

Research Seminar: History of Africa (A004049)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) Dutch, English Gent seminar
independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Mathys, Gillian LW03 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject History)	5	A
Master of Arts in Global Studies	5	A
Master of Arts in History	5	A
Exchange Programme Global Studies and World Societies	5	A
Exchange Programme History	5	A

Teaching languages

English, Dutch

Keywords

Africa, history, historiography, colonialism, violence, social history

Position of the course

- Provide well-founded, scientific knowledge and insights about African history and the impact of this history on mentalities, global relations and contemporary African societies.
- Broaden insights in historiographic methods and scientific methodology from other disciplines that are relevant to the field of African history
- Broaden knowledge about and insight in social theories relevant to the field of African history
- Set up historical research about Africa and apply knowledge and insights regarding African history and historiography on a scientific level.
- Communicating about research methods and results with fellow student and laypersons
- Develop own critical, well-funded, scientific views on Africa within a temporal, spatial and social framework

Contents

This research seminar focuses on specific themes and topics in African history. For 2024-2025 the topic is (colonial) violence. That violence was quintessential to understanding colonialism is by now commonly acknowledged. However, conceptualizing violence is a difficult task, as it includes a wide range of practices as well as motives.

In the class we will engage with more conceptual, often foundational, texts on violence, and couple them to specific case-studies. Some of the themes that will be discussed are: genocide, settler colonialism, everyday violence, counterinsurgency etc.

Initial competences

Students are familiar with historiography and have a basic understanding of non-western or world history

Final competences

- 1 Students know and understand the important evolutions, movements and schools in African historiography, including the most recent debates
- 2 Students are able to independently set up an historical inquiry, select and apply the most relevant research methods from various disciplines, and to position their point of view and arguments in the scientific field.
- 3 Students are capable of communicating their research methods and results to their fellow students and laymen (written and spoken). Students are receptive to cooperation with experts in their own or related fields of study
- 4 Students adopt a critical attitude towards their own thinking, environment and contemporary international relations on the one hand, and towards past and current issues regarding power, the economy and culture in African states and societies on the other hand.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Excursion, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Weekly meetings during which teaching material is discussed in group. Classes revolve around student participation. Participation is therefore mandatory. Participation in and reporting on two academic lectures is expected (lectures at UGent or elsewhere).
No recordings are made.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Collection of texts 'Research Seminar History of Africa'

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Number of Pages : 300

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

References

Course content-related study coaching

Interactive teaching

Feedback after each phase of the learning process (Minerva or face-to-face during office hours)

Follow up of research activities students

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Calculation of the examination mark

Non-periodical assessment: 75%

Periodical assessment (25%)

Facilities for Working Students

1. Student attendance during educational activities is required
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Alternative time for feedback is possible

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy