

Northeastern University, Spring 2006
Africa and the World in Early Times
AFR U390 – HST U390
Tuesday and Friday, 1:35 – 3:15, 35 SL

Patrick Manning
Office: 263 Holmes Hall
Hours: Wednesday 3:30 – 4:30, Friday 12-1
Phone: 617-373-4453
e-mail: planeterra@comcast.net
website: www.whn.neu.edu/manning

This course explores the early history of Africa and Africa's place in the world from the beginnings of human evolution to the high point of Africa's medieval empires in the fifteenth century. It introduces students to the multiple disciplines contributing to knowledge about early Africa, develops skills in internet research, and shows the centrality of Africa and Africans for humanity in general.

The four modules of the course address human evolution, language in history, archaeology of Neolithic and iron-age settlements, and medieval empires. For each module there will be lectures, an assigned book, internet lab sessions, preparation of a two-page paper, discussion (of the lectures, readings, and papers), and an in-class exam. Each student paper will summarize topics selected from a list of key subjects. Research for the papers will rely on internet resources, assisted in lab sessions. Papers will be posted on the web, and the exam for each module will be based on the papers as well as on readings and lectures.

Texts (available at NU bookstore):

- C. Ehret, The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800
- B. Heine and D. Nurse, African Languages: An Introduction
- Graham Connah, African Civilizations
- D. T. Niane, Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali

Text (available at NU Reprographics):

- C. Stringer and R. McKie, African Exodus : The Origins Of Modern Humanity

Course modules and key questions:

- Human evolution** (Weeks 2-5). What were the stages in the evolution of hominids?
What were the stages in the spread of modern Homo sapiens?
- Language** (Weeks 6-8). What can studies of language tell us about the early history of Africa and the world?
- Archaeology** (Weeks 9-11). What can studies of archaeology tell us about life in Neolithic and Iron-Age Africa?
- Medieval Empires** (Weeks 12-14). What was the character of life in Africa's medieval empires?

Course Grade:

Each of the four papers is worth 10%, for a total of 40% (based on group work)

Each of the four exams is worth 10%, for a total of 40% (based on individual work)

Attendance: 10%

Class participation: 10%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1.

Tuesday, Jan. 10. Introduction

Friday, Jan. 13. Introduction

Week 2. Human Evolution

Tues, Jan. 17. Introduction to human evolution

Friday, Jan. 20. *Internet lab* (14 DK): Hominid evolution

Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 1-25
Stringer & McKie, *African Exodus*

Week 3. Human Evolution

Tuesday, Jan. 24. Lecture: Hominid evolution

Friday, Jan. 27. *Internet lab* (14 DK): The spread of modern Homo sapiens

Gone to Pitt

Reading: Stringer & McKie, *African Exodus*

Week 4. Human Evolution

Tuesday, Jan. 31. Lecture: The spread of modern Homo sapiens

Friday, Feb. 3. Lecture: Topics and debates in human evolution

Crayenborgh Lecture - Leiden

Paper 1 (paper or PowerPoint on an aspect of human evolution)

Week 5. Human Evolution

Tuesday, Feb. 7. *Internet lab* (36 DK): Discussion of papers and Stringer book

Friday, Feb. 10. **Exam 1** (based on Stringer, Ehret + papers of classmates)

Week 6. Language

Tuesday, Feb. 14. Introduction to studies of language.

Friday, Feb. 17. *Internet lab* (14 DK): Language

Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 26-58
Heine & Nurse, *African Languages*

Week 7. Language

Tuesday, Feb. 21. Lecture: Human migration as seen through language

Friday, Feb. 24. Lecture: African societies as seen through language

Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 59-106
Heine & Nurse, *African Languages*

Paper 2 (paper or PowerPoint on an aspect of language in Africa)

Week 8. Language

Tuesday, Feb. 28. *Internet lab* (36 DK): Discussion of papers + Heine & Nurse book
Friday, Mar. 3. **Exam 2** (based on Heine & Nurse, Ehret + papers of classmates)

Spring Break Enjoy the break.
Mar. 4 – March 12

Week 9. Archaeology

Tuesday, Mar. 14. Introduction to archaeology of Africa
Friday, Mar. 17. *Internet lab* (14 DK): Archaeology
Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 107-158
 Connah, *African Civilizations*

Week 10. Archaeology

Tuesday, Mar. 21. Lecture: Archaeology of Africa
Friday, Mar. 24. Lecture: Iron-age Africa
March 22-26, ESSHA Amsterdam
Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 159-237
 Connah, *African Civilizations*
Paper 3 (paper or PowerPoint on an aspect of archaeology)

Week 11. Archaeology

Tuesday, Mar. 28. *Internet lab* (36 DK): Discussion of papers and Connah book
Friday, Mar. 31. **Exam 3** (based on Connah + papers of classmates)

Week 12. Medieval Empires

Tuesday, April 4. Introduction to Medieval Empires of Africa
Friday, April 7. *Internet lab* (13 DK): Medieval Empires
Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 238-289
 Niane, *Sundiata*

Week 13. Medieval Empires

Tuesday, April 11. Lecture: Medieval Africa and the Islamic World
Friday, April 14. Lecture: Africa in world history
Reading: Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*, 290-348
 Niane, *Sundiata*
Paper 4 (paper or PowerPoint on an aspect of medieval empires)

Week 14. Medieval Empires

Tuesday, April 18. *Internet lab* (36 DK): Discussion of papers and Niane book

Exam Week

Thurs., April 22. **Exam 4** (based on Sundiata + papers of classmates)
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.