

History 371: History of Sub-Saharan Africa to c. 1850

Fall 2007

MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m.

Instructor: Sara Jorgensen, Department of History
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Office Hours: M & W, 1:30-3:00 p.m.; F 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

Course Description: This course provides an overview of the history of Africa during the period from the emergence of recognizable human cultures to the decline of the Atlantic slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century. Major themes to be covered include the development of complex societies, migrations, state formation, African responses to the arrival of Islam and Western Christianity, Africa's role in world trade, slavery and the slave trade, and the participation of Africans in the Atlantic world. The course will also introduce themes in African historiography—the history of African history—and the methods used in studying that history. Students will engage extensively with primary source materials.

Required Texts:

Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800* (Virginia, 2002).
Derek Nurse & Thomas Spear, *The Swahili* (Pennsylvania, 1985).
Said Hamdun and Noel King, eds., *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* (Markus Weiner, 1998).
Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life* (Cambridge, 1990).
Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born* (Virginia, 2004).

Additional readings will be made available on reserve, on e-reserve, and online.

Evaluation and Grading:

Paper #1:	15%
Paper #2:	25%
Other written assignments (combined):	10%
Final Exam:	20%
Class Participation:	30%

All written assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned. I will accept assignments up to a week after the due date, although there will be a deduction from your grade for lateness. I will not accept assignments more than a week after they are due. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

The class participation component of your grade is based on your attendance, your behavior in class (for example, no eating, use of communications devices during class, sleeping, &c.), and your demonstration of a good understanding of the material through participation in class discussions. Regular attendance is expected.

Statement on Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability—for example, a learning disability, difficulty with vision or hearing, a learning disability, or psychiatric concerns—and you think that you may need special assistance or a special accommodation for this class or any other class, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (110 Frist Hall, ph. 425-4006).

Course Schedule (subject to revision)

M 8.20 Introduction to Course; human roots in Africa

Section 1: Early History

W 8.22 Early indicators of civilization

Readings: Ehret, ch. 1

Brief Assignment 1 distributed

F 8.24 Foraging societies

Readings: Ehret, ch. 2

In class: Khoisan video snippets

M 8.27 Comparisons and reasons: broad cultural developments across the continent

Readings: Ehret, ch. 2 ctd.

Brief Assignment 1 due

W 8.29 Transition to Agriculture & Pastoralism

Readings: Ehret, ch. 3

Section 2: Developments in Northeast Africa

F 8.31 NE Africa: Roots of Egyptian civilization

Readings: Ehret, ch. 4, pp. 143-155

M 9.03 no class, Labor Day

W 9.05 Egypt and the Commercial Revolution

Readings: Ehret, ch. 5, pp. 162-170, 200-221

In-class analysis: Wenamen's Journey (available online at

<http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/wenamen.htm>)

Paper Assignment 1 Distributed

F 9.07 Tug-of-War: Egypt and the Sudan

Reading: Frank J. Yurco, "Egypt and Nubia: Old, Middle and New Kingdom Eras" (available on reserve).

M 9.10 NE Africa and Trade (Indian Ocean, Red Sea)

Readings: See those from 9.05 and 9.07

In-class analysis: Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (available online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/periplus.html>)

Section 3: Early Forms of Social organization south of the Sahara

Readings for Section: Remainder of Ehret, ch. 4 and 5

W 9.12 Another sort of transition: Bantu Migrations

Readings: Vansina, Introduction and ch. 1

F 9.14 Oral History and its Limitations: The Case of the Bemba people

In-class analysis: Andrew D. Roberts, *A History of the Bemba*, ch. 2 (available on reserve).

M 9.17 Development and spread of Iron Technology
Readings: Section readings only

W 9.19 Varieties of Religious belief
In class: Video, “Strange Beliefs”

F 9.21 Social organization, kinship and governance
Readings: Vansina, ch. 2

Section 4: The Middle Centuries: Kingdoms, Empires and Traders

Section Readings: Ehret, ch. 6 & 7

M 9.24 Polities into Kingdoms: Western South-Central Africa
Readings: Vansina, ch. 3

W 9.26 Tributary Relationships: Mapungubwe, Zimbabwe, and Eastern South-Central Africa
Readings: Martin Hall, *Farmers, Kings and Traders*, ch. 7-9 (available on Reserve)

F 9.28 Forager-herder polities and their neighbors: the Khoikhoi
Section Readings only

M 10.01 The East Coast traders: Comparative Perspectives on the Swahili
Paper Assignment 1 due; be prepared to discuss Nurse & Spear and Ibn Battuta in E. Africa

W 10.03 Peoples of the Western Forest
Section Readings only

F 10.05 Savannah Empires: Geography as Destiny?
Section Readings only

M 10.08 Islam and the Savannah Empires
In-class analysis: *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*, West African section
Brief Assignment #2 distributed

W 10.10 Legitimacy, Power and Religion
In-class analysis: excerpt from *The Epic of Son-Jara* (available on Reserve)

F 10.12 The Forest, the Savannah, and the Trans-Saharan trade
In-class analysis: “Tawat and the Western Sudan Trade” (available on reserve)

M 10.15 The Kongo kingdom and the introduction of Western Christianity
Reading: Vansina, ch. 4
In-class analysis: three brief documents on the Kongo: “Paulo Diaz de Novais in Angola, 1571,” “Relations Between the Kingdom of Kongo and the Papacy,” and “Queen Anna Nzinga”
Brief Assignment # 2 due

W 10.17 Peoples on the Periphery of the Trade Networks
Section Readings only

F 10.19 Trade Networks on the Periphery of Africa: Admiral Zheng He, China, and What Might have Been
Reading: Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas*, ch. 8

M 10.22 (no class, fall break)

Section 5: Early European Involvement in Africa

Section Reading: Ehret, ch. 8

W 10.24 Roots of European Involvement in Africa
Paper Assignment #2 Distributed

F 10.26 Early European Settlements, African neighbors
Readings: Donald Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, ch. 3; Elphick and Malherbe, “The Khoisan to 1828” (both available on reserve)

M 10.29 Integration of Atlantic Networks into African Social Systems
Readings: Vansina, ch. 5 and conclusion
In-class analysis: Andrew Battell, “The Jaga, 1568” (available on reserve)

Section 6: Slavery and the Slave Trade

Section Reading: Ehret, ch. 9

W 10.31 Slavery in Africa and the rise of the slave trade
Readings: Manning, ch. 1-3, 6

F 11.02 Africa and the Mediterranean slave trade
In-class analysis: “The Narrative of Robert Adams,” excerpts (available on reserve).

M 11.05 The Atlantic Slave Trade
Readings: Manning, appendix 1; Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade*, ch. 17-20 (available on Reserve)

W 11.07 Quantitative & Qualitative Impact of the Slave Trade on Africa
Readings: Manning, ch. 4, 5, & 7

F 11.09 Africans enslaved: Personal Recollections
In-class analysis: excerpts from *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic* (available on Reserve)

M 11.12 Reactions to Slavery: Abolitionism
Readings: Manning, ch. 8
In-class analysis: T. Fowell Buxton, “The Principles of Abolition” (available on reserve)

W 11.14 Slavery After Abolition
Readings: See section readings; also Amhad Alawad Sikainga, “The Legacy of Slavery and Slave Trade in the Western Bahr al-Ghazal, 1850-1939” (available on reserve).
In-class analysis: Excerpt from “The Story of Zebehr Pasha as told by Himself”; Emily Reute, *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess from Zanzibar*, ch. 11 (both available on reserve)

Section 7: Africa and the Atlantic World: A Broader View

- F 11.16 Slave Refuges and early Back-to-Africa movements
Readings: Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings*, excerpt; Paul Cuffee letter (both available on reserve)
- M 11.19 Abolition and a Settler Enclave: The Cape Colony
Readings: Timothy Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order*, ch. 4 (available on reserve).
- W-F 11.21-23 no class, Thanksgiving
- M 11.26 In class-- video
Paper #2 due
- W 11.28 Premonitions of the colonial world: Explorers and Missionaries
In-class analysis: Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, excerpt; American Zulu Mission documents (both on reserve).
- F 11.30 Africans and African influences in the Atlantic World
Readings: Judith Carney, “Out of Africa: Colonial Rice History in the Black Atlantic”; Lillian Ashcroft-Eason, “‘She Voluntarily Hath Come’: A Gambian Woman Trader in Colonial Georgia in the Eighteenth Century” (both available on reserve).
- M 12.03 Last day of classes
- Final exam: Friday, 12.07, 8-10 am