

ANT 324L, AFR 322, ANT 380

Fall 2010

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN PREHISTORY

PROFESSOR: DR. JAMES DENBOW

OFFICE HOURS: T 2-3:30 and by appointment.

OFFICE: 1.118 SCHOCK

PHONE: 471-8512

E-MAIL: jdenbow@mail.utexas.edu

Course Overview

This course provides an overview of human biological and cultural evolution in Africa. While the roots of humankind go back almost 6 million years on the continent, the earlier materials will only be briefly discussed as the course will focus on the last 200,000 years as modern humans developed and diversified. The African continent is over three times the size of the United States and today there are more than a thousand different languages spoken in Africa; ethnic and ecological diversity are great. Apart from Egypt, Ethiopia, the Swahili coast and North Africa, however, written sources only document the last few centuries most from non-African perspectives. In this class, archaeological data will be used to expand upon anthropological and historical accounts in order to provide a less "Eurocentric" view of the continent and its historical development. No prior knowledge of Africa or of archaeology is assumed.

Prerequisites: None.

Required Textbook:

David Phillipson, 2005. African Archaeology. Cambridge University Press. **Make sure you have the 3rd Edition, published in 2005**, NOT the 2nd edition first published in 1994. ISBN 0521832365. The hardcover book is expensive, but **one can order an e-book version for \$35 - \$40 from Amazon.com or this site:**
<http://www.cambridge.org/us/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780511111846>

Recommended:

[For all students]: J. Reader. 1999. Africa: biography of the Continent. Vantage Press. ISBN 067973869x. This book is an inexpensive (about \$13) and is highly recommended, though not required. Many will find it easier to follow than Phillipson while providing a very readable, if slightly dated, overall account of Africa's history and prehistory. It also provides useful information on geology, climate, health, languages and many other details not covered in depth in Phillipson. This is a book you would probably keep if you have a general interest in Africa.

[For Graduate Students]: Mitchell, Peter (2005). *African Connections: Archaeological Perspectives on Africa and the Wider World*. Altamira Press: New York. This is a good book that relates discoveries in African Archaeology to the history/prehistory of the wider world. This book will also be used in the Spring semester in Archaeology of African Thought. It can be purchased from Amazon.com at this url (just copy and paste): http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=mitchell+african+connections&x=0&y=0&ih=14_8_3_2_0_0_1_0_0_1.80_125&fsc=-1

Website:

A simple website with the approximate pdf copies of some of the files I use in class can be found at:

http://www.utexas.edu/courses/denbow/ANT324intro/index_files/slide0003.htm

The password to download the files is: congo

Evaluation: This course meets the requirements for substantial writing component classes. The final grade will be based on a map quiz (15%), class attendance and participation (5%), a **15 page** research paper (50%), and one short 5 page essay (30% each). **Graduate students** will also write a 15-20 page research paper on a topic to be decided in consultation with Denbow. [Graduate students will also meet to arrange an evening each month when we can get together for in-depth discussion related to student projects.]

GRADING RUBRIC

ORGANIZATION (10%)

- Were the basic sections (Introduction, Conclusion, Literature Cited, etc.) adequate?
- Did the writer use subheadings well to clarify the sections of the text?
- Was the material ordered in a way that was logical, clear, easy to follow?

CITATIONS (20%)

- Did the writer cite sources adequately and appropriately?
- Were all the citations in the text listed in the Literature Cited section?

GRAMMAR AND STYLE (20%)

- Were there any grammatical or spelling problems?
- Was the writer's writing style clear? Were the paragraphs and sentences cohesive?

CONTENT (50%)

- Did the writer adequately summarize and discuss the topic?
- Did the writer comprehensively cover appropriate materials available from the standard sources (e.g. readings, appropriate books and other sources)?
- Did the writer make some contribution of thought to the paper, or merely summarize data or publications?

Because lectures will sometimes cover material not found in the text, or bring text materials up to date by discussing new findings, class attendance is important and will be

spot-checked using “attendance exams.” Please don’t think that you will be able to do well by simply doing the readings for the course. The research paper will be due the last class day.

Course Topics

(Please note that these dates are **approximate**)

Week 1 & 2:

Introduction to Africa and its Physiography

Phillipson: Preface & Chapter 1.

Reader: Chapter 1, Building a continent; Chapter 4, Origins & Climate

(You can also read my account of the social and political aspects of doing archaeology in Africa which is included under course documents on the course blackboard site.)

Week 3:

The Emergence of early Hominens

Phillipson: Chapter 2

Reader: Chapters 5, 6, and 7

Week 4:

The Early Stone Age: Acheulean & Sangoan

Phillipson: Chapter 3

Reader: Chapters 8-12

MAP QUIZ: Sept. 17

Weeks 5 and 6:

Middle and Later Stone Age.

Phillipson: Chapter 4

Reader, Chapters 13 -15

Paper 1: (Due Oct. 8)

Use the archaeological record to discuss and critique the "Sudden/late" or "Rubicon" hypothesis of Richard Klein, Spencer Wells, and others that modern human cognition, language abilities, and the ability to construct and use symbols appeared well after the first appearance of physically modern-appearing Homo sapiens in Africa between 160 – 200 ka.

Week 7:

Rock Art and Transitions from foraging to food production

Phillipson: Chapter 5
Reader, Chapters 16-18

Weeks 8 and 9:

The Nile valley Early early farming communities in North Africa

Phillipson, Chapter 6
Reader, Chapters 19 - 22

Week 10:

Metallurgy and the first expansion of metal-working technologies and farming in sub-Saharan Africa

Phillipson: Chapter 7
Reader, Chapters 23-26

Week 11:

The Chifumbaze Complex and the expansion of herding, farming, metal-working, and Bantu languages into eastern and southern Africa

Chapter 7 & class notes.

Week 12 and 13:

The emergence of Complex societies in eastern and southern Africa: The Indian Ocean trade, early Swahili states, Bosutswe, Mapungubwe, and Great Zimbabwe

Phillipson: Chapter 8 & class notes.
Denbow et al. 2008 (pdf on class blackboard)
Reader, Chapters 30 – 32

Week 14:

The African Slave Trade

Class notes.

TERM PAPERS: (DUE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH). THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM