

Methods, Sources and Historiography in African History (A006725)

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

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

null

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

De Coene, Pieter

LW03

staff member

Couttenier, Maarten

LW03

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

null

crdts

offering

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Methodology of doing research in and about Africa

Position of the course

This introductory course teaches students critical reflexivity and independent research skills concerning the study of Africa and African societies in different spatial and temporal settings

Contents

- Critical exploration of the variety of sources used by historians and the challenges connected with interpreting them.
- Discussion of the relationship between history and other social sciences, of how they complement each other or diverge.
- Introduction and practice concerning the localization, selection, organization, analysis and the summarizing of diverse primary and secondary sources
- Introduction to how to delineate and develop a research question.
- Learning how to report in written form on historical research (source discussion, references, research question, bibliography).

Topics: (non-exhaustive): oral history, colonial archives, fieldwork, archaeology and material culture as a source for African history, images as a source, using footnotes, interview techniques, design a research question.

Initial competences

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Final competences

- 1 The ability to localise, manage and use information in a systematic way
- 2 The ability to develop a research project with a clear research question, with proper guidance.
- 3 Acquisition of a basic ability to discuss and interpret a historical problem according to the standards of the profession.
- 4 Acquisition of a sound understanding of historical and other methodologies and research skills, in general, and specific for African history.

Conditions for credit contract

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

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Excursion, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

The course is taught through a mixture of lecturing, whole class discussion, small-group discussion and independent study.

The course is taught in English with facilities in Dutch. Written assignments can be handed in in either Dutch or English.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Writing African History

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Author : Philips

ISBN : 978-1-58046-164-1

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : not applicable

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : intensive

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : intensive

References

Possible visit to museum or archive: 15 euro.

Course content-related study coaching

- Interactive teaching and learning
- Recurrent feedback (Ufora or consultation hours)
- Guidance regarding research activities

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

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

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- Students are expected to attend and participate actively in class.
- Students choose a source on which to write a paper in which they give a critical appraisal of the source, how it can be used in historical research, what the methodological challenges are etc.
- This also means practicing how to cite primary and secondary sources in a correct fashion.
- This paper is then evaluated.
- Students are also expected to reflect orally and in written form on the literature they have read.

Calculation of the examination mark

100% non-permanent evaluation

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance.
2. The examination cannot be rescheduled
3. No alternative time for feedback

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

