History 4499: Senior Seminar-African Christianity

Fall 2012
Room Social Science Building 3032
Dr. Ryan Ronnenberg
Wednesdays 5:00 pm to 7:45 pm
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm
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Objectives:

This is a senior seminar course, and as such will gauge students’ ability to think, research, and compose like an historian. Students will be asked to thoughtfully examine and engage with one of the most richly researched areas of African history, the advent of Christianity. The course will explore early Christianity (the Amharic tradition), animism, 19th century European/American mission efforts, conversion, the establishment of African mainline churches, and spiritualism/pentecostalism in colonial and independent contexts.

Basis for Final Grades:

This is a writing intensive seminar course, demanding considerable investment in class preparation and participation, research, and composition. Final grades will be determined according to the following breakdown:

- Attendance/Discussion Participation-10% of final grade
- Literature Review (1500-2000 words)-20% of final grade
- Final Paper Peer Review Paper (1000 words)-15% of final grade
- Term Paper First Draft w/apologia (6000-7500 words)-25% of final grade
- Term Paper Final Draft (6000-7500 words)-30% of final grade

Please note that students will also be given an assurance of learning assessment in the second or third week of the course.

Required Texts:

- Guns and Rain, David Lan
- Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History, Elphick and Davenport
- Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity Among Ewe in Ghana, Birgit Meyer

Academic Integrity Statement:

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials,
misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

*Attendance Policy:*

As we meet once a week, and regular participation in these meetings is vital, attendance is mandatory. One absence, assuming the student has no specific responsibilities (is neither presenter nor discussant) for that meeting, is acceptable. Unexcused absences thereafter will be noted and the student’s participation grade will suffer. It is the student’s responsibility to bring exceptional circumstances to the professor’s attention as soon as possible.

*Course Outline/Tentative Schedule:*

**August**

22 Introductions, course expectations and road map, primer for understanding 200 years of African History.

No Readings.

29 Early Christianity (Coptic and Amharic traditions) Assignment of literature review responsibilities.

Readings: Selected readings online.

**September**

5 Library Meeting. Writing a research paper from the ground up. ‘Traditional’ Cosmologies. Broad stroke trends.

Read: *Guns and Rain* (Parts I and II).

12 Beyond Evan’s-Pritchard: Understanding all sides of “Animism.”

Read: *Guns and Rain* (Parts III and IV).

19 19th century European Missionaries

Read: Selections from Of Revelation and Revolution (Jean and John Comaroff). Additional Readings Online assigned in class.

26 Translation and Conversion
Reading: Selections from *Translating the Message*, Sanneh (online).

October

3 Christianity, Colonialism, Literacy, Identity
Readings: Articles distributed in class. Kikuyu case study.

10 Conflict and Contestation
Readings: Elphick and Davenport, pps. 16-88.

17 Alternative Orthodoxies
Readings: Elphick and Davenport, pps. 211-240

24 ‘Diabolization’ and ‘Modernity’ Discourses
Reading: *Translating the Devil*

31 Christianity in modern Africa: From Alice Lakwena to James Kony (really).
Reading: *Translating the Devil* (cont.)

November

7 Modern African Christianity (cont.) Discussion: Historical research, composition, publication. First/model presentation/discussion.

14 Student presentations and peer responses

21 Student presentations and peer responses

28 Student presentations and peer responses

December

5 Student presentations and peer responses