

## 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
B (semester 1)	English	Gent

**Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027**

Bakenne, Nureni Aremu	LW21	staff member
Bostoen, Koen	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Brinkman, Inge	LW21	co-lecturer
Mathys, Gillian	LW03	co-lecturer
Rahier, Nick	LW21	co-lecturer

**Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027**

	<b>crdts</b>	<b>offering</b>
<a href="#">Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject African Languages and Cultures)</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Virtual Mobility</a>	5	B
<a href="#">Master of Arts in African Studies</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme African Languages and Cultures</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context</a>	5	A
<a href="#">Exchange Programme Global Studies and World Societies</a>	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; Ethiopia; ethnicity; ethnography; evolutionary genetics; Gabon; historical linguistics; historicity; interdisciplinarity; Kenya; Khoisan; Kongo; Lesotho; Luba; migration; Mozambique; Namibia; nationalism; Nigeria; 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, while also addressing connections with other regions on the continent, such as West and Southern 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 West and 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**

Lecture recordings are made available to all students.

### **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 (75%). Writing short, critical essays on selected research questions and statements related to the course content.

Non-periodic evaluation: presenting existing research and facilitating a class discussion using the think-pair-share method (25%). Each student briefly explains the main points of at least one research paper as part of one of the classes and facilitates a class think-pair-share session on research questions and/or propositions related to the assigned reading.

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

The final grade is calculated as explained above, namely 75% based on periodic evaluation and 25% based on non-period evaluation. Students may only participate in the periodic evaluation if they have attended at least 80% of the classes. Exceptions may be made only for certified medical reasons or for working students, in which case an alternative to class attendance may be arranged.

Passing this course is only possible if the student passes both the periodic and non-periodic evaluations.

### **Facilities for Working Students**

Facilities:

- 1 Class attendance is mandatory and will be registered for the purpose of participating in the midterm assessment (see above);
- 2 To enable participation by non-UGent students through the ENLIGHT program (see <https://enlight-eu.org/students/courses/1670-language-history-identity-africa>), online participation in classes will be possible, if necessary, and classes will be recorded, including for UGent working students and for UGent students who are absent for valid medical reasons (see above);
- 3 To enable ENLIGHT exchange students (see above) to participate in the periodic evaluation, they will be offered an alternative oral exam whose contents correspond to that of the written exam described above;
- 4 Option for feedback at a different time: by appointment.

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and Philosophy and <https://www.ugent.be/lw/en/degree/fsa/workingandstudying.htm>.