

Language, History and Identity in Central and Eastern Africa (A005111)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Bostoen, Koen	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Brinkman, Inge	LW21	co-lecturer
Gunnink, Hilde	LW21	co-lecturer
Mathys, Gillian	LW03	co-lecturer
Rahier, Nick	LW21	co-lecturer
Verbuyst, Rafaël	LW03	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages (main subject African Languages and Cultures)	5	A
Master of Arts in African Studies	5	A
Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme Global Studies and World Societies	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Africa; African cultures; African languages; African literatures; African studies; Angola; anthropology; archaeology; Bantu; Botswana; Burundi; Cameroon; colonisation; decolonisation; ancient history; Democratic Republic of Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Eswatini; ethnicity; ethnography; evolutionary genetics; Gabon; historical linguistics; historicity; interdisciplinarity; Kenya; Khoisan; Kongo; Lesotho; Luba; migration; Mozambique; Namibia; nationalism; oral history; Republic of Congo; Rwanda; South Africa; Swahili; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia

Position of the course

This course aims at conveying deep, interdisciplinary and long-term insights into the cultural, ecological, ideological, linguistic, political, religious, and social processes underlying dynamic, language-based identities and identity formation in Africa, with particular emphasis on Bantu-speaking Central and East Africa.

Contents

This course offers a thorough knowledge of historical interactions between language, culture and society in the emergence and evolution of communal identities in Central and East Africa with ramifications to other regions, such as Southern Africa. Moreover, it encourages critical reflection on how present-day group identities are anchored or not in the past and on how diverse knowledge systems, both inside and outside Africa, have contributed to the formation of ethnicity in Africa.

Initial competences

Bachelor in African Languages and Cultures or equivalent. If you have not followed the Bachelor in African Languages and Cultures at Ghent University, please familiarize yourself with the literature on the MA program's [recommended](#)

[reading list](#) and the terms on the MA program's [list of important concepts](#). These BA-level basics are supposed to be known before the course starts and will only be reexplained upon explicit request.

Final competences

- 1 Have knowledge of how interactions between language, culture and society have contributed to the emergence and evolution of community identities throughout the ancient history of Central and Eastern Africa with ramifications to other regions of Africa such as Southern Africa.
- 2 Be able to critically reflect upon how present-day group identities are anchored or not in the past and on how diverse knowledge systems have contributed to the formation of ethnicity in Africa.
- 3 Understand how interdisciplinary research is needed and applied to reconstruct the ancient history of Africa.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

If Covid measures so require: online alternatives

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: Language, History and Identity in Central and Eastern Africa (2024-2025)

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

References

None apart from the compulsory reading materials

Course content-related study coaching

Feedback in class

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

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

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Presentation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Periodic evaluation: written evaluation with open-ended questions (50%). Writing short, critical essays on selected research questions and statements related to the course content.

Non-periodic evaluation: presentation (25%) and think-pair-share (25%). Each student will give at least one presentation during one of the classes on one of the compulsory research articles. Each class will have a think-pair-share session on some research questions and/or statements/opinions provided in advance.

Calculation of the examination mark

see above

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

1. Class attendance is mandatory as it will be included in the calculation of the final score.
2. No online/digital facilities (lectures take place on campus without recordings, except in case of corona measures).
3. It is not possible to take the exam at another time, except on medical grounds.
4. Possibility to receive feedback at another time: by appointment.

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and Philosophy and <http://www.flw.ugent.be/flexibelstudereren>.