

Roots & Routes Unveiled: Tracing Ghana's Revolutionary Legacy from the Gold Coast to Global Innovation

Professor Information



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Course Description and Purpose

This course, designed as both a Global Learning and interdisciplinary experience, fulfills your This course will prepare students for an immersive, multi-city educational and service-learning adventure through Ghana, where they will embark on a transformative journey through the nation's rich history, vibrant culture, and commitment to community development. From bustling cities to serene villages, students will delve into Ghana's customs, laws, and tribal rituals before traveling across the country. They will engage directly with historical sites, cultural traditions, and local communities, gaining an in-depth understanding of Ghana's past, present, and future. Through dynamic lectures, hands-on workshops, guided excursions, and impactful service projects, participants will deepen their appreciation for African history, culture, and the challenges and opportunities that define contemporary Ghanaian society. This experience promises to be an eye-opening exploration of one of Africa's most influential nations.

Course Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

Part 1: Classroom Learning (Spring 2026)

By the end of the first semester, students will be able to:

1. Analyze key historical events, cultural movements, and political shifts in Africa's history by engaging with scholarly texts, films, and discussions.

2. Evaluate the legacy of colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade, and independence movements through research and multimedia projects.
3. Examine African cultural expressions, including art, music, dance, and literature, and compare their impact on the African diaspora.
4. Apply critical thinking to Africa's role in global technological advancements, particularly in AI, fintech, and sustainable development.
5. Develop a service-learning proposal addressing an African community's real-world needs, demonstrating cultural sensitivity and ethical engagement.
6. Synthesize interdisciplinary knowledge by creating digital or written analyses of African social, political, and economic transformations.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of African languages, traditions, and belief systems through interactive assignments and guest lectures.

Part 2: Travel & Immersion (Summer 2026)

By the end of the study abroad experience, students will be able to:

1. Engage with African scholars, students, and community leaders to enhance their cross-cultural communication skills.
2. Investigate historical sites, such as Cape Coast Castle and the Salaga Slave Market, and connect their significance to classroom studies.
3. Contribute to community service projects, such as education initiatives or sustainability efforts, and reflect on their impact through daily journaling.
4. Explore African innovations in technology, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability through hands-on experiences.
5. Compare and contrast urban and rural African experiences by immersing themselves in diverse cultural settings, from Accra to Mole National Park.
6. Document their learning journey through multimedia projects, including photography, video reflections, or blog posts.
7. Demonstrate adaptability and cultural competency by successfully navigating new environments, traditions, and group collaborations.

Important Information

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit [FIU's Policy and Procedure Library](#).

As a member of the FIU community you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Accessibility and Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Web Accessibility Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [Google](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for additional information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Conduct and Honor Code. Academic Misconduct includes:

Cheating

- The unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids or assistance from another person on any academic assignment or exercise, unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor.

- Assisting another student in the unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids, unless explicitly authorized by the instructor
- Having a substitute complete any academic assignment or completing an academic assignment for someone else, either paid or unpaid

Plagiarism

- The deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.
- Assisting another student in the deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with [FIU's Panthers Care website](#).

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call (305) 348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Inclusivity Statement

This course will serve to embrace the diversity and inclusivity found within Florida International University. We appreciate and respect diversity, equality, equity, cooperativeness, community, and sustainability within our online courses. We are committed to the ongoing education of our students and their participation within the course regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geographical location, religion, and disability. We strive in encouraging collaboration by preparing our students to value the differences in others. At the core of our intentions is the encouragement of acceptance and appreciation of differences within our student population and community.

Course Prerequisites

Students must register for the Spring 2026 and Summer B 2026 semesters.

Textbook and Course Materials

All reading materials will be provided through Canvas.

Expectations of This Course

Students are expected to:

- **attend** and participate in every class;
- **review the getting started page** located in the course modules;
- **interact** with instructor and peers;
- **review** and follow the course calendar and syllabus;
- **log in** to the course **1 time** per week;
- **submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline

The instructor will:

- log in to the course **3 times per** week;
- respond to **emails** within **24-72 business hours**;
- grade assignments within **7 days** of the assignment deadline.

Course Detail

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within 24 business hours.

Assignments

Specific instructions, guidelines, and rubrics for each assignment will be found within the appropriate assignment drobox.

In general, your assignments will be graded within 7 days of the deadline.

Assignments

Written Reflections

Video Reflections

Students will reflect on the material covered in each module.

Discussion Posts

Students will reflect on the material covered in each module.

Individual Assignment with Peer Interaction

Knowledge Checks

Students will be assessed on the material covered in each module.

You will be able to see your score right away for any multiple-choice questions. Essay questions will be graded within 7 days of the deadline. You will not be able to review the questions and answers after submitting a quiz. There are no make-up exams.

Group Project

Students will collaborate on a group project(s) related to the modules covered during the course.

Late assignments I expect all scheduled work and participation in this upper-division course to be submitted according to the course schedule.

No late assignments will be accepted for full credit without a medical excuse. No exceptions will be made. Assignments will include a 10% deduction per day until the assignment is submitted (This does not include quizzes/exams as these will not be accepted late) until the assignment is submitted up to 3 days. (This does not include quizzes, as these will not be accepted late).

- Individual Assignments (*must be taken during the scheduled time unless the student makes provides proof of a medical or family emergency*)

Contact me immediately if extenuating circumstances prevent you from participating in the class. If the submission of late work is indeed extenuating, a new schedule will be determined, and documentation for the cause of missed work may be required.

Course Grades Distribution Table

Your final grade for this course will be earned by accruing points over the semester as you participate in the course discussions or learning activities, developing your skills.

Available points in the course consist of the following:

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Percentage
Discussions	8	20%

Assignments	5	40%
Group Work	2	30%
Knowledge Checks	8	10%
Total	23	100%

Course Calendar:

Week 1: Introduction – Africa Beyond Stereotypes

- Readings: *The African Experience: From 'Lucy' to Mandela* – Roland Oliver
- Film: *Africa: The Untold Story* (Documentary, BBC)
- Assignment: Write a reflection piece on preconceived notions about Africa and how media shapes these ideas.

Week 2: The African Diaspora & Global Connections

- Readings: *In Search of Africa* – Manthia Diawara
- Discussion: How has Africa influenced global culture (music, fashion, language)?
- Project: Create an interactive digital timeline showcasing African influence in the diaspora.

Week 3: Ghana & The Legacy of the Slave Trade

- Readings: *The Door of No Return* – William St. Clair
- Film: *Sankofa* (1993)
- Assignment: Research a historical African figure connected to the slave trade and present findings.

Week 4: African Political Movements & Independence

- Readings: *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* – Frederick Cooper
- Discussion: Pan-Africanism and the role of leaders like Kwame Nkrumah.
- Project: AI-assisted analysis of speeches from African independence leaders.

Week 5: African Art, Music & Dance – Cultural Expressions

- Readings: *African Art in Motion* – Robert Farris Thompson
- Film: *Afrikipedia: Ghana & Senegal* (Vice Documentary)
- Activity: Virtual reality (VR) tour of African museums.

Week 6: AI, Innovation & Tech in Africa

- Readings: *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa* – Dayo Olopade
- Discussion: How AI is transforming agriculture, health, and education in Africa.
- Project: Research and present on an African tech startup.

Week 7: Gender & Social Justice in Africa

- Readings: *We Should All Be Feminists* – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- Film: *The Woman King* (2022)
- Assignment: Compare African feminism with Western feminist movements.

Week 8: African Mythology & Storytelling

- Readings: *Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe
- Activity: AI-generated African folklore storytelling project.

Week 9: Community & Service Learning – Preparing for Travel

- Guest Speaker: Representative from an African NGO.
- Assignment: Develop a service-learning project proposal.

Week 10: Sustainability & Environmental Challenges

- Readings: *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth* – Tom Burgis
- Project: Design a sustainability initiative for an African community.

Week 11: Religion, Spirituality, & Indigenous Beliefs

- Readings: *African Religions & Philosophy* – John S. Mbiti
- Activity: Group debate on the impact of Christianity and Islam on African traditions.

Week 12: African Media & Digital Activism

- Readings: *Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics: How the Internet Era is Transforming Politics in Kenya* – Nanjala Nyabola
- Project: Develop a social media campaign raising awareness of an African issue.

Week 13: The Business of Africa – Trade & Entrepreneurship

- Readings: *Africa Rising: How 900 Million African Consumers Offer More Than You Think* – Vijay Mahajan
- Discussion: The role of mobile banking and fintech in Africa's economic growth.

Week 14: Ethics & Identity – What Does It Mean to Be African?

- Readings: *Born a Crime* – Trevor Noah
- Assignment: Final research paper – students choose a topic from the course.

Week 15: Final Reflections & Travel Preparation

- Activity: Presentation of final projects.
- Discussion: Cultural expectations and travel logistics.

Summer 2026 Curriculum (4 Weeks – Travel & Immersion)

Week 1: Accra – Urban Exploration & University Studies

- Activities:
 - City tour (Makola Market, Jamestown).
 - Lectures at the University of Ghana.
 - Nkyinkim outdoor museum visit.
 - Volta River boat cruise.
- Assignment: Daily journal reflections & photography project.

Week 2: History & Heritage – Slave Trade & Community Engagement

- Activities:
 - Visit to Cape Coast Castle & Slave River.
 - Volunteering at a local school.
 - Meeting University of Cape Coast faculty for service-learning.
- Assignment: Conduct interviews and create a short documentary on Ghanaian perspectives on history.

Week 3: Rural Exploration, Sustainability & Tech Innovation

- Activities:
 - Visiting Tamale & Mole National Park.
 - Shea butter making workshop.
 - Exploring tech hubs in Kumasi.
- Assignment: Create a research report on sustainability practices in rural Ghana.

Week 4: Cultural Immersion & Farewell Reflections

- Activities:
 - Kente weaving & Adinkra symbols workshop.
 - Drumming, dance, and cooking lessons.
 - Naming ceremony (optional).
- Assignment: Final multimedia presentation on personal growth and key learnings.