**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DIVERSE WORLD**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number:** HS 254, Introduction to African History and Culture

**Home Department:** History

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): Keith Kendall (x-1648; kkendall@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): roughly every 4th semester

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content: This is a broad survey of African history and culture from the beginnings of humanity through post-Cold War era.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes: The significant portion of the course involves document analysis and thesis building; however, those documents and thesis all address issues of diversity and social interaction. Major topics include the relationship between world religions and local religions, slavery and forced labor, colonial economic exploitation, neocolonial exploitation, and globalization’s economic and environmental impacts on Africa, including the students’ own complicity in globalization’s impact on Africa. In the process, students will evaluate the quality of the information available to them, integrate this new information into their existing (typically limited) knowledge of Africa, and apply the historical method to the process; this will be assessed through quizzes and papers. The documents and novels relate to cultural awareness and engagement, ethical issues, and knowledge of the various worldviews competing for dominance in Africa; all of this is assessed through the quizzes, tests, and papers which include the use of appropriate evidence.

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.): This is a 200-level course with no pre-requisites.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.): The course is a non-Western option in the history major (of which we have a severe shortage) is including in the area studies of the International Studies major, and fulfills the World Cultures graduation requirement.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC: The course is occasionally taught online.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Type: Document analysis and thesis projects (include non-graded worksheets and graded short answers or essays); papers and document analysis rely on students the quality of information and integrating that information into an argument  Frequency: Multiple worksheets, 2 short answer sets, 3 essays  Projected submission materials: 2nd or 3rd essay  Relative Importance: worksheets constitute roughly 1/3 of class time; total of short answer and essays is over ½ the students grade  Projected success: past experience suggests between 85 and 90% |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Type: Projects 4 and 5 (the first four projects are laddered in difficulty; project 5 is at the same difficulty level as project 4 but the type of material to be used presents different problems). The laddered difficulty of the projects inherently requires integration of previous understandings into the later assessments.  Frequency: two essays  Projected submission materials: 2nd essay  Relative Importance: this is what the entire class is building towards; although failure in these two projects does not automatically result in failure of the class, the two phenomena are strongly linked. Ultimately, this is part of 100% of the graded assignments in the class  Projected success rate: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Type: Document analysis and thesis projects to be conducted according to historical methodology  Frequency: five projects; multiple worksheets; all involve document analysis.  Projected submission materials: One set of worksheets from last quarter of class.  Relative Importance: projects account for a considerable portion of the grades, worksheets account for roughly 1/3 of class time whereas the projects account for 60% of the grade; (the history department had been explicitly told that the assessment materials need not be graded items, hence the inclusion of the document worksheets in this section—we understand that the committee has changed its mind, however, we still believe non-graded work can provide valid assessment data and so I keeping it in this section for this class).  Projected success: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DIVERSE WORLD**

*Attainment of the SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN A DIVERSE WORLD Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks** | Knowledge of elements important to members of another culture | Type: Projects 4 and 5 (the first four projects are laddered in difficulty; project 5 is at the same difficulty level as project 4 but the materials used present different problems).  Frequency: two essays  Projected submission materials: project 4 essay  Relative Importance: this is what the entire class is building towards. Ultimately, this covers about 100% of the course and is part of every assessment.  Projected success rate: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |
| **Intercultural Awareness** | Awareness of multiple cultural perspectives | Types: Projects 2, 4, and 5 (travelogue, fiction and history, memoir respectively)  Frequency: 3 projects  Projected submission materials: project 4  Relative Importance: each project is a central component in understanding a particular era in African history; in total they—along with the tests which cover intercultural awareness—account for 100% of the course grade  Projected success rate: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |
| **Intercultural Engagement** | Being willing to engage with cultures other than one’s own | Type: project 4 involves novels (two) and documents (two sets) critical for understanding imperialism (the process of acquiring colonies) and colonialism (the act of ruling those colonies); project 5 involves a 2 document sets an the memoir of Peace Corps volunteer.  Frequency: 2 projects  Projected submission materials: project 4  Relative While assessing willingness to engage with cultures other than one’s own is virtually impossible, by signing up for African History—an elective—students demonstrate at least some level of “willingness” as the course is purely an elective. Their actual ability to do so is assessed by every aspect of the course, thus it is part of 100% of the graded work in the course.  Projected success rate: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |
| **Ethical Issue Recognition** | Awareness of ethical issues as they relate to cultures | Type: projects 2 (travelogue), 3 (slavery), 4 (imperialism), and 5 (colonialism)  Frequency: 4 projects  Projected submission materials: project 3 essays  Relative importance: absolutely critical; specific projects collected here are about 1/3 of the total grade, but the dimension is addressed throughout the course.  Projected success rate: past experience suggests between 85% and 90% |

*History: Studying the Past, Preparing for the Future*

HS 254

**Introduction to African History and Culture**

*Professor Alan Scot Willis*

*Cohodas 208 DD*

*Email: awillis@nmu.edu*

*Extension: 1228*

*Coffee Hours: Tuesday: 11:00-1:50, Thursday: 11:00-1:00  
 or by appointment*

*Email is the far better method of getting in touch with me!*

**Required Texts**

Khapoya, *The African Experience* (third edition)

Hull, *African Cities and Towns before European Conquest*

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Ngugi, *The River Between*

Erdman, *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha*

Oyono, *The Old Man and the Medal*

Niane: *Sundiata*

 Other Required Readings

            Online readings linked to the maps in EduCat

            Online resources in African History, linked to learning modules in EduCat

**Course Descriptions**

Structure of the Course: Textbook readings are paired with supplemental readings and EduCat materials:

*African Experience* Chapters 1-2

Hull, *African Cities and Towns*

Selections from "Forcast Africa"

*African Experience* Chapter 3

Ibn Battuta (EduCat)

Niane: *Sundiata*

Slave Trade (EduCat)

*African Experience* Chapters 4-5

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Imperialism (EduCat)

Ngugi, *The River Between*

Colonialism (EduCat)

*African Experience* Chapters 6-8

Independence (EduCat)

Oyono, *The Old Man and the Medal*

Erdman, *Nine Hills*

**General Course Policies**

Contacting the professor: You should contact the professor via the Mail option in EduCat. You should *not* use the professor’s regular email. Why? First, an awful lot of student emails get sent to junk mail by the NMU server—this never happens with the internal EduCat email, so you can be far more certain of me getting the mail this way. Second, even that email which does not get sent to junk mail can easily get lost in the barrage of emails from Amazon, from various publishers, from the university, and from a myriad of other sources. Emails in the EduCat mail system can only be from members of the class and, therefore, I know to give those the highest priority.

I will respond to emails as quickly as I can. Typically, this means by 5:00pm (EST) on the next business day. There may be times when this is not possible, but those will be rare. Nevertheless, you should not expect a response over a weekend or at night. ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PROFESSOR MUST BE IN STANDARD ENGLISH! I *will not* respond to emails written in this new and bizarre language called “texting” (in part because I often cannot decode it); I also expect basic email etiquette to be followed: that is—these are *business* emails, not informal emails to friends or family. Therefore, emails must follow *business* form and be written in standard English without slang.

**History Department 200-level Course Goals:**

* Concepts (These concepts are addressed throughout the course and are part of every assessment in the course)
  + Understanding the concepts of time and chronology
    - The Textbook reading are arranged chronologically; while the supplemental modules are less concerned with chronology, they clearly indicate a progression of issues through time
  + Understanding the concepts of causality and agency
    - Causality—the simple questions of cause-and-effect relationships—becomes more complicated as students begin to assess the issues of *unintended* consequences and the debates between a Eurocentric and Afrocentric view of causality; the conflicts between Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism is even greater in considering agency—the question of *who* (and, on rare occasion, what) actively participated in and shaped the nature of African history.
* Use of Evidence (These abilities and concepts and are addressed primarily through the supplemental modules and the two comparative essays)
  + Ability to analyze and critique evidence
    - At every step of the course students will be analyzing and critiquing evidence, whether in a secondary source (Richard Hull) or a primary source (Ibn Battuta) or in seeing the relationships between different kinds of primary sources (historical documents and literature)
  + Familiarity with primary and secondary sources and the difference
    - Students will be dealing with both secondary sources and primary sources and engage a variety of different examples of each type of source.
  + Ability to integrate evidence into an historical argument
    - Students are expected to arrive at this ability through three steps: 1) identifying and discussing Richard Hull’s argument; 2) creating an argument about Ibn Battuta; 3) Creating, supporting, and sustaining arguments that provide an analysis based on historical documents and works of fiction
* Critical Thinking and Argumentation (These abilities are most clearly addressed and assessed through the supplemental modules)
  + Understanding history as an argument/debate
    - The conflicts between Eurocentric and Afrocentric views of African history provide the basis for seeing history as a debate
  + Ability to develop a thesis
    - Students will begin by identifying Hull’s thesis and then work to developing their own thesis
  + Recognition of contemporary influences on historical arguments
    - Shifting interpretations of African history often follow Africa’s shifting political realities
* Critical Writing (these abilities are assessed through the paragraph-form responses in the Hulland Battuta assessments, and in the comparative essays for the two assignments)
  + Ability to write an evidentiary, thesis-driven essay
    - This will be demonstrated through the successful completion of the two major essays.
  + Command of Standard Written English
    - All postings, assessments, assignments and correspondence is expected to be in standard written English.

**Liberal Studies:**

This course fulfills both the Humanities and the World Cultures requirements of Liberal Studies. This course addressing the following Liberal Studies Goals:

* Ability to write and communicate clearly and effectively
  + Students are expected to write brief papers, which clearly express their understanding of African history
* Ability to evaluate various forms of evidence and knowledge
  + Students will engage in the analysis of multiple kinds of evidence, including scholarly publications, novels, medieval travelogues, and political speeches
* Ability to engage in analytical reasoning and argumentation
  + Papers for HS 254 must be analytical and argumentative in their nature
* Ability to see across disciplinary boundaries
  + Students address ancient Africa via archaeology, examine novels as they reflect a society’s values, analyze political speeches, and follow a religious pilgrims travels.
* Understanding the world as a diverse and interrelated community
  + Africa is an immensely diverse but interrelated continent; furthermore, students will study the African Diaspora and Africa’s role in the making of the Indian Ocean world. It is impossible, for example, to study the Swahili Coast without examining the interaction between Bantu, Muslim, and Indian.
* Understanding the relationship of the individual to society and its culture and institutions
  + All four novels assigned fundamentally address the question of the relationship of one individual to the broader cultural and governing institutions
* Understanding the role of the fine and performing arts and the humanities in shaping and expressing a culture’s values and ideals
  + By using novels to explore social change in Africa, the course is fundamentally a study of history through the humanities; furthermore, African art, African book illustrating, and medieval African mapmaking – highly artistic, but not much use for someone hoping to find a particular place – reflect the cultural values of various African societies.

Liberal Studies: world cultures

Virtually the entire course is a study in non-western history. Where Western history impinges on the history of Africa it is as an intrusion; the study here deals with Western history as prompting African to accommodate, resist, or withdraw from interaction. Western values are cast in sharp relief against non-western African values.

**About Grades:**

In truth, students are far more obsessed with grades than they ought to be; nevertheless, the university will require that I give a grade at the end of the session and, so, you should be aware of a couple of the ground rules for earning a grade:

1. You must complete the course. This means you must complete *all* the assessments and assignments. Since discussion board material is graded (although, I must admit, a bit more liberally than the assessments and assignments) you *must* participate in all of the graded discussion boards.

2. You must do legitimate work. This means, of course, you must not plagiarize (see separate handout). It also means that you must do work that reasonably meets the expectations of the class. Most people see college as a stepping-stone to a middle-class professional job, therefore, I expect that you treat the course as part of a middle-class professional job, and that you treat the assignments as tasks given to you to be completed in order to keep your middle-class professional job.

If, *and only if,* you successfully meet the above two criteria of completing the course and doing legitimage work, you will be eligible for a grade above that of "F"; that grade will be determined by simply adding the number of points you have accrued and dividing it by the number of points available in the course. Please remember, being eligible for a grade above that of "F" *does not* guarantee that you will, in fact, get such a grade.

I will announce when an assessment or assignment has been graded.  You should check your grade at that time.  If you completed the work, but did not receive a grade, this could indicate a computer-based problem.  Both you and I will be much happier if that problem is addressed and solved prior to the end of the Session.  As reasonable as I am, I will *not* give an incomplete grade (or a passing grade) to someone missing assignments due to computer-based problems which they made no effort to solve prior to the end of the Session.

Assessment: All Assessments close at **11:55 pm** on the date indicated on the calendar

*Closing dates are non-negotiable*.

Assignments: All Assignments are due at **Classtime** on the date indicated on the calendar

*Due dates are non-negotiable*.