

Archaeology of African Thought ANT324L; ANT380k

Spring 2013

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OVERVIEW

This course uses archaeological, anthropological and historical works to examine the development and transformation of African societies from the Neolithic through the slave trade and the beginning of the colonial period. The course will discuss the historic and prehistoric foundations of contemporary African societies south of the Sahara, focusing especially on equatorial and southern Africa. The intention is to develop an understanding of the cultural dynamics of African societies and traditions, and their transformations through time. This provides an interpretive framework from which to then examine emerging archaeological perspectives on the Atlantic slave trade and its impact on the Diaspora in the New World.

COURSE FLAGS

1) This course carries the **Global Cultures** flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

2) This course also carries the **Writing Flag**. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

REQUIREMENTS

Grades for undergraduate students in ANT 324 will be based upon two short 3 page papers, a 5 page mid-term paper, and a final 10 page paper and class presentation on an African country, with a focus on the historical context of a problem of the student's

choosing. The first two papers will count for 15% each. A map quiz will account for 10% of your grade. The mid-term paper will account for 25% of the grade, with the final paper and presentation making up 35% of your grade. One class period will be devoted to showing students how to make and use PowerPoint presentations. Students should purchase a copy of Microsoft Office, which includes PowerPoint. This is available to students at a discounted price at the Campus computer store. The classroom is equipped with both Windows and Macintosh machines. Students might also find a bibliography program such as EndNote useful for creating and organizing citations and bibliographies. Information on how to purchase and use this program can be found following the links provided here:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/citations/endnote.html>.

Initial sources for country information can be found by searching by country in UTCAT. On the web you may find resources such News Africa at <http://www.africanews.com>, or on the BBC website, which has African pages and even a podcast: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>. Many African countries also have online newspapers and, in some cases, even television news broadcasts. Paper grades will be based both upon comprehension of course content and written expression in the papers. A guide to writing is included at the back of this syllabus. Please pay special note to the systems of referencing and bibliography. We will be using the standard ones for *American Antiquity*.

Requirements for graduate students enrolled in ANT 380 include a 20 page term paper on an African topic chosen by the student in consultation with and approved by the professor, and a 20 minute presentation of this topic to the class. Several meetings outside class time will be scheduled to discuss topics in African history/archaeology in more depth.

TEXTS

Text books can be purchased online from retailers such as Amazon.com. I have included the summary review of each book and the price from Amazon below.

1. A **class reader** for this class is available at Abel's copies (715 West 23rd St., Suite N, Austin; phone 478-3334). Most of the readings come from this reader -- you cannot do without it. Digitized CD versions may be available. Discuss this with the people at Abel's if you think this will suit your needs better. Articles from the reader are designated with a ** in the outline below.

2. Mitchell, Peter (2005). *African Connections: Archaeological Perspectives on Africa and the Wider World*. Altamira Press: New York. (\$39.95)

(From the exodus of early modern humans to the growth of African diasporas, Africa has had a long and complex relationship with the outside world. More than a passive vessel manipulated by external empires, the African experience has been a complex mix of internal geographic, environmental, sociopolitical and economic factors, and regular interaction with outsiders. Peter Mitchell attempts to outline these factors over the long period of modern human history, to find

their commonalities and development over time. He examines African interconnections through Egypt and Nubia with the Near East, through multiple Indian Ocean trading systems, through the trans-Saharan trade, and through more recent incursion of Europeans. The African diaspora is also explored for continuities and resistance to foreign domination. Commonalities abound in the African experience, as do complexities of each individual period and interrelationship. Mitchell's sweeping analysis of African connections place the continent in context of global prehistory and history. The book should be of interest not only to Africanists, but to many other archaeologists, historians, geographers, linguists, social scientists and their students.)

3. Ogundiran, Akinwumi & Falola, Toyin (2007). *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington. (\$35.00)

(This is the first book devoted to the archaeology of African life on both sides of the Atlantic; it highlights the importance of archaeology in completing the historical records of the Atlantic world's Africans. Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora presents a diverse, richly textured picture of Africans' experiences during the era of the Atlantic slave trade and offers the most comprehensive explanation of how African lives became entangled with the creation of the modern world. Through interdisciplinary approaches to material culture, the dynamics of a comparative transatlantic archaeology is developed.)

4. Reader, John (1998). *Africa: biography of the Continent*. Alfred A. Knopf or Penguin books. (\$11.26)

(In a book as splendid in its wealth of information as it is breathtaking in scope, British writer and photojournalist John Reader brings to light Africa's geology and evolution, the majestic array of its landforms and environments, the rich diversity of its peoples and their ways of life, the devastating legacies of slavery and colonialism as well as recent political troubles and triumphs. Written in simple, elegant prose and illustrated with Reader's own photographs, **Africa: A Biography of the Continent** is an unforgettable book that will delight the general reader and expert alike.)

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Jan. 14, 16, 18

Course overview and introduction to the physical geography of Africa

Readings:

- 1) **Bohannon and Curtin (1995). In **Africa and Africans**. Waveland Press, Prospect Heights. Chapter 1. Myths and Facts pp. 6-15.
- 2) Mitchell, Peter (2005). Read Forward & Chapter 1: Introducing Africa.
- 3) **Dubow, Saul (1995). Chapter 1: Introduction. Chapter 2: Physical anthropology and the quest for the 'missing link.' In **Scientific racism in modern South Africa**. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Pp 1-65.

Film: Africa: Different but Equal. DVD11025, episode 1 (can also be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58l3kqcW-zY>)

Assignment: Choose a sub-Saharan African country that you will become familiar with and use to illustrate your short papers. This country will also be the subject of your final paper.

Week 2: Jan. 21, 23, 25

African climates, rainfall, vegetation and economic resources

Readings:

- 1) **Bohannon and Curtin (1995). Chapter 2. The African Continent, pp. 18-32.
- 2) Reader, John (1998). Building a Continent. pp. 9-17.
- 3) Reader, John (1998). Chapter 11. On Home Ground. pp. 99-104.
- 4) Reader, John (1998). Chapter 24. Disease and Affliction. pp. 239–248.

Short paper #1: write a brief but formal paper outlining the physical geography, climate and natural resources of your chosen country. Include one major problem facing your country in terms of its natural resources or climate. (Due Jan. 28th)

Week 3: Jan. 28, 30, Feb. 1

Distribution and characteristics of African languages. Social context: gender, age, household, family, lineage, clan and marriage.

Readings:

- 1) **Bohannon and Curtin. Chapter 3. Mapping Africa. pp. 34-45.
- 2) **Schneider, Harold (1981). *The Africans: an ethnological account*. Chapter 4, Marriage, descent, and association, pp. 82-119.
- 3) **Bohannon and Curtin. Chapter 5. African Families, pp. 64-75.
- 4) **Bohannon (1966). Shakespeare in the bush. *Natural History*.

Film: Africa: Mastering a Continent. DVD11025, Episode 2.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWS1oUb9PqM>

Week 4: Feb. 4, 6, 8

Tribes and Tribalism: imposed or indigenous? Historical tradition, situational construction, western rationalization?

Readings:

- 1) Reader, John. 1998. Chapter 44. The Afrikaners. pp. 487–498.

- 2) **Southall, Adrian (1970). The illusion of Tribe. In **Perspectives on Africa**, edited by Roy Grinker and Christopher Steiner, Blackwell: Oxford, pp. 38-51.
- 3) **Vail, Leroy (1988). Ethnicity in southern African history. In **Perspectives on Africa**, pp. 52-68.
- 4) **Ranger, Terence (1983). The invention of tradition in colonial Africa. In **Perspectives on Africa**, pp. 597-612.

Short paper #2. Summarize the linguistic and ethnic diversity of your chosen country. What is the difference between ethnicity and tribalism? What problems facing your country are commonly framed in the international press in terms of ethnicity or tribe? Is this point of view shared or contested by local people? In what ways? (Due Feb. 13)

Week 4: Feb. 11, 13, 15

Development and Spread of African Farming Systems

Readings:

- 1) Mitchell. Chapter 2, pp. 33-63. Spread of African Farming Systems.
- 2) Stahl, Ann. (2007). Entangled Lives: the archaeology of daily life in the Gold Coast hinterlands, AD 1400-1900
- 2) Denbow, J. (1990). Congo to Kalahari: data and hypotheses about the political economy of the western stream of the Early Iron Age. **African Archaeological Review** 8: 139-175. (pdf on blackboard)

Week 5: Feb. 18, 20, 22

African religion: status, authority and power.

Readings:

- 1) **Herbert, Eugenia (1993). **Iron, Gender and Power: rituals of transformation in African societies**. Indiana University, Bloomington. pp. 1-40.
- 2) **Ben-Amos, Paula (1994). The Promise of Greatness: women and power in an Edo spirit possession cult. In **Religion in Africa**, edited by T. Blakely, W. van Beek and D. Thomson. Heinemann: Portsmouth, pp. 119-134.
- 3) **Janzen, John (1994). "Drums of Affliction" real phenomenon or scholarly chimaera? In **Religion in Africa**, edited by T. Blakely, W. van Beek and D. Thomson. Heinemann: Portsmouth, pp. 161-181.
- 4) **MacGaffey, Wyatt (1986). **Religion and Society in Central Africa: the baKongo of lower Zaire**. University of Chicago, Chicago. pp. 1-102.
- 5) Denbow (1999). Heart and Soul: glimpses of ideology and cosmology in the iconography of tombstones from the Loango coast of

the Congo. **Journal of American Folklore** 112 (445):404-423.(pdf on Blackboard).

6) Fennel, Christopher. 2007. BaKongo Identity and Symbolic Expression in the Americas. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 199-232.

Weeks 6 & 7:Feb. 25, 27, Mar. 1, 4, 6, 8

The Development of States in Eastern and Southern Africa

Readings:

1) Mitchell. Chapter 3, African in the Indian Ocean World system, pp. 99-134.

2) **Huffman, Thomas (1996). **Snakes and Crocodiles: Power and Symbolism in Ancient Zimbabwe**. Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, pp. 17-174

3) Denbow et al. (2008). Excavations at Bosutswe, Botswana: cultural chronology, paleo-ecology and economy. **Journal of African Science** (pdf file on Blackboard).

4) Kusimba, Chaps (2007). The Collapse of Coastal City-States of East Africa. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 160-184.

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 11-15

Week 8: Mar. 18, 20, 22

West Africa

Readings:

1) Mitchell. Chapter 5: Africa's Other Sea: The Sahara and its Shores, pp. 135-172.

2) Déme, Alioune & Guéye, Ndéye (2007). Enslavement in the Middle Senegal Valley: historical and archaeological perspectives. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 122-139.

3) Monroe, J. Cameron (2007). Dahomey and the Atlantic Slave Trade: Archaeology and Political Order on the Bight of Benin. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 100-121.

5 page mid-term paper due on Mondy, 25th March: Using examples from your readings and lectures, discuss how authority, power, gender, and religion are situational dimensions that come together to inform relations of status and power. You can use as an example either Great Zimbabwe, or situations of everyday action that would include traditional mechanisms for coping with sickness and health.

Week 9 Mar. 25, 27, 29

Commodity production and indebtedness. The African side of the slave trade.

Readings:

- 1) Mitchell. Chapter 6, Africa's Opening to the Atlantic, Pp. 173-204.
- 2) **Joseph Miller (1988). **Way of Death: merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade, 1730-1830.** James Currey, London: Chapters 1-4, pp. 3-139.
- 3) Ogundiran, A. and Falola, T. (2007). Pathways in the Archaeology of Transatlantic Africa. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 3-48.

Week 10& 11: April 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12

The Diaspora

- 1) Mitchell, Chapter 7: Out of Africa 3: The Archaeology of the African Diaspora, pp. 205-226.
- 2) **Mark Leone and Gladys-Marie Fry (1999). Conjuring in the Big House Kitchen: An interpretation of African American belief systems based on the uses of archaeology and folklore sources. **Journal of American Folklore** 112: 372-403.
- 3) **Brian Thomas (1998). Power and Community: the archaeology of slavery at the hermitage plantation. **American Antiquity** 64(4): 531-551.
- 4) Battle-Baptiste, Whitney (2007). "In This Here Place": interpreting enslaved homeplaces. In **The Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 233-248.
- 5) **Maria Franklin (2004). Archaeological and Historical Interpretations of Domestic Life at Rich Neck, ca. 1740s-1770s. Chapter 9, In **An Archaeological Study of the Rich Neck Slave Quarter and Enslaved Domestic Life.** Colonial Williamsburg Archaeological Reports. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Richmond, pp. 207-230.
- 6) Osei-Tutu, Brempong (2007). Ghana's "Slave Castles:" Tourism, and the Social Memory of the Atlantic Slave Trade. In **Archaeology of Atlantic Africa**, pp. 185-198.

Film: Gulla: God's gonna' trouble the water.

Extra Credit paper: 10 points. *Discuss how the archaeological record can be used in conjunction with historical and ethnographic sources in order to elucidate what happened in both Africa and the Americas during the slave trade period. What advantages can*

archaeology bring to such studies. What, in your opinion, are the drawbacks and how do you think they could be overcome.

Weeks 12 and 13: April 15 – May 3 **Final papers for all sections are due on Wednesday, May 2nd.**

These 10 page papers will summarize student research into the country of their choice: its peoples, cultures, languages, history and problems. You may incorporate elements of earlier essays in this final paper. Students will sign up to present a 10 minute summary of their country and its problems during the final two weeks of class. Facilities will be available for PowerPoint presentation and overhead projections. Two to three minutes will be reserved after each paper for other students to ask questions of the presenters.