

Reconstructing Africa's Past to the Late 19th Century
Tufts University - Jeanne Marie Penvenne - Fall 2006

PLEASE NOTE THIS WAS THE SYLLABUS FOR FALL 2006
I WILL CHANGE ASPECTS OF THE CLASS FOR SPRING 2010

Syllabus

Basic Information

Class Time & Place: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:30 - 11:45 Tisch Library, 314

Faculty Information & Contact:

Jeanne.Penvenne@tufts.edu

Office Hours, Tuesdays, 1:00 – 2:30 and Wednesday 9:00 -10:00

Office: East Hall, 105 Voice Mail: 617-627-5460

Introduction:

This course introduces students to the history of African people from the earliest times to the eve of European imperial expansion and conquest in the mid to late nineteenth century. Students explore African history and historical methods through a combination of lecture, film, reading, and discussion. We begin with a discussion of historiography, theoretical controversies and a general introduction to the geography, climate and developing demography of the continent.

A series of case studies acquaints students with complementary disciplines (archaeology and linguistics), specific historical texts (oral history and epics, travel and exploration essays by "strangers") and African cultural and artistic expressions of the past (praise poetry). Each case study suggests the challenge of reconstructing Africa's past and develops a set of themes to illustrate a broad range of historical experience on the continent. The course treats the African continent as a whole, but the various Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa, who live mainly South of the Sahara, comprise the majority of Africa's peoples and will be our major focus.

Student Evaluation and Evaluation Options:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their written work and contribution to quality discussion according the following formula:

Map exam, 4%

First exam, 27%

Second exam 27%*

Third exam 27%*

Class and small group discussion 15% **

Options as indicated * and **

Evaluation options are designed to accommodate students' different skills, backgrounds, intellectual styles and learning patterns. Each student will have the opportunity to approach the material in a manner most conducive to a successful engagement of the tasks at hand. **All students must take** the map exam and first hour exam to ensure that the building blocks for the course are in place. From that point forward students may elect options as stated below.

***Historical Essay Option**

Some students will have broader knowledge of Africa than others, and some students may be interested in a specific aspect of African history that will not be addressed in course lectures, films and readings. The **optional essay** is designed to enable a student to pursue her/his specific interest in greater detail. Students who receive an **85 or better** on the first hour exam **may elect to write an historical essay in lieu of taking either the second or the third hour exam.** The essay is weighted exactly the same as the exam.

Students who wish to substitute an essay in lieu of an exam **must** clear the topic of the essay with the instructor and submit a clear thesis statement and preliminary bibliography to the instructor by 5 PM on the dates listed in the syllabus. **Students who do not submit a satisfactory thesis statement and bibliography will not be allowed to proceed with the essay. The optional essay must be turned in at the time of or before the hour exam begins or the student will be required to take the exam.**

Discussion Classes and Discussion Essays

All students are strongly encouraged to participate in vigorous class discussion so that we all have the benefit of each other's insights. **Discussion classes are indicated on the syllabus** and discussion memos are included with the syllabus. All students are expected to have completed **all required reading and be prepared to engage the material in discussion classes.**

Regular Discussion Classes:

All students **MUST** prepare a "**discussion ante**" for every **discussion** class. The discussion ante has two parts, a "text" and a paragraph. Students select a "text" (it can be a short quote, a photograph, a name, a character, etc.) for discussion. The "discussion ante" begins with the "text: (quote, name, or a photocopy of the photograph, etc.) followed by the paragraph that briefly states why the student chose that particular "text" for discussion. We shall begin our discussion in small groups with a "read around" where each student reads her or his text and paragraph. The read around is intended to break the ice and set the tone for the broader discussion. The "discussion antes" will be turned in at the end of each discussion class. If a student does not hand in an ante at the end of discussion class it will be evaluated as 0.

****Absences for Class Discussion:**

If a student must miss a discussion class, she or he may submit a discussion essay **prior to class discussion.** If a student has an unanticipated absence for discussion class she or he must submit the essay, in the next class the student attends. Discussion essays are designed to accommodate a missed class. They are not a satisfactory substitute for class attendance and discussion.

Uniform Standards & Plagiarism

In order to be fair to all students, **no student will be allowed to submit extra work for extra credit.** The course requirements and student options are clearly stated. Except for extraordinary circumstances, confirmed through university channels, **all students will be evaluated according to the above guidelines and formula.** **Plagiarism is a serious breach of intellectual integrity and personal trust.** Students who are apprehended taking credit for work that is not theirs will be reported through channels for plagiarism and **FAIL** the course regardless of their grade to that point.

Course Readings

Required - Available for purchase at the bookstore:

Graham Connah, *African Civilizations*, Cambridge 2001

John Iliffe, Africans, *The History of a Continent*, Cambridge 1995

Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot, ...* Heinemann, 1995

Allen and Barbara Isaacman, *Slavery and Beyond*, Heinemann 2004

D.T. Niane. *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (Essex, Longman African Classic, 1986)

Blackboard & Packet

A packet of course readings is available at the History Department (room 10 East Hall) Readings available electronically will be hotwired to the course Blackboard site.

Schedule of Classes

Week One: Interdisciplinary Approaches to our Contested Past

5 Sept. Charting our Course and Controversies

Silences, Black Athena, "The Real Eve," Blombos Cave and The Mfecane

Film clip from Basil Davidson's Different but Equal

7 Sept. Basics: Wind Water, Land and People

Required Reading:

Except where noted, the required readings listed are to be completed by the first class in the following week. Recommended readings are listed separately.

PACKET; Jacques Depelchin, "Silences and Related Syndromes in African History," *in Silences in African History from Discovery to Abolition* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2005): 1-24.

Graham Connah, *African Civilizations*, Ch 1 & 2

John Iliffe, *The Africans*, Ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-17).

Google search under "The Real Eve"

Week Two: Ancient Land and Cultures

12 Sept. The Nile: Continent Facing Northeast

Film Clip Davidson "Different but Equal"

14 Sept. Introduction to Ancient Nubia

Film Clip Gates, "Black Kingdoms " &" Holy Land"

Required Reading:

PACKET Thomas Spear, "Oral Traditions: Whose History?" *History in Africa*, Vol. 8 (1981): 165-181,

Connah, *African Civilizations*, Ch. 3

Iliffe, *The Africans*, Ch. 3, esp. pp. on Nubia

Film Memo- Tree of Iron

Week Three: Orality and Iron

19 Sept. **Map Exam & FILM** Tree of Iron.

21 Sept. **Class Discussion** - Orality and Tree of Iron

****THURSDAY Evening 21 Sept Field Trip to Boston Museum of Fine Arts [MFA]**

Visit the MFA Nubia galleries – and if time ancient Egypt. Those who cannot make Thursday should go on your own or in groups over the weekend. MFA hours are Mon. Tues, Sat & Sun

10:00 AM to 4:45 PM and Wednesday through Friday 10:00 to 9:45 PM. It is FREE for Tufts Students

Required Reading:

Connah, *African Civilizations*, Ch. 4
Iliffe, *Africans*, Ch 4, esp. Islam in Sudan
Niane, *The Epic of Old Mali* first half

Week Four: Kingdoms of the Savannah

26 Sept. "Islam and the Kingdoms of the Savannah"
Film clip Davidson "Caravans of Gold"
28 Sept. "Trade, Accumulation & Environment"

Required Reading:

PACKET Ibn Battuta "Mali"
Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, complete for class discussion on 3 October.
Iliffe, *Africans*, Ch.5 esp. Ghana, Mali, Songhai

Week Five:

3 Oct. **Class Discussion** - Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali & Ibn Battuta
5 Oct. **Exam One**

Required Reading:

Iliffe, *Africans* Ch 7 Atlantic Slave Trade
Connah, *African Civilizations*, Ch. 5
VIA JSTOR, Patrick Manning, "Contours of Slavery and Social Change in Africa,"
American Historical Review, 88, 4 (1983): 835-857

Required Viewing: Bahia: Africa in the Americas

Week Six: The Atlantic Slave Trade

10 Oct. The Atlantic Opening - Slavery and the Number's Game
12 Oct. Ocean Connections & Disconnects
Short Film : Son of Africa : The Slave Narrative of Olaudah Equiano

Required Reading:

Iliffe, *Africans*, Ch. 6 East African sections
Connah, *African Civilizations*, Ch.6
PACKET, Alpers, "Slave Routes..."
PACKET, Wright, "Bwanikwa: Consciousness and Protest among Slave Women.."
PACKET, Karasch, "Anastácia and the Slave Women of Rio"
Begin Glassman

Week Seven: Indian Ocean and Gendered Slavery

17 Oct. The Slave "She"
19. Oct. **Class Discussion** –Slaves, Slavery and African Societies

Optional Essay in Lieu of Second Hour Exam

Topic & Preliminary Bibliography Due 18 Oct. 5:00 PM.

Required Reading:

Continue Glassman,
PACKET Salim al Mazrui "The Sultan and Mombasa"
Begin Isaacmans *Slavery and Beyond*

Week Eight: Eastern Africa – a Closer Look at Swahili Culture

24 Oct. The Swahili Coast & the South Central Gold links

26 Oct. **Class Discussion-** Glassman “Feasts and Riot”

Required Reading:

Finish Glassman for Discussion 26 Oct.

Continue Isaacman & Isaacman

Packet: Manola, “Slave Trade Mozambique and Rio”

Connah, *African Civilizations* Ch. 7

Week Nine:

31 Oct. Lecture & Slides

South – Central Africa: From Schroda & Mapungubwe to Great Zimbabwe

2 Nov. South Central Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries

Required Reading:

Continue Isaacman & Isaacman.

Iliffe, *Africans* Review Ch 6 Central & Southern Africa

Week Ten:

7 Nov. **NO CLASS** – Tufts Friday

9 Nov. **Exam 2**

Required Reading:

Complete Isaacman & Isaacman for discussion on 14 Nov

Week Eleven:

14 Nov. Discussion Class- Isaacman & Isaacman

16 Nov. **NO CLASS** – Penvenne at African Studies Association Conference

Required Reading:

Iliffe, *Africans*, Ch 8 esp. Southern Africa

Henry Francis Fynn, “Shaka” and Steenkamp, “The Great Trek”

Julian Cobbing, “The Mfecane” JSTOR hotwired from Blackboard

Week Twelve: Contested Histories - Mfecane / Difaqane

21 Nov. Putting the Players in Place

Optional Essay in Lieu of Third Hour Exam

Topic & Preliminary Bibliography Due 21 Nov. 5:00 PM.

23 Nov. **NO CLASS Happy Thanksgiving**

Enjoy the holiday

Week Thirteen

28Nov. Slides & Lecture: Mfecane –the Sources & Theories

30 Nov **Class Discussion** - Mfecane / Difaqane

Required Reading:

PACKET Mfecane Readings: Etherington, Wright and Parsons

Elizabeth Eldredge, “Sources of Conflict” and Carolyn Hamilton, “The Character and Objects of Chaka,” both JSTOR hotwired from Blackboard.

Week Fourteen:

5 Dec. Reconstructing Africa's Past to 1850 - Have our perspectives changed since September?

7 Dec. **Third Hour Exam**

Reserve Readings

Theoretical Debates:

Depelchin, Jacques. "Silences and Related Syndromes in African History" Ch. 1 in Depelchin *Silences in African History from Discovery to Abolition* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuku na Nyota, 2005): 1-24.

Spear, Thomas "Oral Traditions: Whose History?" *History in Africa* Vol 8 (1981):165-81

Documents:

Ibn Battuta, "Mali" & Al-Kanami, "The Case Against the Jihad" both in *African History in Documents: Western African History*, edited by R.O. Collins (Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1990).

Salim Al-Mazrui, "The Sultan and Mombasa," in *African History in Documents: Eastern African History*, edited by R.O. Collins (Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1990).

Henry Francis Fynn, "Shaka" & Ana Elizabeth Steenkamp, "The Great Trek" in *African History in Documents: Central and South African History*, edited by R.O. Collins (Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1990).

East African / Indian Ocean Slavery

Alpers, Edward. "Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa." in Benigna Zimba, et al. *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa* (Maputo: 2005): pp. 1-11.

Wright, Marcia. "Introduction" and "Bwanikwa: Consciousness and Protest among Slave Women in Central Africa, 1886-1911," *Strategies of Slaves & Women: Life-Stories from East Central Africa*. New York, Lilian Barber Press, 1993.

Afro-Brazilian Slavery

Manolo, Florentino. "Slave Trade between Mozambique and the Port of Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790-1850, Demographic, Social and Economic Aspects," in Benigna Zimba, et al. *Slave Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa* (Maputo: 2005): 63-90.

Karasch, Mary. "Anastácia and the Slave Women of Rio de Janeiro" in Paul E. Lovejoy, ed. *Africans in Bondage; Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1986): 79-105.

Mfecane Essays:

Etherington, Norman, "Putting the Mfecane Controversy into Historiographical Context," & Wright, John, "Beyond the Concept of the 'Zulu Explosion: Comments on the Current Debate," & Parsons, Neil, "The Time of Troubles," *Difaqane in the Interior*," All in *The Mfecane Aftermath: Reconstructive Debates in Southern African History*. Edited by Caroline Hamilton (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995): pp.13-19, 107-121 & 301-306 respectively.

Mfecane Essays in *Journal of African History* via JSTOR:

Julian Cobbing. "The Mfecane as Alibi: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo." *Journal of African History* Vol. 29 (1988): 487-519.

Elizabeth A. Eldredge. "Sources of Conflict: Southern Africa c. 1800- 1830: The 'Mfecane' Reconsidered." *Journal of African History* Vol. 33, No. 1 (1992): 1-35.

Carolyn Hamilton. "The Character and Objects of Chaka" : A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as Mfecane Motor," *Journal of African History* Vol. 33, No. 1 (1992): 37-63.