**War and Violence in Africa**

Professor Barbara Cooper

[The idea would be to target « 21st century challenges « ]

[I’m not envisioning this as an upper level course, but rather as a course for students curious about why they see Africa so much in the news, students interested in contemporary political science, veterans, and the humanitarian crowd. The required textbooks are not difficult, although some of the other materials will be more of a challenge. I can sneak a fair amount of social history in here and there are a number of interesting documentaries I would want to use. 200 level ?]

This course explores the longer history of warfare and violence in Africa with a view towards understanding how war has shaped African states, societies, and economies. Topics will include different patterns of military organization over time; the evolution of weaponry, tactics, and strategy; and the increasing prevalence of warfare and militarism in African political and economic systems. We will trace shifts in the culture and practice of war from the first millennium into the era of the external slave trades, and then into the nineteenth century, when a military revolution unfolded across much of Africa.

The second half of the course will focus upon more recent violence beginning with colonial rule and the cold war. We will focus on a number of issues of a social and cultural nature : gendered violence, child soldiers, religious extremism, and the experience of displaced people. Our goal will be in part to understand contemporary conflicts in the context of the longer history of the continent.

Required Textbooks :

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History* (Cambridge 2012)

Meredeth Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya, *What Women do in Wartime* (Zed Books 1998)

David Eggers, *What is the What ?*

Alcinda Honwana, *Child Soldiers in Africa* (U. of Pennsylvania 2007)

We will also read portions of the following books :

Edna Bay, *Wives of the Leopard : Gender Politics and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey*

Jack Goody, *Technology Tradition and the State in Africa*

Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*

William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa* (Cambridge 2011)

Gerard Prunier, *Africa’s World War : Congo, The Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford 2011).

I would like to see if it would be possible to fit in a showing of *Le Camp de Thiaroye* by Ousmane Sembene—it is a feature length film so I might need to show it outside of class maybe for extra credit. I would love to have Carolyn talk about WWII at some point, week 6 would make sense. Meredeth Turshen might be interested in a cameo appearance as well.

Required work for the course :

60 points : Students will submit a brief response to the assignment question each week. The assignment (with the exception of the map exercise) will be uploaded to the course Sakai site and Turnitin. (12 papers 5 points each).

20 points : class discussion and participation. Attendance in the course is mandatory and I expect all students to take part in discussions.

20 points : Final 8-10 page paper placing the violence in Congo in the context of the course of as a whole. Due on the final exam date.

[the idea here is to get them to write every week, so that by the end they have accumulated a lot of thoughts and are in the habit of writing. But the final writing assignment will be longer and will be synthetic. The hardest reading is the Prunier book, the easiest is the Eggers, which is something of a novel. I probably will offer hem a couple of topics from which to choose that would enable them to draw together more concrete themes (gender, children, genocide, arms), for the moment this is just the general idea.]

Week 1) Environment and War

Introduction to course

Reading :

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 1 : The Contours of Violence:

Environment, Economy and Polity in African Warfare pp. 1-17

Written Assignment : Map Exercise

Week 2) Arms and War

The Technology of War

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 2 : Arms in Africa’s Antiquity: Patterns and Systems of Warfare, to the Early Second Millennium CE pp. 18-45.

Jack Goody, *Technology Tradition and the State in Africa*

Written Assignment : Why is it important to consider environment in attempting to understand warfare in Africa ?

Week 3) Warfare and State Formation

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 3: The Military Foundations of State and Society, to circa 1600, pp. 46-78.

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 4 : Destruction and Construction, circa 1600 to circa 1800, pp. 79-106.

Written Assignment : Compare three different cases of societies explored by Reid.

Week 4) The 19thc. Revolutions

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 5 : Transformations in Violence: Military Revolution and the ‘Long’ Nineteenth Century, pp. 107-146.

Jean Boyd, One Woman’s Jihad

Written Assignment : Discuss three different ways in which women could be significant in warfare in the 19th century.

Week 5) Women and War: Amazons

Bay on women in Dahomey.

Film : [There are several films on the so-called Amazons, I’ll need to decide whether to go with fiction or documentary]

Written Assignment : Discuss how women were implicated in the shape of Dahomean society both in military, political and reproductive terms.

Week 6) Colonial Soldiers

Richard Reid, *Warfare in African History*, Chapter 6 : Revolutions Incomplete: The Old and the New in the Modern Era, pp. 147 – 182.

Echenberg excerpt on Colonial Soldiers

[showing of Le Camp de Thiaroye or perhaps Indigenes—with French classes?]

Written Assignment : Discuss the contradictory implications of the widespread pattern of conscripting « native » soldiers into colonial militaries.

Week 7) Colonial Resistance and Rebellion

Anti-Colonial Rebels

Reno Chapter 2, 37-78.

[may show part of Battle for Algiers or something on Mau Mau]

Written Assignment : Discuss the various ways in which anti-colonial rebellions both drew upon and moved beyond prior patterns of warfare.

Week 8) The Long Struggle for Majority Rule

Majority Rule Rebels

Reading : Reno chapter 3, 79-118.

[may show part of Generations of Resistance]

Written Assignment : Discuss the implications of the cold war for violence on the African continent.

Week 9) Women and War: Contemporary experiences

Turshen and Twagiramariya

What Women do in Wartime.

Written Assignment : Discuss how women contribute to, cope with, and experience war.

Week 10) The Problem of Child Soldiers

Honwana

Child Soldiers in Africa

Written Assignment : Discuss the origins of the uses of child soldiers in Africa and some of the steps that would be needed to eliminate their use.

Week 11) The Experience of Wartime Refugees

Eggers, What is the What ?

Written Assignment : Discuss the title of the book—what does it mean ?

Week 12) Congo Catastrophe: Rwanda Genocide

Prunier, Africa’s World War

Written Assignment : Discuss how the Rwandan genocide shaped international perceptions of the continent on the one hand and dynamics on the continent on the other.

Week 13) Congo Catastrophe: The end of Zaire

Prunier, Africa’s World War

[will show documentary The Greatest Silence on rape in the Congo violence]

No written assignment : work on final paper

Week 14 Congo Catastrophe: Chaos in eastern Congo

Prunier, Africa’s World War

[possible discussion of Tuareg rebellion and Mali on the final class]

No written assignment : work on final paper