# African History through the lens of Economics

*A course by the Wheeler Institute for Business and Development at London Business School*

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African History through the lens of Economics

An Initiative by the Wheeler institute for Business and Development

Objective.

The Wheeler 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 11 weeks, every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am ET / 3pm GMT [with minor variations - please see course schedule below for more details], 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.

Teaching Team

- Elias Papaioannou is Professor of Economics at the London Business School, where he serves at the Academic Co-Director of the Wheeler Institute for Business and Development. Elias is a CEPR Research Fellow and a Managing Co-Editor of the Review of Economic Studies. His research covers political economy, international finance, and economic history.
- Stelios Michalopoulos is Professor of Economics at Brown University, an NBER Faculty Research Fellow and a CEPR Research Fellow. His research covers growth, macro development, political economy, and cultural economics.
- Nathan Nunn is the Frederic E. Abbe Professor of Economics at Harvard University. Nathan is an NBER Faculty Research Fellow, a Research Fellow at BREAD, and an Editor of the Quarterly Journal of Economics. His research covers political economy, economic history, development, cultural economics, and international trade.
- Leonard Wantchekon is a Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University and an Associated Faculty in the Department of Economics. Leonard is the Founder and President of the African School of Economics. His research studies economic history, political institutions, governance, and development mostly in Africa.

Support.

The Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) and the Structural Transformation and Economic Growth Initiative (STEG) are supporting the online course. The course is part of European Research Council Consolidator Grant, whose financial support is gratefully acknowledged.
Audience.

Advanced undergraduate, master’s and doctoral students in economics, political science, history, and sociology, interested in Africa’s history, development, and political economy.

The online course is also well-suited for professionals in international organizations, development agencies, non-governmental organization, and development finance institutions interested in how history shapes domestic policies, foreign aid, development finance, and international investment.

Cost/Registration.

This is an open access course. All lectures and sessions will take place on zoom. All interested to participate need to register by the day the classes commence.

Participation.

We recommend that those registered will attend all lectures and special and plenary sessions; however, they are free to attend the sessions as they please. We look forward to a discussion and encourage active participation.

Course Material.

The main and guest lecturers will post their slides, notes, and supplementary material in a dedicated course website: https://www.wheelerafricacourse.org/

Dates and times.

The course will run from February 1 till April 13 [11 weeks]. Each week there will be a main lecture, delivered by the core teaching team, and one supplementary special lecture zooming on core issues. In the end of the course (in late March and early April), there will be some plenary sessions.

▪ All the main lectures will take place on Tuesdays at 10.00-11.40 (EDT) / 15.00-16.40 (GMT through March dates, and then GMT+1 for April dates)
▪ All supplementary special lectures, including plenary sessions, will take place on Wednesdays at 10.00-11.15 (EDT) / 15.00-16.15 (GMT through March dates, and then GMT+1 for April dates)

Logistics.

LBS Wheeler Institute for Business and Development will provide administrative and teaching support.

▪ Course Administration:
  o Trias Kolokitha-Schmitz: tkolokitha@london.edu
  o Bushra Yasin: byasin@london.edu
  o Michelle Joyce: mjoyce@london.edu
▪ Outreach, Marketing and Communications:
  o Tiago Martinho: tmartinho@london.edu
  o Madeleine McEncroe: mmencroe@london.edu
  o Sanjana Kakar: skakar@london.edu
▪ Course Management: Professor Elias Papaioannou (London Business School)
# Tentative Course Schedule

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<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Faculty Lead</th>
<th>Additional Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction. African Development and History</td>
<td>Christopher Ehret</td>
<td>Long-run trends of development in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Moderator: Awa Ambra Seck</td>
<td>February 2, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Morten Jerven</td>
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<td>• Ewout Frankema</td>
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<td>• Marious van Waijenburg</td>
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<td>Moderator: Ibrahim Al-Bakri Nyei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Precolonial Africa. Political Organization</td>
<td>Stelios Michalopoulos</td>
<td>On Origins of African States</td>
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<td>February 8, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Warren Whatley</td>
<td>February 9, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>Moderator: Alfred Tembo</td>
<td>• James Fenske</td>
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<td>• Marcella Alsan</td>
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<td>• Mamello Selamolela</td>
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<td>Moderator: Ibrahim Al-Bakri Nyei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Structure [kinship, family, social relations]</td>
<td>Nathan Nunn</td>
<td>Mapping Contemporary African Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 15, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Guest Speaker &amp; Moderator: Chinemelu Okafor</td>
<td>February 10, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Tanner Regan</td>
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<td>• Elias Papaioannou</td>
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<td>• Mamello Selamolela</td>
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<td>Moderator: Marina Mavungu Ngoma</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Slave Trades</td>
<td>Nathan Nunn</td>
<td>Understanding African Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 22, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Guest Speaker &amp; Moderator: Oyebola Okunogbe</td>
<td>February 16, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Amma Panin</td>
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<td>• Awa Seck</td>
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<td>• Moussa Blimpo</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Scramble for Africa</td>
<td>Stelios Michalopoulos</td>
<td>The Slave Trades' Impact on Population and Africans</td>
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<td>March 1, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Jeffrey Herbst</td>
<td>February 23, 11 am ET / 4 pm GMT</td>
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<td>Moderator: Tanaka Chīmba</td>
<td>• Patrick Manning</td>
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<td>• Ugo Nwokedi</td>
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<td>• Moussa Blimpo</td>
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<td>Moderator: Jacien (Jay) Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colonization I. Introduction. Human Capital and Infrastructure</td>
<td>Elias Papaioannou and Leonard Wantchekon</td>
<td>A Closer Look at South Africa and Nigeria from Colonization</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Moderator: Mamello Selamolela</td>
<td>March 2, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Nigerija: Nonso Obikili</td>
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<td>• South Africa: Johan Fourie</td>
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<td>• Ubah (Uji) Shipoke</td>
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<td>Moderator: Larissa Nayo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colonization II. Infrastructure and Extraction</td>
<td>Elias Papaioannou</td>
<td>On the Legacy of Christian Missions</td>
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<td>March 15, 11 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Moderator: Tapiwa Ngara</td>
<td>March 9, 10 am ET / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Etienne Le Rossignol</td>
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<td>• Catherine Guirkinger</td>
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<td>• Dozie Okoye</td>
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<td>• Larissa Nayo</td>
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<td>Colonization III. Decolonization and Early Independence</td>
<td>Leonard Wantchekon</td>
<td>Colonial Infrastructure and Repression</td>
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<td>March 22, 11 am EDT / 3 pm GMT</td>
<td>Moderator: Eloho Omame</td>
<td>March 16, 11 am EDT / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Roland Pongou</td>
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<td>• Belinda Archibong</td>
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<td>• Mesay Gebresilasse</td>
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<td>Cold War, Third Wave of Democratization, and Recent Progress</td>
<td>Leonard Wantchekon</td>
<td>Local Government and Tax Capacity</td>
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<td>March 31, 4 pm EDT / 9 pm BST</td>
<td>Hosted by Yale Economic Growth Center</td>
<td>March 30, 12 pm EDT / 5 pm BST</td>
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<td>Register Here</td>
<td>• Local state capacity. Jutta Bolt</td>
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<td>• Taxation. Leigh Gardner</td>
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<td>• Toni Oki</td>
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<td>Conclusion. Persistence and Opportunity.</td>
<td>Full teaching team, David Laitin and Gábor Nyéki</td>
<td>Colonial Concessions</td>
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<td>April 5, 10 am EDT / 3 pm BST</td>
<td>Moderator: Mamello Selamolela</td>
<td>March 30, 12 pm EDT / 5 pm BST</td>
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<td>• Giorgio Chiovelii</td>
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<td>• Sara Lowes</td>
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<td>• Amanda Maria Umuze</td>
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<td>April 6, 10 am EDT / 3 pm GMT</td>
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<td>• Bill Easterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>April 12, 10 am EDT / 3 pm BST</td>
<td>Farewell: Looking Forward</td>
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| April 12, 10 am EDT / 3 pm GMT | Plenary Session 2. Africa’s Latent Assets and the Future | Celestin Monga
Dr Mo Ibrahim
Moderator: Tanaka Chiimba |                            |
| April 12, 10 am EDT / 3 pm GMT | Plenary Session 3. Africa; WEIRD or Not? | Joe Henrich
Moderator: Sopé Ogunrombi |                            |
General Readings [Non-Africa Focused.]

  - Volume 1 (Global)
  - Volume 2 (Africa and Asia)
  - Volume 3 (Europe and the Americas)


Topics and Readings per session*.

**Week 1. African Development, Contemporary and Historical**

- Main Patterns. Development and Inequities. Country, Regional and Ethnic differences
- Main Contemporary Datasets
  - Satellite Imagery Luminosity
  - Census [IPUMS]
  - Demographic and Health Surveys [DHS]
  - Afrobarometer
  - Conflict [UCDP-GED, ACLED]
- Measuring historical development. Approaches and Data

**Background Readings**

Week 2. Precolonical Africa. Political Organization and Mode of Subsistence Economy

- Overview
- Ethnographic and anthropological approaches
- Political Organization
- Mode of Subsistence Economy
- Geography, Ecology

Background Papers

Week 3. Social Structure

- Clan and family structure
- Social organization

Background Papers


**Week 4. The Slave Trades**

- Historical Overview
- Origins
- Legacy
- Mechanisms

**Background Papers**


Week 5. The Scramble for Africa

- Historical Overview
- Consequences
- Ethnic Partitioning
- Country Size, Shape
- Geographic and Ethnic Inequality

Background Papers

Week 6. Colonization I. Introduction & Human Capital

- Overview
- Classifications.
  - Colonial Power Identity
  - Structure of the Colonial Economy
  - Other
- Phases of African Colonization
  - Early. Pre WW-I
  - WWI and Recovery
  - Great Depression and WWII
  - Decolonization
  - Unbundling Colonization
    - a. Infrastructure [railroads, roads, ports]
    - b. Education and Health. The Role of Christian Missions
    - c. Institutions

Background Readings. Colonization Introduction


Background Readings. Human Capital and Christian Missions

Week 7. Colonization II. Infrastructure & Extractive Institutions

- Railroads and Roads. Local and aggregate effects
- Extractive Institutions. Prison Labor, Chiefs and Indirect Rule, and Colonial Taxation

Background Papers. Infrastructure


Background Papers. Colonial Institutions and Extraction


Background Papers. Colonial Taxation


*Please Note - Reading list for Week 8 will be updated soon.*
Week 9. Cold War, Third Wave of Democratization, and Recent Progress

- The Third Wave of Democratization
- African socialism
- Cold War

Background Readings

Week 10. Persistence, Challenges and Opportunity

- Mapping African Land of Opportunity?
- Educational Mobility
- Regional, Ethnic, and Religious Inequalities

Background Papers

Farewell and Conclusion, Looking Forward

Background Readings

- Heinrich, Joseph. WEIRD. How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous