  Stearns, 250-338
Apr. 17  ICC and Special Courts  Baker article
         Turack article
Apr. 19  Truth Commissions  Vora and Vora article
         Steinberg article
         Map quiz #3
Apr. 24  UN Peacekeeping  Adebajo and Landsberg article
         Bah and Aning article
         Media report #4 due
Apr. 26  Terrorism in Africa  Campbell article
         Whitaker article

NOTE: Final essay is due by 5pm on May 1st in Professor Decker’s office (University Hall 308)