This class will trace the development of human civilization in Africa from ‘Lucy’ to the European Age of Exploration in the 15th and 16th century. The Sahara desert will be used as a centerpiece for connecting not only West, East, and North African experiences, but also connecting these experiences with Mediterranean, Islamic and Indian Ocean regions. Key themes include the Agricultural Revolution, the Bantu Migration, the spread of Christianity and Islam, trade, the varied African diaspora and state constructions.
Required Readings

Pre-Modern African History Course Reader (available on blackboard)

Recommended Readings


Also, Gilbert and Reynolds have a good list of readings at the end of each chapter. In addition, I list some works at the end of each week’s lecture topics. If you desire to learn more about any of the topics discussed in lecture, discussion or the research presentations please see me during office hours and I can provide you with some additional sources.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation 30% (Participation 10%, Responses and Attendance 10%, Discussion Sessions 10%)
Map Quizzes 3 at (5%) 15%
Midterm Exam 15%
Two Essays 2 at (10%) 20%
Final Exam 20%

Explanation of Requirements

Papers:

There are two essays for this course. A handout will be provided explaining the requirements. The essays will be due during Week five and Week ten. Late papers will be deducted ½ a grade per day.

Attendance

Come to class on time. Class time is limited and tardiness not only distracts your classmates, but also increases the likelihood of missing important information.
Three (3) late arrivals = one (1) unexcused absence.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and three (3) unexcused absences will result in a one (1) letter lowering of your grade.

Participation

In order to be successful in this course, you must actively participate in the section discussions. This includes reading all assignments (in the textbook, sourcebook and course website) and coming to class ready to discuss the assigned readings.
Good participation is displayed by comments or questions that are relevant to lecture or discussion session topics and are informed by the assigned readings. You can also earn extra participation points by attending pertinent lectures that will be announced during class.

**Responses**

Throughout the semester a discussion question will be assigned and you will write and hand in a one (1) page response to a question given in class the week before by email. In addition, on occasion, using Blackboard (http://oncampus.oberlin.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp), a question will also be posted (Occasionally, during the weeks where there is not an assigned response paper, every student will prepare three (3) questions for discussion during the section. These questions will come from assigned readings and will relate to theoretical issues in the readings.

Even if you are absent from the session (excused or unexcused) you are still required to hand in these responses or questions by email BEFORE the session meeting (9:45am). If there is minimal oral participation during session meetings, there will be additional response paper assignments.

**Classroom Conduct**

During the section meetings, there will many opportunities for you to express yourself orally. In order to allow a fluid exchange of ideas, **everyone’s opinion will be respected**. You are welcome to disagree with your classmates’ views on certain issues; however, personal attacks, rude comments or disrespectful behavior of any type will not be condoned and will be detrimental to your participation grade.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

The Oberlin Honor Code applies to all assignment for this course. This code can be found through Blackboard → Lookup/Directories → Honor Code. On assignments and tests you turn in for this course, the honor pledge and your signature must be present. The pledge is as follows: “I affirm that I have adhered to the honor pledge in this assignment.” All tests are closed book, closed notes and closed “friend.” For the exams, signing the honor pledge signifies that you have abided by those restrictions and neither given nor received aid during the exam. The essay and research paper are to be written without assistance, but as always you are encouraged to discuss your idea with others.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities that require accommodations (such as a note taker or special testing arrangements), please let the instructor know early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Ms. Jane Boomer, Coordinator for Services for Students with Disabilities. Her office is in Peters G-38A and her phone number is x58464
Email Policy

I will respond to emails within 24 hours from Monday – Friday, and within 48 hours on the weekends. It is a requirement to check your email and blackboard for announcements for this class.

Schedule of Lectures and Assignments

Unit 1: Setting the Stage: Africa in the Ancient World (Pre History – 3rd Century)

Week One: Introductions and Approaching Pre-Modern African History

Assigned Readings: Pier Larson “10 Myths about Africans and African History” available at https://jshare.johnshopkins.edu/plarson1/web/syllabi/121/myths/myths.htm and Blackboard

9/8 Introduction
9/10 Approaching Pre-Modern History. Read: Pier Larson “10 Myths about Africans and African History”

Further Readings: The Academic journal History in Africa, Jan Hultin Oral History as Tradition, and Mario Acevado Africana Studies

Week Two: Early Human Environments, Revolutions and Migrations of Ancient Africa

Assigned Readings: Chaps. 1-3(G+R)

9/13 Origins of Humanity, Environments of Africa. Read: (Chap. 1 (G+R))
9/15 Food and Technology and Populating Ancient Africa Read: (Chap. 2 (G+R))
9/17 What Changed the World in the lives of Early Humans Read: (Chap. 3 (G+R))


Week Three: African States in the Ancient World

Assigned Readings: Chapter 4 G+R and Egypt’s Relations with the Rest of Africa (Available on Blackboard under Week 3’s Required Readings)

9/20 Map Quiz 1/ Egypt in the Ancient World (Read: Chapter 4 (G+R))
9/22 Egypt and Nubia (Read: Egypt’s Relations with the Rest of Africa)
9/24 Film: Black Pharaoh or Nubia

Further Reading: Martin Bernal Black Athena vols. 1 and 2, UNESCO History of Africa vol. 1, Cambridge History of Africa vol. 1, Mary Lefkovitz Not Out of Africa, Black Athena Revisited, Graham Connah African Civilizations and Barbara Watterson The Egyptians
Week Four: African States in the Ancient Mediterranean World

Assigned Readings: North Africa Readings and The Periplus of the Erythraen Sea (Both available on Blackboard under Week 4’s Required Readings) and your group of Women

9/27 North Africa in the Ancient World (Read North African Required Readings)
9/29 Aksum and the Swahili Coast in the Ancient World (Read The Periplus of the Erythraen Sea)
10/01 DISCUSSION: “Ain’t I A Woman” the Ancient Women of Africa (Cleopatra, Hatshepsut and Sheba)


Unit 2: The World Religions and the Sahara (3rd Century A.D – 6th Century)

Week Five: Early Christianity and Africa

Assigned Readings: Chap. 5 (G+R), “African Christianity” (Available on Blackboard under Week 5’s Required Readings)

10/04 Roman North African Christianity (Read Chap. 5 G+R)
10/05 ESSAY #1 DUE AT 5pm in Rice 14
10/06 Byzantine African Christianity (Read “African Christianity”)
10/08 Class cancellation: MMUF Conference


Week Six: Pre Islamic North and West African Empires

Assigned Readings: Ancient Ghana and Berber Readings (Available on Blackboard under Week 6’s Required Readings) and your group’s section of Augustine’s Confessions Book 6

10/11 MAP QUIZ 2/ Ancient Ghana (Read: “Ancient Ghana”)
10/13 The Berber States (Read: “The Berber States”)
10/15 DISCUSSION: Augustine’s Christianity

Further Readings: Michael Brett The Berbers, Nehemia Levitzon Ancient Ghana and Mali

Week Seven: Pre-Islamic East Africa
Assigned Readings: The Swahili Pre-History and the Conversion of Axum (Available on Blackboard under Week 6’s Required Readings)

10/18 Ethiopia on the Eve of Islam (Read: Brown’s Conversion of Axum)
10/20 East Africa on the Eve of Islam (Read: The Swahili Pre-History)
10/22 MIDTERM


Fall Recess 10/23-10/31

Unit 3: The Shape and Reshape of Islamic Conversion (6th Century – 14th Century)

Week Eight: The Birth of Islam

Assigned Readings: Chap. 6 (G+R), “Egypt and North Africa” and Primary Source: Conversion of King of Ghana

11/01 Islam, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea (Read: “Egypt and North Africa”)
11/03 Islam, the Sahara and West Africa (Read Chap. 6 (G+R))
11/05 Discussion: The Conversion of the King of Ghana


Week Nine: Islam and African Empires

Assigned Readings: Epic of Sundiata and African Empire G+R Chapter 7

11/08 Mali/Songhay and Islam (G+R Chap. 7)
11/10 Islam and State Construction in West Africa (Begin Epic of Sundiata)
11/12 Discussion of Sundiata (Finish Epic of Sundiata)


Week Ten: “Traditional” Empire Building

11/15 The Buganda Case/ **MAP QUIZ #3** (Read: Semakula Kiwanuka “Buganda and its Neighbors 1300-1800”)
11/17 The Ethiopian (Abyssinian) case (Read: Harold Marcus “The Golden Age of the Solomonic Dynasty, to 1500”)
11/19 Class Cancellation: ASA Conference


**Essay #2 is Due** November 18th

**Unit 4: Africans in the World and the World in Africa (13th Century – 16th Century)**

**Week Eleven: Pre-Modern African Diasporas**

Assigned Reading: Joseph Harris “Africans in Asian History” and “Malik Ambar: African Regent-Minister in India”, David Northrup “First Sights-Lasting Impressions” and Ivan Van Sertima “Mandingo Traders in Medieval Mexico”

11/22 The Indian Ocean Diasporas (Joseph Harris “Africans in Asian History” and “Malik Ambar: African Regent-Minister in India”)
11/23 **ESSAY #2** is due at 5pm, Rice 14
11/24 The America/ European Diasporas (David Northrup “First Sights-Lasting Impressions” and Ivan Van Sertima “Mandingo Traders in Medieval Mexico”)
11/26 Thanksgiving Break


**Week Twelve: European Explorations of Africa and African Interpretations of Them.**

Fage Chap. 9, Davidson Chapter 5 – 205, G+R (141-156), Harold Marcus “The Decline of the Solomonic Dynasty, to 1769 and Primary Sources

11/29 West African Explorations (Read: Fage Chap. 9, Davidson Chapter 5 185 – 205, G+R (141-156)
12/01 East Africa and The Ethiopian Escapade (Harold Marcus “The Decline of the Solomonic Dynasty, to 1769)
12/03 DISCUSSION: The Nature of Exploration: Comparing the Views (Present and Past)

**Week Thirteen:** African Empires on the Eve of the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade

Davidson, Chap. 205-224, (G+R) 156-167, Fage Chap. 10 and Group Assignments

12/06 West African empires and beginnings of the Christian Slave Trade (read Fage Chap. 10 and (G+R) pgs. 156-167)
12/08 The Atlantic World and the Christian Slave Trade (Davidson Chap. 5 205-224, (G+R) 168-173
12/10 DISCUSSION: To Participate or not?

Further Readings:

**Week Fourteen:** Initial Experiences with Modernity

Assigned Readings NONE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

12/12 Conclusions: The Coming of Modernity . . . and Evaluations

**Week Fifteen:** Final Exam December 15th, 2009 9:00am - 11:00am