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The Historian's Craft

Yaari Felber-Seligman
CUNY City College

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HISTORIAN'S CRAFT

SYLLABUS FOR FALL 2021

Updated: October 12, 2021

Course Number: HIST 21300

Instructor: Dr. Yaari Felber-Seligman (they, them, theirs)

Email: yfelberseligman@ccny.cuny.edu

You may email me at any time. I do my best to respond to all emails within 48 hours. Please note that I usually do not check work emails on Fridays and Saturdays.

Phone:

This is a Google voice account. With this number, you will be able to text or call me. Unless it is an emergency and you require help connecting with CCNY services, I ask that you *only* call or text during the following days/times when I can commit to being able to respond within a few hours if not sooner:

Tuesday-Thursdays between 10am-5pm and Sundays between 5-8pm. During these hours, I will do my best to return texts/calls within 3 hours of receipt if I cannot pick up the phone directly. If I receive a call outside these times or days, I will do my best to return it during my next scheduled available day/time.

Texts/Calls are best for quick questions or to set up an appointment for a longer scheduled meeting with me (as a call or Zoom session). Keeping unscheduled calls/texts brief allows me to give fair attention to all my students and to my other responsibilities.

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30pm-4:30pm and Sundays 7:00-8:00pm.

As your first option for connecting with me, I ask that everyone try to attend office hours if you are able to do so. However, I know that not everyone's schedule will permit this. You may also schedule a meeting with me by appointment. Please text or email to do so.

Office hours are your chance to drop in and meet with me and/or work or connect with your classmates in a break out room hosted there. You never need an appointment for office hours.

Use this link to join office hours or scheduled meetings.

Classroom/Times:

Our course is 100% virtual. We meet on Zoom during our scheduled time/date: 11am-12.15pm Tuesdays/Thursdays. Unless announced, all our classes will meet live. All our course information may be found on Blackboard.

Find the website to log into Blackboard here. On this site, there is also helpful links for user guides and trouble-shooting:

The Blackboard Website:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/cis/core-functions/cuny-blackboard/>

[Google Planning Document](#)

We use this document for class activities and to sign up for projects like the group book reports project.

WELCOME, AKWAABA, KARIBUNI, SANIBONA!

This is our course syllabus for fall 2021. It outlines important course policies, explains what is expected of you and how you will be graded, and contains key deadlines and a course calendar. This syllabus also contains an overview of our campus resources to support you and your studies. Please read through this document carefully. Its goal is to contain all essential course information. As assignments are given out over the semester, these instructions will also be added to the syllabus posted to our course website. Likewise, sources and topics considered in our classes will be noted too on our calendar to aid everyone's review.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course offers an intensive introduction to the principles of historical research, writing, and analysis. Thinking and writing historically is more art than science and, like any craft, requires practice and dedication. Through a series of focused readings and writing assignments, students learn critical thinking, research, reading, and writing skills that are not only essential to the historian's craft but applicable in many other disciplines as well. Students will explore what makes writing effective (and even enjoyable!) in general, and what ingredients go into successful historical writing in particular. In addition, this course will examine various ways to study historical topics through methodological and theoretical readings. To accomplish these goals, this course involves regular writing and in-class exercises to explore the wide array of ways in which historians engage with the past.

To direct our discussions, our focus will be on theme from African History (detailed below). Along the way, we will consider both conventional and unconventional historical sources and approaches. During the semester each student will design a research proposal project on a historical topic of their choosing. All students are required to get instructor approval for their project choices to make sure I have the expertise necessary to advise and grade you on it.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- identify and apply the key historical concepts of change-over-time, cause-and-effect, agency, historical empathy, and continuity and discontinuity, and recognize how these concepts are employed in the historical method.
- analyze and interpret primary sources and secondary with attention to audience, authorship, and context.
- recognize some of the ways in which historians have conflicting interpretations of the past, and identify broad trends and schools of thought in history writing.
- identify and evaluate a variety of historical methodologies.
- produce a research prospectus with a clear thesis and identify primary and secondary source material relevant to their project.
- express their ideas clearly and coherently in writing with appropriate evidentiary support and proper citation.
- use the library, internet, and local archives for historical research.
- cite sources appropriately and accurately.
- understand plagiarism and its consequences.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Our course is 100% virtual. It will be taught live as scheduled except for exceptions announced in class and on our calendar. Please join Zoom at our time as your default plan. Please see page 1 for details and links. All course information is hosted on our Blackboard website. On our course site, in the Course Content section, you will find a folder for each day. It will contain the necessary materials for a particular class (such as a sample primary source or web link). Please use this [Google Planning Document](#) to sign up for Book groups and other activities.

COMMUNICATIONS

When you get in touch (whether by email, zoom office hours, or text/call), please introduce yourself by the name (and pronouns) you want me to use and remind me which class you are in. I'm teaching three classes this term so I have a lot of new students to get to know.

Especially in a virtual course, communications are super important. I can be reached by email or, during certain hours, by phone or text (see page 1 for all contacts and when I am available for these contact options). For any in-depth questions or things you need to share, please either email me or set up an appointment. For quick questions please feel free to text/call. Getting career advice, going over a grade, getting feedback on a paper draft, all are best done during a meeting or in office hours, not by phone or text.

Please Check your Email Regularly

On your end, as a student in this course, I ask of you the following: 1) please know which email accounts you have linked to your Cunyfirst and Blackboard accounts. Please check those emails regularly. If necessary, please change the email accounts or set up forwarding to be sure you do not miss vital communications. I will use the email addresses you have there to do essential things like share paper and exam feedback and grades or follow up if I am missing an assignment with you. 2) I ask you to stay in touch. I would love to see all my students at least once in the semester during office hours.

How to Turn in Assignments

Informal writing, such as Participation Activities or our Independent Learning Blog will all be done on Blackboard in the Discussion Forums. We will go over how to do this in Weeks 1 and 2.

Any formal writing or projects (exams, papers, book report) should be emailed to your instructor at: yfelberseligman@ccny.cuny.edu PLEASE USE AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT IF POSSIBLE. Sometimes sharing access does not work and this causes grading delays.

Share Course Problems or Concerns

If something isn't working, please let me know. I am (for better or worse) not the programmer for Blackboard or CUNYfirst as systems (although, I am responsible for content on our specific Blackboard site); however, I can reach out to IT or others as needed. I definitely want to hear about any problems accessing assigned resources, our Blackboard site's content or any other obstacles keeping you from doing your best in this class.

If you have feedback on the course or an assignment, I want to hear it! I am constantly updating and improving my classes and value input from all my students. If there's something I can do to make you feel more welcome, please let me know. I'm someone who thinks a lot about how to create courses welcoming and accessible to students of all backgrounds and abilities. I really value hearing from you if there are any concerns or ways I can further improve to make sure you get the most out of our class. Likewise, if any problems arise that make attending or participating in our course difficult, please let me know something is going on. If I'm informed, I can usually help you get caught up, but if I never hear from you until final's week, it becomes a tough situation.

OFFICE HOURS

I want to stress that office hours are for everyone! Not just students who may feel they have difficulties with the class. Office hours also offers one way for you to further connect with your classmates. I will set up a break out room during all my Zoom office hours. You can either meet with me then or hang out in the break out room, using it as a space to get work done or connect with classmates per your preference. As needed I will add additional breakout rooms so we can have a quiet study/writing room and a chatting room as needed. Please see page 1 for our Office Hours times and a Zoom Link to them.

CLASSROOM CULTURE AND ETIQUETTE

Everyone is welcome in my classroom! I value the diversity of our CCNY student body and that includes respecting the range of personal, political, religious, cultural, and other perspectives students might have. Class discussion and assignments can certainly acknowledge personal insights and viewpoints (sometimes this is a key research strategy as you will see). However, all students are required to respect each other's right to be in this class. This means, in practice, demonstrating respectful disagreement and acknowledging that you may not always agree with your classmates (or with your instructor) and that is okay. We can all learn much from

each other and from our differences. If I may paraphrase from Star Trek, “our business” is the diversity of human experiences.

In many ways, any historical study or research means encountering the past as “an unfamiliar country.” There is tremendous value in this but, as your instructor, I recognize certain topics may be difficult, feel deeply personal, or be triggering, depending on everyone’s backgrounds. To participate in this class, you also are required to recognize that not all course material, readings, or other sources will reflect perspectives that you may agree with or be comfortable with. (For example, as a history class we will consider topics such as European colonialism, diverse religious perspectives, politics, racism, and more). In practice, this means, I will do my best as an instructor to give you a head’s up if I know from experience a topic or sources can be difficult (for example, I do my best to flag any sources that depict explicit violence or are sexually suggestive as I know students’ comfort levels vary). You may always feel free to contact me if something makes you uncomfortable or comes up in class. However, please note I will not necessarily remove a topic or reading or source from consideration simply because you disagree with it. I do care, though, to know a reading/source/topic is difficult so I can do my best to maintain inclusive and safe discussions for all in class.

In sum, it is very important to me that all students feel supported, welcomed, and safe in my classes. I think a lot as an instructor about how to design courses and assignments and create environments that welcome everyone, but of course, like anyone, I can always improve further. Please know that I welcome your feedback if there are things that I can do to better meet these goals and/or if any problems come up during the course.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Like, 2020, this year continues to be an incredibly stressful time. I, and others at CCNY, want to do our best to support everyone as best we can. Please find here links to our campus policies and resources. Certain policies, such as Covid-safety measures, continue to evolve, so I highly encourage everyone to always check the websites and watch their emails for the latest information.

Our library

Learn about our library, how to access materials, and get help here. The library team is available for research advice as well. <https://library.cuny.cuny.edu/>

The Writing Center

One on one assistance with assignments. Highly recommended to all students, regardless of your grade point average or how you are doing in this course.

<https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/writing>

Stress Management

Please take advantage of our campus’s free resources. Taking care of your self is an important part of being a student, scholar, and researcher. <https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/counseling>

Office of Information Technology

Get help with email, Cunyfirst, Blackboard, or borrow for free a device for this semester. <https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/it>

Student Affairs: Activities, Clubs, Support, Emergency Grants

Use this site for information and support on CCNY activities, clubs, emergency grants and more: <https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/studentaffairs>

Benny's Food Pantry

Information about our campus's Food Pantry here:
<https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/bennysfoodpantry>

CAMPUS POLICIES

Covid-19 and Campus Access

Please see the CCNY and CUNY sites here for the latest on policies. They describe what is required to access campus with the latest information per library use, what testing/vaccine requirements are in place, and more. CUNY's site also has helpful supports and resources.

CCNY's Covid-19 site: <https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/presidentsoffice/blog/covid-19>

CUNY's Covid-19 site: <https://www.cunycunycuny.edu/coronavirus/continuity-for-students/>

Accommodations for Students who have Disabilities

In compliance with federal, state, and local law and CUNY policy, and to ensure the full and meaningful participation of all students, CCNY provides appropriate academic accommodations through the AccessAbility Center. Students requiring special accommodations, including testing accommodations, should contact the AccessAbility Center and provide all pertinent documentation to their course instructor at the beginning of the term. You are encouraged to discuss with me any accommodations or concerns you have during the first week. Please know I am committed to working with you and am happy to help work out what you need. For more information, visit CCNY's Access Ability website:

<https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/accessability>

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Any work you submit must be your own, not something purchased, copied, or downloaded from someone else. Your work **must** have appropriate footnotes or other citations for ideas quoted, paraphrased, or drawn substantially from someone else. A paper that fails to show full, truthful, and accurate citations constitutes academic dishonesty as much as a paper that was written in part or full by someone else. Any evidence of academic dishonesty may be reported to the appropriate dean for disciplinary action. For more information, visit CUNY's Academic Standards: <https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/standards>

Grading & Registration

As our semester progresses, I will share my grading policies and expectations for all assignments. For questions on enrollment, campus deadlines, and campus grading policies, see the Registrar's office: <https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/registrar>

CCNY's Office of Diversity and Compliance

Please visit this website for information on diversity and compliance. Should you encounter problems, I am also able to assist you in finding the appropriate contacts.

<https://www.ccnycunycuny.edu/affirmativeaction>

ASSIGNED READINGS AND SOURCES

No purchase of books or other materials is required for this course. Our readings will consist of a combination of library e-books, web-materials, journal articles, and PDFs.

Some readings and materials will be noted on our calendar as Homework readings: these are to be done outside of class time. Homework readings are usually overviews of key topics, such as selections from textbooks or articles. I do my best to have these readings be approachable and interesting.

Other readings & materials will be part of our classes. For example, I may give you 20 minutes to read a primary source before we break up into small groups to discuss it. These materials will be available in a folder in the CONTENTS section with that class date on our Blackboard website. By dividing readings in this manner, not only do I hope you gain a richer involvement with them, but I also hope this keeps the course reading load manageable, as I know in these uncertain times, everyone faces additional obligations and stress.

When I upload PDFs or any other materials, I will do my best to make sure they are in accessible format for everyone. Please inform me if there are any problems and I will do my best to correct them.

The following are our full-length books. All are available from the library as e-books. Details on when to read them appear on the course calendar below.

Brundage, Anthony. *Going to the Sources: a Guide to Historical Research and Writing*. 6th ed. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2017.

Parker, John and Richard Rathbone. *African History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004.

SEMESTER'S THEME AND BOOK PROJECT CHOICES

Each semester, I select a theme from my areas of expertise for this class. This theme helps ground our readings, offering you sample case studies, research, sources, and more to focus our exploration of historical research and methods. *This semester our theme is African-Global Encounters: Complexities of Economy and Culture*. Research and study of different scales of time and geography can be incredibly valuable. I model this with our class as we are focusing on a comparative topic and how it unfolded over longer periods of time. This, of course, is an incredibly broad topic. In general, my focus here is on the following: 1) How did African-“other” encounters influence African cultures and societies? Often, in the United States, one focuses on the Atlantic African diaspora; however, this complex era brought many changes to the continent itself. 2) How did various Africans manage the turbulence of these encounters? (The risks, advantages, changes, uncertainties, and, especially in the last 300 years, the often highly unequal power dynamics)? 3) How much can (or should) we generalize about patterns of history or geography? Are there commonalities or key differences between exploring East Africans and West Africans’ relationships with other in these times? 4) What insights to new methodologies or approaches can we gain from readings we do on this theme?

To give you practice reading secondary works, identifying and critiquing their arguments, and assessing other scholars’ research, early in the semester we will be working in book report groups. Each group will focus on one of the following books and prepare short-class and Discussion Forum presentations and assessments of these books.

Please review these choices and then sign up for your first choice book on our [Google Planning Document](#). To make sure everyone has enough time to contribute in a book group, the maximum students per book choice is 4. The recommended number of students per book is 2-3. If

a student wishes or ends up working individually that is fine too; however, please note you will be the solo presenter for all topics (however, you will not be expected to present for as long as a group with 3 people, for example). Should there be strong interest in a specific book, as necessary, the instructor help you identify a similar title among these choices (there are parallels between the books chosen for each geographic region).

The book descriptions here are from each book's promotional materials as found on a Amazon. Again, NO book purchase is necessary for this assignment. Each book title is hyper-linked to the CCNY library so you can begin reading and confirm your access to it.

Choices for West Africa

Fields-Black, Edda L. [*Deep Roots Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora*](#).

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Mangrove rice farming on West Africa's Rice Coast was the mirror image of tidewater rice plantations worked by enslaved Africans in 18th-century South Carolina and Georgia. This book reconstructs the development of rice-growing technology among the Baga and Nalu of coastal Guinea, beginning more than a millennium before the transatlantic slave trade. It reveals a picture of dynamic pre-colonial coastal societies, quite unlike the static, homogenous pre-modern Africa of previous scholarship. From its examination of inheritance, innovation, and borrowing, *Deep Roots* fashions a theory of cultural change that encompasses the diversity of communities, cultures, and forms of expression in Africa and the African diaspora.

Jones, Hilary. [*The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa*](#).

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

The *Métis of Senegal* is a history of politics and society among an influential group of mixed-race people who settled in coastal Africa under French colonialism. Hilary Jones describes how the métis carved out a niche as middleman traders for European merchants. As the colonial presence spread, the métis entered into politics and began to assert their position as local elites and power brokers against French rule. Many of the descendants of these traders continue to wield influence in contemporary Senegal. Jones's nuanced portrait of métis ascendancy examines the influence of family connections, marriage negotiations, and inheritance laws from both male and female perspectives.

Mark, Peter. [*"Portuguese" Style and Luso-African Identity Precolonial Senegambia, Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries*](#). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

In this detailed history of domestic architecture in West Africa, Peter Mark shows how building styles are closely associated with social status and ethnic identity. Mark documents the ways in which local architecture was transformed by long-distance trade and complex social and cultural interactions between local Africans, African traders from the interior, and the Portuguese explorers and traders who settled in the Senegambia region. What came to be known as "Portuguese" style symbolized the wealth and power of Luso-Africans, who identified themselves as "Portuguese" so they could be distinguished from their African neighbors. They were traders, spoke Creole, and practiced Christianity. But what did this mean? Drawing from travelers' accounts, maps, engravings, paintings, and photographs, Mark argues that both the style of "Portuguese" houses and the identity of those who lived in them were extremely fluid. "Portuguese" Style and Luso-African Identity sheds light on the dynamic relationship between identity formation, social change, and material culture in West Africa.

Choices for East Africa

Fair, Laura. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001.

The first decades of the twentieth century were years of dramatic change in Zanzibar, a time when the social, economic, and political lives of island residents were in incredible flux, framed by the abolition of slavery, the introduction of colonialism, and a tide of urban migration. *Pastimes and Politics* explores the era from the perspective of the urban poor, highlighting the numerous and varied ways that recently freed slaves and other immigrants to town struggled to improve their individual and collective lives and to create a sense of community within this new environment. In this study Laura Fair explores a range of cultural and social practices that gave expression to slaves' ideas of emancipation, as well as how such ideas and practices were gendered. *Pastimes and Politics* examines the ways in which various cultural practices, including taarab music, dress, football, ethnicity, and sexuality, changed during the early twentieth century in relation to islanders' changing social and political identities. Professor Fair argues that cultural changes were not merely reflections of social and political transformations. Rather, leisure and popular culture were critical practices through which the colonized and former slaves transformed themselves and the society in which they lived.

Prestholdt, Jeremy. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

This book boldly unsettles the idea of globalization as a recent phenomenon—and one driven solely by Western interests—by offering a compelling new perspective on global interconnectivity in the nineteenth century. Jeremy Prestholdt examines East African consumers' changing desires for material goods from around the world in an era of sweeping social and economic change. Exploring complex webs of local consumer demands that affected patterns of exchange and production as far away as India and the United States, the book challenges presumptions that Africa's global relationships have always been dictated by outsiders. Full of rich and often-surprising vignettes that outline forgotten trajectories of global trade and consumption, it powerfully demonstrates how contemporary globalization is foreshadowed in deep histories of intersecting and reciprocal relationships across vast distances.

Sheriff, Abdul. *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873*. London: J. Currey, 1987.

The rise of Zanzibar was based on two major economic transformations. Firstly slaves became used for producing cloves and grains for export. Previously the slaves themselves were exported. Secondly, there was an increased international demand for luxuries such as ivory. At the same time the price of imported manufactured goods was falling. Zanzibar took advantage of its strategic position to trade as far as the Great Lakes. However this very economic success increasingly subordinated Zanzibar to Britain, with its anti-slavery crusade and its control over the Indian merchant class. Professor Sheriff analyses the early stages of the underdevelopment of East Africa and provides a corrective to the dominance of political and diplomatic factors in the history of the area.

Choices for South Africa

Dlamini, Jacob S. T. *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2020.

Safari Nation opens new lines of inquiry in the study of national parks in Africa and the rest of the world. The Kruger National Park is South Africa's most iconic nature reserve, renowned for its rich flora and fauna. According to author Jacob Dlamini, there is another side to the park, a social history neglected by scholars and popular writers alike in which

blacks (meaning Africans, Coloureds, and Indians) occupy center stage. *Safari Nation* details the ways in which black people devoted energies to conservation and to the park over the course of the twentieth century—engagement that transcends the stock (black) figure of the laborer and the poacher. By exploring the complex and dynamic ways in which blacks of varying class, racial, religious, and social backgrounds related to the Kruger National Park, and with the help of previously unseen archival photographs, Dlamini’s narrative also sheds new light on how and why Africa’s national parks—often derided by scholars as colonial impositions—survived the end of white rule on the continent. Relying on oral histories, photographs, and archival research, *Safari Nation* engages both with African historiography and with ongoing debates about the “land question,” democracy, and citizenship in South Africa.

Osseo-Asare, Abena Dove. [*Bitter Roots: The Search for Healing Plants in Africa*](#). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

For over a century, plant specialists worldwide have sought to transform healing plants in African countries into pharmaceuticals. And for equally as long, conflicts over these medicinal plants have endured, from stolen recipes and toxic tonics to unfulfilled promises of laboratory equipment and usurped personal patents. In *Bitter Roots*, Abena Dove Osseo-Asare draws on publicly available records and extensive interviews with scientists and healers in Ghana, Madagascar, and South Africa to interpret how African scientists and healers, rural communities, and drug companies—including Pfizer, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Unilever—have sought since the 1880s to develop drugs from Africa’s medicinal plants. Osseo-Asare recalls the efforts to transform six plants into pharmaceuticals: rosy periwinkle, Asiatic pennywort, grains of paradise, *Strophanthus*, *Cryptolepis*, and *Hoodia*. Through the stories of each plant, she shows that herbal medicine and pharmaceutical chemistry have simultaneous and overlapping histories that cross geographic boundaries. At the same time, Osseo-Asare sheds new light on how various interests have tried to manage the rights to these healing plants and probes the challenges associated with assigning ownership to plants and their biochemical components. A fascinating examination of the history of medicine in colonial and postcolonial Africa, *Bitter Roots* will be indispensable for scholars of Africa; historians interested in medicine, biochemistry, and society; and policy makers concerned with drug access and patent rights.

Ross, Robert. [*Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners*](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

In a compelling example of the cultural history of South Africa, Robert Ross offers a subtle and wide-ranging study of status and respectability in the colonial Cape between 1750 and 1850. His 1999 book describes the symbolism of dress, emblems, architecture, food, language, and polite conventions, paying particular attention to domestic relationships, gender, education and religion, and analyses the values and the modes of thinking current in different strata of the society. He argues that these cultural factors were related to high political developments in the Cape, and offers a rich account of the changes in social identity that accompanied the transition from Dutch to British overrule, and of the development of white racism and of ideologies of resistance to white domination. The result is a uniquely nuanced account of a colonial society.

ASSIGNMENTS

Course Participation [total for this category 30% of the overall course grade]

Students are expected to take an active role in full class discussions and in smaller group work. Typical classes will be a combination of instructor led lecture/full-class discussion and smaller group work. Please come to every class prepared for discussion. That means you arrive promptly and have completed all assigned readings and tasks for that day. I will elaborate on my expectations for participation activities and how I evaluate it during our first classes. In short, this category includes how you share (verbally, by chat, and how you listen) during that class, our reading quizzes, Discussion Board posts, and giving peer feedback.

Attendance [10%]

Participation activities [15%]

Class Presentations with Book Group [5%]

Papers [total for this category: 30% of the overall course grade]

[10%] Book Report Paper (due September 30)

[5%] Revision of Book Report paper (due October 19)

[10%] Argument-Centered Paper (due October 21)

[5%] Revision of Argument-Centered Paper (due November 9)

Instructions on each will be shared in class.

Research Prospectus [total for this category 40% of the overall course grade]

This writing assignment, sometimes also called a Research Proposal, serves as the equivalent of a class midterm and final exam. It is completed in various stages. The final version is a research prospectus of 8-10 double-spaced pages (excluding bibliography or cover page). It describes a hypothetical research project you would undertake if you received a fellowship award. The final prospectus presents the research question(s) and why these matter to scholarship (project significance), describes how past scholars have approached this problem and why there is need for more research (literature review), details how the student would approach their research (methodology/research plans), and offers a working thesis based on research to date that answers the student's research question (thesis statement/argument). All projects must engage with at least two primary sources (identified by the student and confirmed by the instructor) and with relevant scholarship on their topic. Your project should relate to African history. I will also consider approving other projects that clearly connect to course themes and areas of my expertise on a case-by-case basis. However, you are strongly encouraged to connect your prior interests to a case-study in African history. Details will be given in class for each assignment as well as elaboration on the Prospectus and expectations for the final draft.

[2.5%] Topic Statement (due September 9)

[7.5%] Annotated Bibliography (due Sep 21)

[5%] Full Prospectus Draft (due November 2)

[5%] Class Research Presentation (sign up in class: Nov 30, Dec 2, Dec 7, Dec 9)

[20%] Final Prospectus (due December 16)

Instructions on each will be shared in class.

LATE POLICIES ON ASSIGNMENTS

After much thought, I have come up with these policies to try to balance fairness and understanding for all my students (both those who submit timely assignments and those who may be facing circumstances that require them to prioritize health, family, etc, in lieu of course deadlines.) Please read over this carefully as it is important to me that I be transparent in how I am grading and that all of you understand these policies.

Attendance/participation: Participation is an important opportunity for everyone to

learn from your classmates. You contribute by both sharing and listening. For that reason, it is not possible to make up a missed day of participation in terms of activities that day (posts, quizzes, peer feedback) or attendance points. Your overall participation grade will include scores for each class on your attendance/participation in that day as well as other in-class activities, such as reading quizzes, or other tasks. I will drop everyone's 3 lowest scores for attendance. Thus, if you attend but don't have a great participation day or don't score well on a reading quiz given, you can still earn 100% grade-wise. Or, if you must miss up to 3 classes, you can still score 100%. Likewise, I will drop everyone's 3 lowest scores for participation activities.

For formal written work (prospectus & papers): I will accept late assignments with the following caveats. 1) First, perhaps an obvious point, but I ask all to recognize that the given deadlines of assignments are there for a reason. That is, our assignments are meant to be cumulative, to help you assess and build your knowledge and skills over the course. Thus, it is usually in your best interest to submit assignments as close to the deadline as you can, as otherwise it will take away from your overall course experience. 2) Second, if you must submit late, please note the following late deadline and grade reduction will apply: **Late exams/papers/reports may be submitted up to December 9th, our last day of class**. Any late papers/exams/reports will have their grade reduced by 1/3 letter. This will apply whether it is one minute late or 12 days late. The deadline is defined as that calendar date up to midnight EST. Thus, if your paper or exam scored a B based on the grading criteria, if it was submitted late, I will reduce that grade to a B-. For that reason, if you are going to be late with an assignment, I am going to urge you to take another day or days and submit your best work. As your instructor, I would much rather read your best effort. 3) Lastly, here, I ask all to recognize that my ability to give detailed feedback on late work may be limited. For example, if I receive a bunch of late papers on our last day of the semester, I may only be able to share grades and not written comments on each as I must also grade finals for all my classes.

COURSE CALENDAR

*All readings listed here as **HW** = Homework readings. They are to be completed before our class. Other readings will be required as part of your group-work for our Book Group projects. As you will also be doing substantial reading and research for your Prospectus Project, I have made an effort to keep HW readings to essential advice on history research, practice, and writing. During our classes we will begin looking at other primary sources and sample secondary readings on our semester's theme. In some cases, you will need to complete these readings after class; however, by introducing them as part of our class activities, it should help keep the readings manageable.*

As our semester progresses, I will update our calendar here with the key questions and topics considered on each date, as well as note particular additional readings or sources we examined in class. I do so to help you review those classes and keep track of all our materials. If not available on the web or through our library site, all readings used in class or as HW will be available in the Contents section of our Blackboard website.

All deadlines are by midnight EST that day. For example, the assignment due October 1st will be late if it is received at 12.01am on October 2nd or beyond.

Thursday August 26

Semester Begins. Live/Zoom class day.

In-class: Review course goals and expectations

In-class: Begin Discussion of Approaches to History

HW: Vote in Office Hours poll (see page 1) & begin considering book choices and your ideas for a final project

If time permits, we will do both these of these in class, if not, please complete them by Sep. 2nd

HW: Read: African humorists write back on African stereotypes: Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa," [Grantia](#) 92 (2005): 1-3.

HW: "Africa Straight Up: Dismantling the Single Narrative," African Studies Center, Boston University, 30 mins, <https://www.bu.edu/africa/outreach/outreach-library/>. Click on the tab that says "Dismantling the Single Narrative."

Tuesday August 31

Introduction to Course & Study of History

In-class: Introduction to Course Cont'd

In-class: Introduction to History and Research

In-class: Review Book Groups Choices & Discuss Prospectus

** Due to the start of term, these readings are to be completed after our class today. Please complete them by September 5th* *

HW: Brundage, "The Ever-Changing Shape and Texture of the Past," [Going to the Sources](#), 1-15.

HW: Rampolla, "Why Study History" and "Writing a Research Paper" [page numbers differ depending on which edition you read, c.27 pages]

Thursday September 2

Project and Semester Planning

In-class: Discuss Research Prospectus

In-class: Share Strategies for Time Management and Planning Big Projects.

HW: Brundage, "Getting the Most out of History Books," In [Going to the Sources](#), 51-63.

HW: Read Rampolla, [A Pocket Guide to Writing in History](#), "Approaching Typical Assignments in History."

HW: Read Parker and Rathbone, [African History](#). Goal to identify possible topics and questions of interest. For example, if you already know you are fascinated by 20th century history, focus on that chapter; likewise if Ancient history is your passion, focus earlier in the book. I highly recommend all read the opening and conclusion of this book. You are also very welcome to set up a short meeting with Prof. S to brainstorm topics.

HW: If you haven't already done so, please sign up for a Book Selection for our Book Groups. Sign up on our [Google Planning Document](#).

Tuesday September 7

NO CLASS PER CCNY CALENDAR

Thursday September 9

History Research & Historical Sources

Topic Statement Due. Email to Instructor.

In-class: Discuss History Research and Sources, examples from class theme

HW. Brundage, "Nature and Variety of Historical Sources," [Going to the Sources](#), 17-29.

HW: Brundage, "Finding Your Sources: The Online Library Catalog and Beyond," [Going to the Sources](#), 30-50.

HW: Finish Topic Statement

Tuesday September 14

Introduction to Research Strategies

In-class: Discuss research strategies, examples from class theme

HW: Brundage, "Beyond Textual Sources," [Going to the Sources](#), 64-76.

HW: Brundage, "History's Public(s) and Public History," [Going to the Sources](#), 77-88.

HW: Work on locating sources for the Bibliography. Reach out to library for advice, reference consult, or meet with Prof. S as needed.

Thursday September 16	NO CLASS PER CCNY CALENDAR
Tuesday September 21	<p>Introduction to Theory and Historical Analysis <i>In-class: Examples from class theme</i> Annotated Bibliography Due. Email to Instructor. HW: Select a book from your bibliography for the book report paper. Locate the book in our library and make sure you have access. I highly recommend you selecting a book that is available as an e-book, as ordering ILL materials can be time-consuming due to the Pandemic.</p>
Thursday September 23	<p>Introduction to Research Methodologies <i>In-class: examples from class theme</i> HW: Review Book Report Paper instructions & read your chosen book (it should relate to your final project)</p>
Tuesday September 28	<p>Introduction to Research Methodologies <i>In-class: examples from class theme</i> HW: Review Book Report Paper instructions & read your chosen book (it should relate to your final project)</p>
Thursday September 30	<p>Introduction to Historiography <i>In-class: examples from class theme</i> Book Report Paper Due today. Email to Instructor. HW: Complete book report paper.</p>
Tuesday October 5	<p>Book Groups Day 1 <i>In-class: Present your book's topic, author, and significant (what's the big debate/question it addresses)</i> HW: Read book group book & prepare for short class presentation with team members</p>
Thursday October 7	<p>History Writing & Editing <i>Goal: Review general principles of editing a history paper</i> <i>Goal: Peer feedback on book reports (how to share and receive helpful, constructive feedback)</i> HW: Rampolla, "Following Conventions of Writing in History," A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, [page numbers differ by edition.] HW: Rampolla, "Quoting and Documenting Sources," A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, [page numbers differ by edition.] HW: Rampolla, "Plagiarism: What it is and How to Avoid it," A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, [page numbers differ by edition.]</p>
Tuesday October 12	<p>Analyzing Primary Sources <i>In-class: examples from class theme</i> HW: work on revision of book report and prepare for presentations</p>
Thursday October 14	<p>Book Groups Day 2: Historiography <i>In-class: Present your book's approach to past scholarship. This means considering what interventions your book makes & comparing its approach to 1+ of the samples of past scholarship found in our historiography folder on Blackboard (see contents section)</i> HW: Read your selected book, review a sample historiography piece from the folder, & prepare for short class presentation with team members</p>

- Tuesday October 19
- Book Groups Day 3: Fields of History & New Approaches to African-Global Encounters**
Book Report Revision Due
In-class: Present your book's historical contributions. Share its field of history (economic, cultural, political, etc) and some specifics about the history it offers. I encourage students to consider here summarizing one chapter instead of tackling the entire book. Your presentation should also reference 1 of the articles in our fields of history folder on Blackboard.
 HW: Read your selected book, read one sample fields of history article, & prepare for short class presentation with team members
 HW: finish book report revision due tonight by midnight
- Thursday October 21
- Argument-Centered Paper Due today.** Email to Instructor.
In-class: materials from course's theme
 HW: Complete paper due today
 HW: Personal assessment: see where you are with the prospectus project and draft plans. Make appointment as necessary with Prof. S or reference librarian for assistance
- Tuesday October 24
- Writing and Advancing a Historical Argument**
In-class: practice advancing historical arguments
 HW: Brundage, "Engaging with Primary Sources: The Research Paper," 110-129.
 HW: work on prospectus draft
- Thursday October 26
- Prospectus Review and Draft-Writing Advice**
In-class: Class Peer feedback on argument-centered papers
In-class: Spend time discussing questions on full prospectus draft due next class
 HW: work on prospectus draft
- Tuesday November 2
- Full Prospectus draft due.** Email to Instructor.
In-class: Course theme day
 HW: complete full prospectus draft. Remember to review assignment check list.
- Thursday November 4
- History Writing & Editing**
In-class: Peer feedback on argument-centered paper
In-class: Identify general principles of copy-editing and checking citations
In-class: Review basics of footnotes & why historians (usually) prefer them
 HW: Brundage, "Appendix C: Footnote/Endnote Formatting," [Going to the Sources](#), 136-140.
- Tuesday November 9
- Revision of Argument-Centered Paper due today.**
 Email to Instructor.
In-class: Course theme day
 HW: Complete your revision of the Argument-Centered paper considering Instructor and peers' feedback.
- Thursday November 11
- Prospectus Draft Workshop Day**
In-class: Workshop with peer feedback and advice on Prospectus drafts
 HW: have draft prospectus ready to share with a peer
 HW: Review preliminary feedback on draft from Prof. S and identify 1-

3 areas where you'd like peer advice
HW: Review your calendar between now and our Prospectus deadline and develop a personal plan on how best to use your time for this project and your other courses and obligations

Tuesday November 16

Historical Writing: Proposed Project Plans & Logistics

In-class: As a class we will discuss and brainstorm best ways to plan for the hypothetical project work described in the Prospectus. Topics covered include best practices historical research (such as planning to visit an archive, conduct oral history, etc), proposing a budget, and developing a proposed project timeline

HW: Have this section of your draft prospectus ready so that you can edit and elaborate it as we brainstorm in class and group work

Thursday November 18

Historical Writing: Crafting Strong Arguments

In-class: Discuss and practice exercises on writing strong arguments

HW: Select and read one of the choices in the folder on Writing Style found on our Blackboard website. Be prepared to share insights with peers in class.

Tuesday November 23

Historical Writing: Style & Polish

In-class: Discuss and practice exercises in polishing one's writing

HW: Select and read one of the choices in the folder on Writing Style found on our Blackboard website. Be prepared to share insights with peers in class.

Thursday November 25

NO CLASS PER CCNY CALENDAR

Tuesday November 30

Class Research Presentations

In-class: Presentations & final advice on Prospectus

HW: Prepare for class presentation

HW: Work on final prospectus

HW: Personal assessment: do you need a meeting with Prof. S or a reference librarian or the Writing Center to best finish your Prospectus? If so, please plan ahead and make appointments as necessary

Thursday December 2

Class Research Presentations

In-class: Presentations & final advice on Prospectus

HW: Prepare for class presentation

HW: Work on final prospectus

Tuesday December 7

Class Research Presentations

In-class: Presentations & final advice on Prospectus

HW: Prepare for class presentation

HW: Work on final prospectus

Thursday December 9

Class Research Presentations

In-class: Presentations & final advice on Prospectus

HW: Prepare for class presentation

HW: Work on final prospectus

Thursday December 16

Final Prospectus due today by email

I am unable to accept papers later than December 17th. This year, due to my obligations, it is necessary that I submit ALL my students' grades on the 18th of December. If you are unable to make this deadline, I urge you to email me the following: please clarify

whether you wish to be graded as is, e.g. graded per your work completed except for this final and any other missing assignments; or if you wish to receive an Incomplete. Per CCNY policies, I can only offer you an INC grade if you have above a C+ grade based on everything you have done (e.g. above a 77%).