

Anthropology 3801 W

African Roots: From *Australopithecus* to Zimbabwe

Spring 2014, CRN 97271, 3 credits

Tuesday-Thursday 2:20-3:35 PM

Old Main, rm 312

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Alison S. Brooks
OFFICE: X-204 (2112 G Street NW)
OFFICE HOURS: Tues 4-5:30 or by appointment
TELEPHONE: 202-994-6079
EMAIL: abrooks@gwu.edu OR brooksalisons@gmail.com
TEACHING ASSISTANT: Robert Kaplan, office HAH, hours TBA
EMAIL: rkaplan1@gwmail.gwu.edu

PLEASE USE ASB's GMAIL ADDRESS FOR ANY EMAILS WITH ATTACHMENTS!

General Course Description: A survey of African prehistory and early history, from more than 2 million years ago until the European contacts and colonization movements of the 16th century AD. The focus will be not only on the material evidence for each region and its interpretation, but also an understanding of the major questions confronting archaeologists and early historians, methods of inquiry, and problem solving.

Learning Objectives: At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Understand the biases inherent in different types of data used to reconstruct African history, including not only documents but also archaeology, art, genetics and linguistics
- Understand how African geography and climate affected the course of human history
- Be able to discuss and refute major myths concerning Africa's past and the role of Africans in the development of world culture.
- Understand and evaluate different theories concerning the development of state-level or complex societies, including the roles of specialized technologies, trade and warfare.
- Understand how food and diet as a part of cultural heritage reflect both geography and history, and how food plants and animals introduced from other continents changed African cultures and historical trajectories
- Understand the role of the early civilizations of northeast Africa (especially Ancient Egypt) in the development of the continent.
- Evaluate disputes over the role of outsiders, especially Near Easterners and Arabs, in the development of African cultures and civilizations
- Be able to write a short research paper using scholarly sources obtained from appropriate search engines and scientific citation style, together with an annotated bibliography

Course Format: The course will consist of twice weekly classes that will include lectures as well as in-class discussion based in part on assigned readings, in which all members of the

class are expected to participate. The aim is to achieve a better understanding through an open forum for the exchange of information and to think critically about the evidence.

Required Textbooks and Readings: (See separate reading lists for additional required articles)

1. Barham, Lawrence and Peter Mitchell (2008). *The First Africans: African Archaeology from the Earliest Toolmakers to Most Recent Foragers*. Cambridge University Press ISBN 978-0-521-61265-4
2. Brewer, Douglas J., and Emily Teeter (2007). *Egypt and the Egyptians*, Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, ISBN-13 978-0-521-61689-8
3. Connah, Grahame (2001). *African Civilizations: An Archaeological Perspective, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press ISBN 0-521-59690-4
4. Niane, D.T transl G.D. Pickett (2006) *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali, Revised Edition*. Longman African Writers, Prentice Hall, ISBN-10: 1405849428 ISBN-13: 978-1405849425
5. Wengrow, David (2006). *The Archaeology of Early Egypt: Social Transformations in North-East Africa, 10,000 to 2650 BC*. Cambridge University Press ISBN-13 978-0-521-543743 NB – this book may not be available in time for the assignments in February – in which case another arrangement will be made (also check online booksellers such as Amazon).

Additional **required** readings will be posted on the Blackboard system as .pdf files, and are listed in the attached reading list. Additional **recommended** readings are shown for those of you particularly interested in a particular topic. Supplemental material will also be posted periodically. All readings are to be **completed** prior to the assigned date. These readings are subject to change as the semester progresses; announcements will be made in class and via the Blackboard system.

Grading: There will be two exams for the course (each worth 20%) and one map quiz on African geography (worth 5%). You will also write a (8-10 page) research paper with annotated bibliography – (not included in the 8-10 page total) on the precolonial history of one African region or culture (or, you may define a problem that crosscuts several regions), worth 25% of your final grade; the proposal (abstract and preliminary references) for the paper is worth an additional 5%. You will also write and post a brief critique of a film watched in class (guidelines to be provided),, as well as critiques (two **single-spaced** pages each) of TWO exhibits in the National Museum of African Art and National Museum of Natural History, each worth 5% of the course grade (15% total). Finally, you are expected to contribute a food item to a lunch featuring foods that originate in or were widespread in Africa before Columbus (pre-1500AD), with a 2-page (**double-spaced**) discussion of (a) whether the item is indigenous to Africa or imported, (b) when and where it first appeared, and (c) its importance in the diet (10%).

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| | Jan 21 | Map Quiz | 5% |
| | Feb 18 | African Lunch and paper | 10% |
| | Feb 27 | Revised Lunch Papers due | |
| DUE DATES | Mar 6 | First Exam | 20% |
| | Mar 27 | Film exercise and review | 5% |
| | Apr 3 | Paper proposals (abstract + 5 refs) | 5% |
| | Apr 15 | Museum reviews (2) | 10% |
| | Apr 22 | First draft of paper due | |
| | Apr 24 | Second Exam | 20% |
| | May 6 | Revised Final Paper due 5PM | 25% |

Attendance: Regular class attendance is required, and you remain responsible for any information you missed during classes. Excused absences must be discussed with me beforehand, and written documentation may be required. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>.

Exams:

There will be two exams in this course. It is expected that you will be present for the exams. Failure to be present for an exam without proof of serious medical and/or family emergency and prior notification of instructor will result in a failing grade. Exams will focus on major topics covered in readings and class lecture/discussion. **Class lectures will regularly consist of new information not covered in the readings.** The second exam is non-cumulative. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to know and adhere to the University's policies on academic integrity and academic dishonesty, the latter defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. This includes use of materials found on the internet! Further information may be found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

Support For Students Outside The Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS) (see also above under "Exams")

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

COURSE SCHEDULE

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Week</u> | <u>Topic</u> |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| Jan 14 | 1 | Intro, Myths about Africa, Reconstructing Early History (Archaeology) |
| Jan 16 | 1 | African Geography |
| Jan 21 | 2 | Map Quiz ; Reconstructing History: African languages |
| Jan 23 | 2 | Reconstructing History: Race and African genetics |
| Jan 28 | 3 | The earliest human record: Oldowan and Acheulian |
| Jan 30 | 3 | Oldowan and Acheulian continued |
| Feb 4 | 4 | The Middle Stone Age and the emergence of modern humans |
| Feb 6 | 4 | The Later Stone Age, early African artists |
| Feb 11 | 5 | Fishers and herders of the Sahara, first domestication experiments |
| Feb 13 | 5 | The origins and spread of domestication and agriculture |
| Feb 18 | 6 | African Lunch – bring a creative food based on African diet BEFORE 1500AD, with 2-page discussion (check cookbooks on reserve in Dept) |
| Feb 20 | 6 | Peer Review of Food Papers in class , early pastoral societies in E. Africa |
| Feb 25 | 7 | Nubia and the African roots of Ancient Egypt |
| Feb 27 | 7 | Elements of Egyptian civilization, Final food papers due. |
| Mar 4 | 8 | Egyptian history, an overview |
| Mar 6 | 8 | First EXAM |
| Mar 11-13 | | SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS |
| Mar 18 | 9 | Meroe and Axum – the Iron Age and the spread of Christianity |
| Mar 20 | 9 | The Bantu Expansion |
| Mar 25 | 10 | West Africa’s iron age and first towns of the Niger |
| Mar 27 | 10 | In class film exercise: TREE OF IRON, post report by midnight |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--|
| Apr 1 | 11 | West African Kingdoms |
| Apr 3 | 11 | The rise of Mali and the coming of Islam, Sundiata PAPER TOPICS DUE |
| Apr 8 | 12 | NO CLASS: Visits to National Museum of African Art and National Museum of Natural History, post reports by midnight on April 13 |
| Apr 10 | 12 | GUEST LCTURE: Prof Chapurukha Kusimba (American Univ.) The Swahili Coast, the Indian Ocean trade, and the settlement of Madagascar |
| April 13 | 12 | MUSEUM VISIT REPORTS DUE |
| Apr 15 | 13 | Kingdoms of the Forest and interlacustrine heart of Africa |
| Apr 17 | 13 | Great Zimbabwe and the development of complexity in Southern Africa |
| Apr 22 | 14 | The archaeology of European contact and the African diaspora First drafts of papers due |
| Apr 24 | 14 | Second EXAM |
| May 6 | | FINAL PAPERS DUE AT 5 PM |