Africa and Africans in Global History: new perspectives, concepts and narratives

Syllabus, fall 2023

Where: Classroom 2

When: Starting on November the 6th, then every Monday at 11:00 AM

Teacher: Thaïs Gendry

Student reception: by appointment.

Evaluation criteria:
Class attendance: 15%
Participation to class discussion: 35%
Final paper on one topic discussed in classes (between 4,000 and 6,000 words): 50%

General description of the course

Western university students bring with them a lot of preconceived ideas about Africa, even though it is a little-known continent. Those who can situate some key dates or facts about the history of Africa do not usually realise they are mere examples in European-centred narratives. African narratives of African history and global events are absent from European universities. This class is designed to present alternative historical tools and narratives that will enable students to integrate Africa in global history, but also to look at world history from the perspective of African actors. In this class we will learn about the specificities of African history but also use them as a stepping stone to explore global history and challenge the classical writing of history.

Overview of the classes

Lecture 1, November 6th
Forging tools and concepts for doing African and global history

Lecture 2, November 13th
How to write of Medieval and Early Modern Africa: oral histories and global histories

Lecture 3, November 20th
Framing historical events: timeline, space and actors (1)
The case of Abina Manshah, a domestic slave in a British colonial court of law

Lecture 4, 27th of November
Framing historical events: timeline, space and actors (2)
European colonialisms: examples of West-African perceptions and (re)actions

Lecture 5, December 4th
Africa and Africans during the World Wars

Lecture 6, December 11th
Title TBD, With Noureddine Amara, SSM

Lecture 7, December 18th
The dimensions of anticolonial struggles: African feminists, global feminisms and anticolonialism

Lecture 8, February 12th
(Un)framings: Photographic Appropriations, with Daniel Foliard (Université de Paris)