

# *Early African History*

*-- learning and teaching about Africa --*

Northeastern University, Winter 2000

Sequence 2, MWTh 9:15, 209 RY

**Prof. Patrick Manning**

*cross-listed:*

AFR 1191 -- Key

HST 1620-- Key

- \* Human evolution
- \* Language, art and economy of early Africa
- \* Ancient Egypt and Nubia
- \* Early Africa in world history
- \* Archaeology of African civilization --  
Nubia, Axum, Nok, Zimbabwe
- \* Medieval empires -- Ghana, Mali, Songhai

Students will explore early life in Africa via lecture, discussion, video, CD-ROM, field trips, and by producing multimedia term projects.

course syllabus and supplements on the  
World Wide Web at  
<http://www.whc.neu.edu/manning/AFR1191>

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**Instructor:**

Patrick Manning, Professor of History and African-American Studies  
e-mail: [manning@neu.edu](mailto:manning@neu.edu).

Office hours:

In History: 263 Holmes Hall (World History Center), 373-4453  
Monday, 10:30 a.m. - noon  
Wednesday, 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

In African-American Studies: 132 Nightingale Hall, 373-3148  
Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - noon.

**Texts:**

James L. Newman, The Peopling of Africa, A Geographic Interpretation  
Graham Connah, African Civilizations  
D. T. Niane, Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali  
Readings packet to be purchased at Gnomon Copy  
(includes articles marked below with \*)

**Course Assignments:**

Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Map Work	10%
Multimedia Project	40%

Commentary on Multimedia Projects	10%
Final Exam	20%

**Course Project: Teaching Materials on Early African History**

The main project in this course will be the development (by each individual student or by groups of students) of a multimedia teaching module on a topic in early African history. In preparing the project, students will use library and multimedia facilities available at the university. The project, in final form, may be in videotape, on a computer disk, on World Wide Web files, or on paper -- the essential requirement is that it utilize more than one medium to convey information about an important issue in early African history.

Possible topics for multimedia projects:

- Early human evolution
- Recent human evolution
- African languages
- Development of agriculture
- Iron production
- Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa
- Bantu migrations
- Family and social life
- Early African commerce
- African states: Egypt, Nubia, Axum, Zimbabwe,  
Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kilwa, Benin

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- Week 1. Overview (January 6)
- Week 2. Early human evolution (January 10, 12, 13)  
Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, pp. ix - 21, 202-205  
Connah, African Civilizations, 1-23, 227-232
- Week 3. Learning and teaching about Africa (January 19, 20)  
**Map 1 due in class**  
Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, 22-39  
\*C. Ehret, "East Africa in World History"  
  
\*Y. Coppens, "East Side Story: The Origin of Humankind," Scientific American (May 1994)  
\*R. Blumenshine, "Scavenging and Human Evolution," Scientific American (October 1992)
- Week 4. Later human evolution (January 24, 26, 27)  
**Project Proposal due**  
Reading: \*A. Wilson & R. Cann, "The Recent African Genesis of Humans" Scientific American (April 1992)  
\*A. Thorne & M. Wolpoff, "The Multiregional Evolution of Humans" Scientific American (April 1992)  
\*D. Phillipson, African Archaeology, 1-33
- Week 5. Language, art and economy (January 31, February 2, 3)  
**Quiz 1**  
Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, 40-59  
\*L. Cavalli-Sforza, "Genes, Peoples and Languages" Scientific American (November 1991)
- Week 6. Ancient Egypt; Early Africa in world history (February 7, 9, 10)  
**Preliminary Project due**  
Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, 63-103  
Connah, African Civilizations, 1-66
- Week 7. Archaeology of African civilization (February 14, 16, 17)  
**Map 2 due**  
Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, 137-183  
Connah, African Civilizations, 67-97

Week 8. Medieval empires (February 21, 23, 24)

***Quiz 2***

Reading: Niane, Sundiata

Newman, Peopling of Africa, 104-136

Connah, African Civilizations, 97-213

Week 9. Presentation of course projects (February 28, March 1, 2)

***Final project due***

Reading: Newman, Peopling of Africa, 184-201

Connah, African Civilizations, 214-32

Week 10. Review and critique (March 6, 8, 9)

***Commentary on projects due***

Week 11. ***Final Exam (essay)***

Reading Packet

AFR 1191 -- Early African Civilization

Winter 1996

P. Manning

1. Y. Coppens, "East Side Story: The Origin of Humankind," Scientific American (May 1994)
2. R. Blumenshine, "Scavenging and Human Evolution," Scientific American (October 1992)
3. A. Wilson & R. Cann, "The Recent African Genesis of Humans" Scientific American (April 1992)
4. A. Thorne & M. Wolpoff, "The Multiregional Evolution of Humans" Scientific American (April 1992)
5. L. Cavalli-Sforza, "Genes, Peoples and Languages" Scientific American (November 1991)
6. C. Ehret, "East Africa in World History"
7. D. W. Phillipson