

History 6395 - Section 05567  
**Africa in World History I (to 1800)**  
Monday 5:30-8:30  
Professor Kairn Klieman  
University of Houston  
Fall 2006

This class is designed to introduce graduate students to the pre-colonial history of Africa, and is especially focused on teaching ways to integrate Africa into World History surveys or Western Civilization courses. It is a graduate level reading course, which means there is plenty of reading! However, throughout the course of the class I will probably "lecture" regularly on certain topics, since I'm aware that many of you have no prior knowledge of Africa through academic study. It is important to note that for the earlier periods of African history written historical sources are few and far between. As a result, you will have to become accustomed to reading historical synthesis based on what are "non-traditional" sources for non-Africanists – i.e., archeology, comparative historical linguistics, oral tradition, and comparative ethnography. As you will see, historians of Africa have done an amazing job of marshalling these sources to produce a coherent understanding of Africa's deeper past – methodologically speaking, the innovative use of such a broad variety of historical sources is a great source of pride for Africanists. As you are doing the various readings, please take enough time to understand, contemplate, and critique the methods being used to reconstruct early African history. Along with the actual content of readings, methodological issues will be an important element of discussion for this class.

**Required Books: (To Be Bought )**

- Keim, Curtis. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind* (Westview Press, 1999)
- Gilbert, Eric. *Africa in World History* (Prentice Hall, 2003)
- Welsby, Derek. *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires* (Marcus Weiner, 1999)
- Vansina, Jan. *Paths in the Rainforest: Towards a History of Political Tradition in Central Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
- Lovejoy, Paul. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*
- Webb, James. *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change along the Western Sahel, 1600-1850* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995)
- Kusimba, Chapurukha. *The Rise and Fall of the Swahili States* (AltaMira Press, 1999)
- Thornton, John. *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> expanded edition, 1998)
- Klieman, Kairn. "The Pygmies Were Our Compass": *Bantu and Batwa in the History of West Central Africa, Early Times to c. 1900 C.E.* (Heinemann, 2003)
- Sweet, James. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006)
- Heywood, Linda. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)

There are additional readings (see end of syllabus below) that you will need to photocopy or borrow from the reserves in library. We will work on this together to make it as easy as possible for all.

## **Class Requirements:**

**Attendance and Participation (30%):** Students are expected to attend and actively engage in each class discussion. Participation should reflect *careful reading* and *thoughtful engagement* with the assigned reading. In addition, I would like each of you to come to class with five questions regarding the readings each week; these can be informational/methodological/historiographical queries or broader questions designed to provoke discussion. I do not plan on collecting these, but if I find that some students are not participating enough I will begin asking for these along with written synopses of readings on a weekly basis.

**Service as Class Discussant (30%):** Each student will be required to serve as class discussant twice during the semester; in some cases you will do this alone, in others alongside a second student. As class discussant you are required to find at least three critical reviews of the works under consideration, make these available to other students before class, and lead a discussion of at least 40 minutes regarding the work. You must be thorough in leading these discussions, addressing themes/issues/methods of the book and bringing together information from accompanying articles in intelligent/coherent ways. (if additional articles aren't assigned, you may need to look to bibliographies/discuss with me for a couple additional sources that will help contextualize). In other words, you should be a step ahead of other students in terms of understanding the work (methods, historiographical issues, historical content, relation to global historical issues) when you do your presentation.

**Final Paper (40%):** You will be required to write a research paper that is 20-25 pages long. This can be on a topic of your choice - but you must confer with me regarding your ideas for a topic. The paper does not have to be based on original research since you aren't historians of Africa. What I'm expecting is a somewhat synthetic paper; you can pull from previous scholarly works to make your argument. You should be aware of, and include, however, historiographical issues where they are appropriate. African history is full of debate; try to figure out the debates that surround your topic early on. That way you will be able to recognize each author's "slant" as you read. One way to approach this paper is to think of a topic you know you would like to lecture about for 2/3 days in a World Civilizations class. Do this paper now as the necessary background for such a lecture. You might be able to save yourself a great deal of prep time for later teaching! In an attempt to aid you with this paper, I would like to follow the schedule below:

- 1) project statement, preliminary biography, meeting with me:  
(Week 6)
- 2) final bibliography: (Week 10)
- 3) final paper: Due Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> (hard copy in my box, history office)

**Week 1: August 21 - Introduction to class**

**Week 2: Aug. 28 – American/Western biases about Africa**

Overview: Africa in World History

Discussion: Keim, *Mistaking Africa*

Gilbert, *Africa in World History*

**Week 3: Sept. 4- Labor Day - NO CLASS –**

(But do readings below for discussion on Sept. 12)

Early Sudanic Civilizations/Nile Civilizations

Readings:

-Ehret, C. "Sudanic Civilization" p. 224-274 in Michael Adas (ed.)

*Agricultural and Pastoral Societies in Ancient and Classical History.*

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.

-Celenko, Theodore, *Egypt in Africa.* Indianapolis: Indiana University

Press, 1996. This is an exhibition catalog with scholarly articles - read it all.

-Welsby, D. *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires.*

Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1996.

**DISCUSSANTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4: Sept. 11 –Discussion: 1) Sudanic/Nile Civilizations and 2)Early Christianity**

Be Prepared to stay for full 3 hours this night.....

Readings: Early Christianity

Egypt and North Africa

-Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present.* Lawrenceville, MJ: Africa World Press, 1995. Chapter 1 (pg. 1-44)

Aksum/Ethiopia:

-Pankhurst, Richard. *The Ethiopians.* Cornwall: MPG Books, 1998. Chapters 1-6 (pg. 1-108)

Nubia: (this for Class Discussant only; be ready to "teach" others)

-Welsby, Derek. *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia.* London: British Museum Press, 2000. Read Chapters 1-5 (pg 1-111)

**DISCUSSANT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 5: Sept. 18- Alternative Models for the Rise of Complex Societies**

Readings:

- McIntosh, Susan Keech. "Cities Without Citadels: Understanding Urban Origins along the Middle Niger," pg. 622-641 in Shaw, et al (eds) *The Archeology of Africa: Food, Metals, Towns*. London: Routledge Press, 1993.
- McIntosh, Susan Keech, (ed.). *Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1999. Read chapters 1 and 4.
- Vansina, Jan. *Paths in the Rainforest: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, chapters 1-6, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990)  
(For Discussant - an overview of this history viewed in terms of neo-evolutionist models, see chapter 13 of *Beyond Chiefdoms* as well)

**DISCUSSANT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6: Sept. 25 - The Introduction of Islam/The Rise of Sudanic Empires**

Readings:

- Eaton, Richard M. "Islamic History as Global History" p.1-36 in Michael Adas, (ed.), *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press/AHA, 1993.
- Connah, Graham. "An Optimal Zone: the West African Savanna" pg. 97-120 in *African Civilization: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa - An Archaeological Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, 1980.

**DISCUSSANT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 7: Oct. 2- African Slavery/Islamic Slavery**

Reading:

- Lovejoy, P. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (second edition), chs. 1 and 2.
- Hunwick, J.O. "African Slaves in the Mediterranean World: A Neglected Aspect of the African Diaspora" pg. 289-323 in Joseph Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (Howard University Press, 1982).

**DISCUSSANT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 8: Oct. 9 - Environmental History in the Western Sudan**

Reading: Webb, *Desert Frontier*  
Articles TBA

*Discussant:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 9 - Oct. 16 - Indian Ocean Trade Networks/The Swahili**

Readings:

- Abu-Lughod, Janet Lippman. "The World System in the Thirteenth Century: Dead-End or Precursor?" pg. 75-102 in Michael Adas, (ed.), *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*. Philadelphia: Temple - University Press/AHA, 1993.
- Kusimba, C. *The Rise and Fall of Swahili Civilization*
- Basu, H. "Slave, Soldier, Trader, Faquir: Fragments of African Histories in Western India (Gujarat), pg. 223-249 in Jahasuriya and Pankhurst, *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean* (Africa World Press, 2003)
- Pankhurst, R. "The Ethiopian Diaspora to India: The Role of Habshis and Sidis from Medieval Times to the end of the Eighteenth Century" pg. 189-222 in Jahasuriya and Pankhurst, *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*.

**Discussants:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 10: Oct. 23 - The Kingdom of Kongo and the Portuguese**

Readings:

- Vansina, finish Paths in the Rainforest, chapters 7-9.
- Vansina, J "The Kongo Kingdom and its Neighbors," p. 546-587 in B.A. Ogot (ed.), UNESCO General History of Africa Vol. V: Africa from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Berkeley: Heinemann/University of California Press, 1992.
- Thornton, John. *The Kongolese St. Anthony: Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1786*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998.

**Discussant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 11: October 30 – Africa and World History: High School Teaching**

Invited Speaker: Phil Sinitiere

(he may have something for you to read)

**Week 12: November 6 – Batwa or "Pygmy" Histories of West Central Africa**

Reading: Klieman, *The Pygmies Were Our Compass*

**Discussant:** \_\_\_\_\_

Week 13: Nov. 13 - Central Africans in the Atlantic Diaspora I

Reading: Sweet, *Recreating Africa*

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 14: Nov. 20 - Central Africans in the Atlantic Diaspora II

Reading: Heywood, *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations...*

Discussant: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 15: No Class

Final Papers Due Friday December 8<sup>th</sup> (Put in my box, history main office)

### Additional Readings: to be photocopied

- Ehret, C. "Sudanic Civilization" p. 224-274 in Michael Adas (ed.) *Agricultural and Pastoral Societies in Ancient and Classical History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.
- Celenko, Theodore, *Egypt in Africa*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996. This is an exhibition catalog with scholarly articles - read it all.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World Press, 1995. Chapter 1 (pg. 1-44)
- Pankhurst, Richard. *The Ethiopians*. Cornwall: MPG Books, 1998. Chapters 1-6 (pg. 1-108)
- McIntosh, Susan Keech. "Cities Without Citadels: Understanding Urban Origins along the Middle Niger," pg. 622-641 in Shaw, et al (eds) *The Archeology of Africa: Food, Metals, Towns*. London: Routledge Press, 1993.
- McIntosh, Susan Keech, (ed.). *Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, Chapters 1 and 4.
- Eaton, Richard M. "Islamic History as Global History" p.1-36 in Michael Adas, (ed.), *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press/AHA, 1993.
- Connah, Graham. "An Optimal Zone: the West African Savanna" pg. 97-120 in *African Civilization: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa - An Archaeological Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. New York/London: Africana Publishing Company, 1980.
- Hunwick, J.O. "African Slaves in the Mediterranean World: A Neglected Aspect of the African Diaspora" pg. 289-323 in Joseph Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (Howard University Press, 1982)
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- Pankhurst, R. "The Ethiopian Diaspora to India: The Role of Habshis and Sidis from Medieval Times to the end of the Eighteenth Century" pg. 189-222 in Jayasuriya and Pankhurst, *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean*.
- Vansina, J "The Kongo Kingdom and its Neighbors," p. 546-587 in B.A. Ogot (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa Vol. V: Africa from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century*. Berkeley: Heinemann/University of California Press, 1992.