

Tentative and subject to revision

History 075.401

HISTORY OF AFRICA TO 1850

Spring 2016, MW, 11-12

Instructor: Dr. Cheikh Babou, 306 G CH

Office hours: M: 12:00-1:00; F: 12:00-1:00

and by appointment

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the cultures, history, social structures, political organizations and economy of Africa before the arrival of Europeans on the continent. We will examine the dynamics of historical change and continuity in Africa and the contributions of Africa and Africans to world civilizations. The major geographic areas of the continent will be studied within a broader chronological and thematic framework, to allow for the examination of both similarities and diversities in the African experience. We will look at the emergence and development of the Ancient civilizations of the Nile Valley, religions and cultures, trade and processes of state building and transformation in the interior and along the Atlantic and Indian coasts, the Atlantic slave trade, and finally Southern Africa.

Objectives and Format

This course has three major aims: first, to introduce students to the rich and diverse civilizations that emerged in pre-colonial Africa; second, to analyze some of the historical processes which have shaped African societies before the European encounters of the nineteenth century; and third, to critically reflect on the ways in which scholars use archeology, linguistics, oral tradition and other disciplines to reconstruct historical knowledge about pre-colonial African societies. Format consists of two lectures per week and a one-hour recitation (REC) to discuss class material.

Requirements

Attendance and class participation: Regular attendance at lectures and participation in recitation sessions are essential. You are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the readings for each week and to participate actively in discussions. Assigned readings are indicated in the syllabus for each meeting. It is the student's responsibility to complete the

required readings on schedule so as to participate fruitfully in the weekly discussions. Both attendance and in-class participation will count towards your grade. **Late submission of an assignment will result in the loss of 1/3 of a full grade per day (e.g., A to A-; B+ to B). One absence does not carry penalty but any additional unexcused absence will negatively affect your final grade. If you have a legitimate reason to miss class, please let me and your teaching assistant know beforehand.**

Weekly assignment: The weekly assignment and participation in recitations will count for 20% of your grade. The weekly assignment consists of not longer than two paragraphs of response to the readings and video of the week. You are expected to summarize the main arguments raised in the material you have read, then to formulate two discussion questions for recitation meetings. These questions are not directed to you or to the instructor but to the students in the section. The weekly assignment is designed to help you keep up with and reflect on course materials as the semester goes along.

Exams: Each student will be evaluated on five pieces of work and on participation in recitations. There will be a map quiz, two essays, a mid term test and a final.

Map quiz ---in sections (5%)
Essay No. 1-----(15%)
Mid-term test----- (20%)
Essay No. 2----- (15%)
Final----- (25%)
Recitation and weekly assignment (20%)

Electronic resources: The syllabus for this class will be posted on Canvas as well as a **required electronic bulk pack of supplementary readings** (ER) and some additional resources related to specific course topics. Students are invited to use the digital drop box and the forum on Canvas to post the weekly assignment. Registered students with a Penn ID and an E-mail address are automatically listed on Canvas.

Academic integrity: Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity and plagiarism policies on all assignments. Plagiarism consists of using other people's ideas without proper acknowledgment. Students who violate the university's academic integrity policies risk failing the course. The Code of Academic Integrity can be found here: <http://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/13/code-of-academic-integrity> (Links to an external site.)

Required Readings

Books

The following books are available for purchase at the Penn Book Center 34th St. and Sansom near the bank and also at the Rosengarten Reserve Desk at the Van Pelt library.

In addition, an electronic bulk pack of required supplementary readings is available on the Files section of Canvas.

Diop, Cheikh Anta. *The African Origin of civilization*. Lawrence Hill Books, 1974.

Ehret, Christopher. *The Civilizations of Africa: a history to 1800*. Charlottesville: The University of Virginia, 2002.

Niane, D. T. *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*. Essex, England: Longman, 1994.

Electronic Reserve on Canvas

Martin Bernal, *Black Athena*, vol. I, 1-39

Stanley Burstein, ed., *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2nd ed. 2009): 49-64; 97-114

Julian Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Alibi," *Journal of African History*, 29(1988): 487-519

Elizabeth, Eldredge, "The Mfecane" Reconsidered, *Journal of African History*, 33 (1992):1-35

Seymour Drescher, 'Emperors of the world: British abolitionists and imperialism' in Derek Peterson, ed. *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic* (Ohio U. Press, 2010)129-146

Christopher Fyfe, "The Abolition of the Slave Trade," in *History of West Africa* vol. 2, ed M. Crowder, chapter 2

Boyd Hilton, '1807 and all that: why Britain outlawed her slave trade' in Derek Peterson, ed. *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic* (Ohio U. press, 2010), 63-79.

Vincent B. Khapoya, *The African Experience* (Longman, 3rd ed. 2010): 21-49; 56-61

Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa*, xi-52

Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: a History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-22

Ghislaine Lydon , *On Trans-Saharan Trails* (Cambridge 2009), 49-106.

Daniel McCall, 'Introduction' in J. E. Philips ed., *Writing African History* (University of Rochester Press, 2006), 1-21.

Roland Oliver, *The African Experience*, chapter 7

David Robinson and Douglass Smith, *Sources of the African Past*, chapters 1 and 5

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, chapter 3 and 4

Edith R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis" in Robert O. Collins ed., *Problems in African History: The Pre-colonial Centuries*, pp. 9-19

Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, chapter 2

Worger and Al, *Africa and the West*, pp1 -67

Recommended and reference books

These texts are not required but they constitute important additional resources for course readings and for your writing assignments. Excerpts from these books will be used to supplement required material. All recommended books are available at the Library reserve.

Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena: the Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, volume I: the Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Collins, Robert O. *Problems in African History*. New York: Markus Wiener Press, 1993.

Connah, Graham. *African Civilizations: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa: an Archeological Perspective*. Cambridge (England): Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Davidson, Basil. *The African Slave Trade*. Boston: Little Brown, 1980.

Elphick, Richard. *Kraal and Castle: Khoi Khoi and the Founding of White South Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

Khapoya, Vincent. *The African Experience: an Introduction*. Prentice Hill, 1998.

Philips, John Edward, *Writing African History*. University of Rochester Press,,2006

Poh-Kwamena and al. *African History in Maps*. New York and London: Longman, 1982.

UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 1: Methodology and African Pre-History, ed. J. Ki-Zerbo

UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 2: Ancient Civilizations of Africa, ed. G. Mokhtar.

UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 3: Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century, ed. I. Hrbek.

UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 4: Africa from the twelfth to the sixteenth, century ed. D. T. Niane.

UNESCO General History of Africa, Volume 5: Africa from the sixteenth to the Eighteenth century, ed. B.A. Ogot.

Schedule of meetings and assignments

Introduction and overview

Week 1:

Introduction
REC Introduction

The Land and the People

Week 2:

MLK day no classes:
Issues in African History
Bohannon & Curtin ER, 6-15; Sanders in Collins ER, 9-19; Ogot ER
McCall ER, 1-21
REC: The writing of African History + preparation of map quiz in sections

Week: 3

Geography and Peopling of Africa
Social and political institutions
Map quiz in sections
Ehret; 59-100; Khapoya ER, 21-49; 56-61;
REC: The roots of social structures

Reconstructing the ancient African civilizations and cultures of the Nile Valley: history, race, and ideology.

Week 4:

Film: *Different but Equal*
Ancient Egypt
Diop xvii-170
REC: Who were the ancient Egyptians?

Week 5:

Kush (Ancient Nubia)

Axum (Ancient Ethiopia)

Ehret, 200- 208; 208-215; Diop, 230-235; Burstein ER, 49-64; 97-114

REC: trade, culture, and politics in the Nile Valley

Week 6

Film: *Black Athena*

African Traditional Religions

Bernal, ER and Lefkovitz, ER.; Bohannon and Curtin ER, 115-123

REC: *The Black Athena* Debate

Christianity and Islam in Africa

Week 7:

Christianity in Africa

Essay No 1 due

The coming of Islam

Oliver ER, 86-101; Leftzion ER, 62-91.

REC: Christianity and Islam in Africa

Islam, Trade, and State Building in West Africa

Week 8:

Film: *Caravans of Gold*

The trans-Saharan trade and state building

Lydon, ER, 49-106.

REC: Islam, trade, and the globalization of West Africa

Week 9

The Sundiata Epic

The Swahili civilization

Niane, *the Epic of Sundiata*; Ehret, 248-251; 377-379

REC: The Sundiata Epic: myth or history

Kingdoms of the Forest: religion, ethnicity and state building in West and West central Africa

Week 10:

The Yoruba states: Ife, Oyo and Benin

Ashanti

Ehret, 314-318; Bohannon and Curtin, 54-57; Robinson and Smith ch 5, ER

REC: The Yoruba and Ashanti states

Week 11

mid-term exam

The Kingdom of Kongo
Vansina ER, 37-69; Thornton, ER.
REC: Kongo and Christianity
Topics for essay No 2 distributed

The Atlantic Slave Trade

Week 12

Film: *Dark Passages*
Origins and growth of the Atlantic Slave Trade
Lovejoy, 1-22; Bohannon and Curtin, 180-188; Worger et Al..ER
REC: Origins and expansion of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Week 13

The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade

Essay No II due

The Impact of the Atlantic Trade on Africa
Rodney, ER; Fyfe, ER; Hilton 63-79 ER; Drescher 129-146 ER
REC: Consequences of the Atlantic Slave Trade in Africa

Southern Africa: contested African histories in the era of white domination

Week 14

Film the *Neo-African Americans*
The *mfecane*: Shaka and the Zulu Kingdom
Robinson and Smith ch 1 ER, Cobbing and Eldridge, ER
REC: Shaka in the history of Africa and South Africa

Week 15

Great Zimbabwe
Review session
REC. Shaka and the history of South Africa

Final exam:

Essay papers

Your papers should be about 5 pages double-spaced. Make sure that you have a beginning, in which you pose the question and suggest how you will go about answering it; a middle, in which you organize your evidence around an argument; and an end, where you respond to the question on the basis of the evidence and the argument you have developed. Your essays should be well thought-out, clearly organized and carefully

proofread and they should be based on information from all the assigned readings and lectures prior to the due date. You may agree or disagree with the authors or the lecturer, but your essays should demonstrate that you have read and thought carefully about the course materials in light of your own views.

Essay No. I

Answer one of these two questions.

1-What are Diop's main arguments for the "African Origins of civilization"? In your view, does he make a plausible case? Assess the validity of his arguments and those of his critics by paying particular attention to the nature of their sources and the contemporary relevance of the debate.

2-How, when, and why did great civilizations emerge in Africa? Explain with reference to the geographical, technological, cultural, and economic factors that underpinned the development of these civilizations. Give specific evidence from the examples of Egypt, Kush and Aksum.

