RUTGERS UNIVERSITY—NEWARK
History of Africa I
21:510:263
Conklin 346: T/Th 11:30am–12:50pm
Fall 2022

Dr. Habtamu Tegegne
Office: Conklin 329
Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00pm–5:00pm
Email: ht254@newark.rutgers.edu

Office Hours:
I will hold office hours in Conklin Hall 329 on Thursdays between 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm, and by appointment. I am present, during office hours which are scheduled for you, to talk about a course material or an assignment. If you have any urgent and critical issue about anything, ask and clear them with me immediately. Communication is the key for a rewarding course experience. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Course Description

This course explores key developments in African history from human origin to 1850. This period has seen vast cultural changes in African societies, the rise of empires and kingdoms, and the incorporation of Africa into the modern world system. Through lectures, readings, and discussions we will look at the political, social, and cultural history of Africa, exploring some major historical processes and events that shaped and continue to reshape the continent and lend themselves to discussions and inquiry.

The course is divided into four broad parts.

I. Origins and Foundations of African Civilizations. This section deals with the general introduction of the land, geography and peoples of Africa, the history of man and his evolution, the emergence of food-producing communities.

II. Ancient and Classical African Civilizations. This section discusses some of Africa’s very old and great civilizations and societies which flourished in the Nile valley. First, we will consider the Egyptian civilization and review the vigorous debate regarding the identity of Pharaonic Egyptians and the relation between ancient Egypt and African and European civilizations and
cultures. Then we will look at Kush and its Meroitic and Christian Nubian successors and the Empire of Aksum.

III. Medieval African Civilizations. This section covers ‘medieval’ African societies and kingdoms including the succession of empires which flourished in the middle sections of the Niger River in West Africa, the forest states in west Africa and the states of southern and central Africa. Special emphasis will be given to the Empire of Mali and to oral tradition of its founder and greatest king Sundiata.

IV. Early Modern Africa. This section deals with the history of early modern Africa and its engagement with the larger world. We will explore in-depth how world religions and the trans-oceanic and inland trade networks and allied economic activities and political institutions have developed, changed and affected African societies from circa CE 1000 to 1850. The last part of this section of the course then takes up the commercial and religious revolutions of the 19th century and the encounter between Europeans and Africans in southern Africa and the accompanying significant social and political reordering across Africa.

Course Objectives

- encourage students’ development of critical thinking and of writing skills.
- introduce students to basic concepts in the study of African history to 1850.
- provide them with a basic historical outline of African history to 1850.
- enable students to develop a basic understanding of the historical forces—both external and internal—that contributed to the diversity of Africa’s cultural, political and social terrains as well as the common historical experiences and roots that tie together African peoples and societies.

Required Texts


Any additional primary sources listed below under the schedule are freely available online. All the required reading for the course is contained in the two books (which are available for purchase from online booksellers, such as Amazon), the online sources, and the class notes.
Evaluation Breakdown
Grading in the course will be based on an evaluation of student performance in the term paper, participation in discussion, presentation, midterm, and final exams. Points will be available as follows:

- Weekly Activities (due: weekly) 25%
- Group Presentations (due: various/ongoing) 10%
- Term paper (due: October 23) 15%
- Midterm Exam (due: October 30) 20%
- Final “Teach Another Person” Project (due: December 20) 30%

Grading Scale
Grading for the course will be as follows:

- 90 - 100 A
- 87 - 89 B+
- 80 - 86 B
- 77 - 79 C+
- 70 - 76 C
- 60 - 69 D
- 59 or less F

Evaluation Details

Weekly Activities (25%)
Constructive and energetic participation in weekly class activities is a key element of the course and is worth 25% of your final grade. There will be a range of weekly activities, including quizzes, document analysis, surveys, and in-class writing tasks. The weekly activities will be given throughout the term, and each will be worth 2.5% of your course grade. Students must attend class physically to complete these activities. Attendance will be taken at the start of class with sign-in sheets. The weekly activities are related to the weekly topic and allied documentary/film. Both the quality and the quantity of weekly activities are important. It is in your best interest to ad postings and actively participate in weekly activities. The objective of the semester long weekly activities is to help you keep up and engage critically with the course materials and themes.
**Group Presentations (10%)**
Everyone will be assigned to a presentation group. Each student is required to present as part of a group once during the semester based on a sign-up sheet which will be made available in the beginning of the term. Group members must watch the assigned film in advance of time, and then present in 15 to 20 minutes their findings, questions, and criticisms to the class. There should also be a discussion following the presentation. In order to facilitate this discussion, the presenters should come up with two to three open-ended questions.

The presentations are based on a film specifically assigned to each group. The films assigned for presentations are available either on YouTube for free or can also be accessed at the online video database via Rutgers Library. A detailed group presentation rubric will be given in the beginning of the term.

**Term Paper (15%)**
There is one assigned paper for this course which is worth 15% of your course grade. The writing guideline and the topics will be given well in advance of the due date. You have to turn in your papers on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted for full credit without any documented valid excuse. No papers will be accepted after three days past the deadline for any credit. Your paper is due on Sunday, October 23. Turn your paper in on canvas. In addition, please note, submission of a term paper and of a final exam are course requirements.

**Late Policy**
Turn your paper according to the official (syllabus stated) due date. Five points will be deducted for each day your assignment, including the term paper, is late. You may only ask for an extension at least 48 hours before the due date and only if you have a valid reason and valid documentation. None will be accepted after the end of the semester. Doctor’s notes that are dated either more than 24 hours after the onset of illness or after the due date will not be accepted. Even if you have obtained a doctor’s note, you will be penalized until the day I receive your doctor’s note.

**Midterm (20%)**
The midterm will be based on course lectures, readings and discussions. The midterm will be held on Canvas on October 30. The midterm will be opened from 9am until 8:59am the following day on October 31. Questions may include short identification questions and essay questions.
Final “Teach Another Person” Project (30%)
Students will have an opportunity to take on the role of a teacher to teach a friend or family member on a selected topic/theme that they have learned in the course. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate students’ understanding of African history and to apply ideas and concepts learned in the study of African history. The guideline to the final project and the grading rubric will be given in the course of the term. The teach another person project is due to canvas on Sunday, December 20. Students are required to turn in the final project based on the schedule indicated in the course syllabus. The due date to the final project cannot be rescheduled to a date different from the official (university/syllabus-stated) due date.

Weekly Schedule
Below is the course schedule that we will follow in the course of the semester. The schedule is subject to revision. We might drop, add, or exchange readings according to our specific interests and because of weather emergency.

Part I: Origins and Foundations of African Civilizations

September 06  Topic 1: Introduction to the Study of Africa and African History
Readings: This Syllabus; and Pier M. Larson, Myths about Africa, Africans, and African History: The Student's "Ten Commandments": https://reedhistory.net/myths-about-africa-africans-and-african-history/

September 08  Topic 1 (cont’d): Lecture on Geography, Human Habitation, History & Concepts

September 13  Topic 2: African environment & human origins; lifestyles (foraging, farming, and pastoralism); Peoples and languages of Africa
Reading: Harms, Africa in Global History, 10–39.


Part II: Ancient & Classical African Civilizations (2700 BCE–700 CE)
September 20  
Topic 3: Ancient Kingdoms and Classical African Civilizations I: Egypt in African history  
Readings: Harms, *Africa in Global History*, 41–85; and Accounts of Meröe, Kush, and Aksum, c. 430 BCE–550 CE:  
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/nubia1.asp#:~:text=430%20BCE%2D%20550%20CE,%20that%20Strabo%20did.

On Afrocentric view of African History  
Ann Macy Roth: *Building Bridges to Afrocentrism*  
Ibrahim Sundiata: Afrocentrism: *The Argument We’re Really Having*

The Black Athena Debate  
Summary of the debate:  
http://academic.reed.edu/humanities/110tech/BlackAthena.html  
Bernal on Lefkowitz, Review of Lefkowitz, ed. *Not Out of Africa*:  
http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1996/96.04.05.html  
Lefkowitz on Bernal:  
Dr. Charles S. Finch III, M.D., Response to Mary Lefkowitz’s Not Out of Africa:  

September 22  
Discussion: “Africa: A Voyage of Discovery: Different but Equal” (Episode 1):  
https://video.alexanderstreet.com/embed/different-but-equal.

September 27  
Topic 4: Ancient Kingdoms and Classical African Civilizations II: Empire of Kush; the kingdoms Meroe-Nubia; Aksumite Ethiopia (c. 1,000 B.C.E.—800 C.E.)  

September 29  
Discussion: “Kingdom of Kush—History of Africa with Zeinab Badawi” (Episode 4):  
Presenters (4X)
PART III: Medieval African Civilizations

October 04  Topic 5: Trading Kingdoms of the Western Sudan, to 1600
The Trans-Saharan Trade & the Sudanic Kingdoms (700–1450);
Literacy, Orality, State & Society in West Africa
Readings: Harms, Africa in Global History, 125–146; Niane, 
*Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali.*
Glimpses of the Kingdom of Ghana in 1067 CE:

October 06  Discussion: “Africa’s Great Civilizations: Empires of Gold” (Episode 3):
Presenters (4X)

October 11  Topic 6: The Varieties of States and Societies in West African
Forest; The Guinea Coast and the Rise of the Forest Kingdoms.
Readings: TBA
Watch: Head of an Ife King from Nigeria—Masterpieces of the
British Museum (Parts 1 & 2) https://youtu.be/wa0st_aMjmA; and
https://youtu.be/3mtvc1EjgM

https://youtu.be/_KKnpSnXRxo
Presenters (4X)

October 18  Topic 7: State and Society in East, Central, and South Africa
The Dispersion of the Bantu-speaking Peoples; Great Zimbabwe;
the Kingdom of the Congo

October 20  Discussion: “Great Zimbabwe & The First Cities of Southern Africa”:
https://youtu.be/CdKD4-fVnyE.
**Term paper due October 23 at 11:59 pm.**


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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>Topic 8: Africa and Religious Worlds</td>
<td>Early Christianity in Africa (Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia); Africa and the Islamic World.</td>
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**Midterm Exam, Sunday, October 30**

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<td>November 01</td>
<td>Topic 9: Trading Worlds—Africa and the Indian Ocean System</td>
<td>The Indian Ocean Trade Network; the East African World; Swahili Society; Great Zimbabwe; Somali Society; Polynesia and Africa</td>
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<td>Presenters (4X)-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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November 15  Topic 11: Africa and the Atlantic World (c. 1440–1820 CE)
The Atlantic commerce; Demography & geography of the slave trade
Pope Paul III: Sublimus Dei [On Slavery], 1537:
http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_pa03sd.htm
http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/tmg/vol2/iss2/5.

November 17  Discussion: “Africa’s Great Civilizations: The Atlantic Age” (Episode 5):
https://video.alexanderstreet.com/embed/the-atlantic-age
Presenters (4X)________________________________________

November 22  Topic 12: Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade:
Economic and Political Impact; Africans in the new World; The Atlantic Slave Trade in Memory and Tradition

November 24–27  Thanksgiving Recess

November 29  Topic 13: Political and Religious Revolutions in West Africa:
The Sudan and Sahel: Jihad and Mass Islam; legacies of the jihad

December 01  Discussion: “Ghosts of Amistad: In the Footsteps of the Rebels”:
Presenters (4X)________________________________________
December 06  
Topic 14: Settlers and Africans in Southern Africa:  
Encounter between Khoi-San-Bantu and European Colonists;  
European Expansion  

December 08  
Discussion: “SHAKA Zulu” (Episode 05#10): [https://youtu.be/jbzau85Y5Dw](https://youtu.be/jbzau85Y5Dw)  
Presenters (4X)_________________________________________

December 14  
End of Classes

December 15  
Reading Day

December 16–23  
Exam Period

**Course Website**

Canvas is our best means of communication. Be sure to check Canvas and your university email account on a regular basis. You will need access to the Canvas course site in order to access your grade, complete some of the readings, to get paper topics, exams, announcements, and other information of interest and importance. You will need to be able to access the course site at least three times a week; on the evenings before TTR and on Saturdays in order to download the weekly assignments, lectures, and other relevant files.

**Copyright Statement**

Lecture notes, slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments developed for this course are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination outside of the course. Posting, selling and providing course material to third-party websites violates an instructor’s intellectual property rights, and the American Copyright Law. Failure to follow these instructions violates the university’s Code of Student Conduct and will result in disciplinary measures.

**Attendance**

In accordance with the History Department policy: Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in
this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. Recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.

**Decorum**
Course decorum is a university requirement every student must fulfil. As university students you are expected to behave as adults and act with courtesy and professionalism at all times. Express your thought and opinion in a way which is professional and does not offend anyone. Avoid any inappropriate comments. Here is the link to the student code of conduct: https://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/processes/university-code-student-conduct

**Academic Integrity**
As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

**Integrity Pledge**
All students are required to adhere to the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. You must include the following Rutgers Honor Code Pledge on all examinations and major course assignments and submitted for grading:

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment). (Name) (Signature – typing your name is fine) (Date)”.

See: https://www.sashonors.rutgers.edu/academics/integrity-pledge.

**University Resources**
Your health and well-being matter, and Rutgers has put in place a number of resources that are intended to help students through the challenges that might emerge during these times. Information on many of these resources appears below. Please let me know immediately if you are experiencing circumstances that are negatively impacting your academic performance. I also strongly encourage you to contact your academic advisor.
Accommodation and Support Statement
Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

Absences: All students are responsible for timely notification of their instructor regarding any expected absences. The Division of Student Affairs can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.) Students should refer to the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), for complete expectations and responsibilities. The office can be contacted at: (973) 353-5063 or deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

Temporary Conditions/Injuries: The Division of Student Affairs can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request for assistance at: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

Pregnancy: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the office at (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the office at: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf.
Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does not have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-Being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out Sanvello for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit https://my.rutgers.edu/, click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

Emergencies: Call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) at (973) 353-5111.

**Learning Resources**

Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services):
Tutoring available in a variety of math, science, technology, and business courses. Contact the Learning Center to determine whether tutoring is available for a specific course.
Room 140, Bradley Hall (973) 353-5608
learning.center@newark.rutgers.edu
https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center

Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops) (973) 353-5847
nwc@rutgers.edu
https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center

**Technology/Internet Resources for Students**

https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-technology-resources
https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/tlp