

HI32B-30 Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion, 1952-1960

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Credit value

30

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module is intended to examine a wide variety of sources related to the origins, conduct and memorialisation of Kenya's Mau Mau war of 1952-60. The sources will reveal the complexity and ambiguities of what was both an anti-colonial rebellion against British rule and a civil war within the colony's Kikuyu community.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module has a particular focus on understanding the motives and actions of those Kikuyu who joined the rebellion, and those who opposed it. The sources used will include the memoirs of the participants, official records from Kenya and the UK, and fictionalised accounts of the war in Britain and Kenya. Sources produced by all sides of the conflict will be discussed. Students will examine the on-going uses of a deeply contested historical event.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Autumn Term

1. Introductory Session
2. Lectures A & B - Mau Mau: The Legal Case and the Context. Historiography: Mau Maus of the Mind
3. Lectures C & D - The Conquest of Kikuyuland, to 1914. The Colonial Moment in Kikuyuland, 1914-1939
4. The Politics of Reproduction: Generation, Gender and Property
5. The Politics of Labour: Masters and Servants, 1905-1952
6. Reading Week
7. The Politics of Land: Squatters and Olenguruone, 1905-52
8. Towards the State of Emergency 1945-52
9. Emergency Powers and White Highlanders
10. Mau Mau's Land and Freedom Army

Spring Term

1. Creating Kikuyu Loyalists
2. The British Counterinsurgency, 1952-56
3. Winning "Hearts and Minds"
4. Detention and Villagisation
5. Mwea, Hola and the Rule of Law, 1956-59
6. Reading Week
7. Kenya's Politics of Decolonization, 1959-63
8. Interpreting Mau Mau
9. Fiction and Film
10. Dissertation Presentations

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the place of Mau Mau within the wider history of colonial Africa and the longer histories of British imperialism and Kenyan politics
- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of primary sources (including the methodological challenges of archival-based research into colonised societies) relating to the history of the Mau Mau Rebellion
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, relating to the complexity of anti-colonial rebellions
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas relating to the history of the Mau Mau Rebellion

Indicative reading list

- David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005)
- E.S. Atieno Odhiambo & John Lonsdale (eds), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority, Narration* (Oxford, 2003)

- Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in Kenya* (Cambridge, 2012)
- Bruce Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (Oxford, 1992)
- Bruce Berman & John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Oxford, 1992)
- Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Civil War, Counterinsurgency and Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2009)
- Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London, 2005)
- Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective* (Oxford, 1989)
- Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau* (London, 1987)
- Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London,)
- Greet Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below* (Oxford, 1997)
- W.O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt* (Bloomington, 1993)
- Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Gikuyu* (Nairobi, 1974)
- Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH, 2004)
- David Sandgren, *Mau Mau's Children: The Making of Kenya's Postcolonial Elite* (Madison WI, 2012)
- David Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau 1945-52* (London, 1988)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	2 sessions of 2 hours (10%)
Seminars	15 sessions of 2 hours (71%)
Tutorials	2 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Practical classes	1 session of 2 hours (5%)
Other activity	4 hours (10%)
Total	42 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Other activity description

Revision sessions

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D1

	Weighting	Study time
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word essay	10%	
3000 word essay	40%	
Take-home Examination	40%	

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

[Past exam papers for HI32B](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 4 of UITA-R3V2 Undergraduate History and Italian

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
 - Year 3 of V100 History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)