# African History through the lens of Economics

*An Initiative by the Wheeler institute for Business and Development*

## Course Objective

The Wheler Institute for Business and Development at the London Business School (LBS), is offering a virtual online course in African economic history.

This masterclass aims to familiarize students with insights of the recent, burgeoning literature on the impact of Africa’s history on contemporary development. Despite Africa’s recent growth miracle, there are vast regional—as well as ethnic and religious—inequalities that are linked to Africa’s dark past: slavery, colonial extraction, violence, cold-war-fueled conflict. This masterclass will cover recent contributions in economic history that using geospatial data from anthropological maps, colonial archives, secondary sources, and other sources uncover the legacies of these phenomena. The course will be inter-disciplinary aiming to provide a forum of dialogue between economics, history, political science, cultural anthropology, even psychology.

There will be ten 90 minutes main lectures (with a small break), spread over 10 weeks every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 am ET / 3pm GMT starting on 1st February, covering precolonial social and political organization, Africa’s slave trades, the Scramble for Africa, colonization, independence movements, the Cold War, and the Third Wave of Democratization.

The lectures will be accompanied by ten supplementary special lectures (75 minutes), where guests will present inter-disciplinary research. The special session will zoom on issues, like prison labor, the role of private concessionary companies during colonization, Christian Missions, colonial tax policies, and delve into some country-cases.

There will also be plenary sessions, where guests will join the teaching team discussing the controversy regarding foreign aid’s impact, the psychology of Africans in comparison to other continents, and the future of Africa.

## Tentative Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Faculty Lead</th>
<th>Additional Session</th>
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| **1** Introduction. African Development and History  
February 1, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT | Elias Papaoannou  
Guest lecture: Tanner Regan | Long-run trends of development in Africa  
February 2, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Morten Jerven  
- Ewout Frankema  
- Marlous van Waijenburg |
| **2** Precolonial Africa. Political Organization  
February 8, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT | Stelios Michalopoulos | On Origins of African States  
February 9, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- J. Fenske  
- M. Alsan |
| **3** Social Structure [kinship, family, social relations]  
February 15, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT | Nathan Nunn | A Long-Run View of African History  
February 16, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Christopher Ehret  
- Awa Seck |
| **4** The Slave Trades  
February 22, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT | Nathan Nunn | The Slave Trades’ Impact on Population and Africans  
February 23, 11 am ET / 4 pm GMT  
- Patrick Manning  
- Ugo Nwokeji |
| **5** The Scramble for Africa  
March 1, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT | Stelios Michalopoulos | A Closer Look at South Africa and Nigeria from Colonization  
March 2, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Nigeria: Nonso Obikili  
- South Africa: Johan Fourie |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
<th>Session Details</th>
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March 8, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Etienne Le Rossignol  
- Catherine Guirkinger |
| 7   | Colonization II. Infrastructure and Extraction | Elias Papaioannou | Colonial Infrastructure and Repression  
March 15, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Roland Pongou  
- Belinda Archibong |
March 22, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Local state capacity. Jutta Bolt  
- Taxation. Leigh Gardner |
| 9   | Cold War, Third Wave of Democratization, and Recent Progress | Leonard Wantchekon  
[Simon Kuznets Lecture, Yale Economic Growth Center] | Colonial Concessions  
March 30, 12 pm ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Giorgio Chiovelli  
- Sara Lowes |
| 10  | Conclusion. Persistence and Opportunity. | Full teaching team | Plenary Session 1  
April 5, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
Foreign Aid  
- Bill Easterly  
- Celestin Monga |
April 12, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
- Chima J. Korich  
- James Robinson | Plenary Session 3  
April 13, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT  
Africa: WEIRD or Not?  
- Joe Henrich |

Please Note: A longer version of the course syllabus including a reading list will be shared with the attendees.

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