

African Archaeology (116.541)
Syllabus—Spring 2011

Room 11-301
Wednesdays 9:00-12:00

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Office Hours: Thursdays 10-12
Appointments welcome

This course will offer you a critical introduction to the discipline of Africanist archaeology. Africa has the longest archaeological record on the planet with a highly diverse linguistic landscape that reflects the complexity of prehistoric interactions across the continent. Understanding African archaeology is the gateway to gaining command of archaeology in general because the roots of humanity are firmly planted in the African soil.

There are two primary objectives in this class: (1) provide you with a background in the archaeology of Africa beginning with the earliest stone tool makers through early food producers, periods of state formation and intercontinental trading networks, and (2) improve your English writing and critical thinking skills.

There are two textbooks for the class, which are available in the SNU library:

Barham, L. and Peter Mitchell
2008 *The First Africans: African Archaeology from the Earliest Toolmakers to Most Recent Foragers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stahl, Ann B. (ed)
2005 *African Archaeology: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

I will assist you in getting the reading material you need for this class. I reserve the option to assign supplemental readings for each week as necessary, however your primary task of this class will be to construct an annotated bibliography that will help you toward completion of your final paper. Therefore, each student will be responsible for finding articles that pertain to each week's class discussion and share their knowledge with the other students in the class.

Grading: Class attendance/participation (5%); Weekly 1-page annotated bibliographies (50%); Midterm take home exam (20%); Final exam (25%)

Class Participation: You are expected to give a brief presentation every week in class regarding what you learned from constructing your weekly, annotated bibliography. Your presentation **will not** be a reading of your annotated bibliography. You will discuss the context of your readings for the week and what they have helped you learn about the subject material for this week. You do not need to prepare a formal presentation. Just be prepared to discuss the important aspects of your readings with the rest of the seminar. I also require students to participate in the class discussions and will call on you in class frequently to ensure on participation.

Annotated Bibliographies: An annotated bibliography is a list of articles or books accompanied by a brief, critical description of each text. The annotations are to be designed to help the readers of your bibliography determine the value of the reading material. Each student will be expected to produce **three** annotated references each week that will be shared with your classmates. I will grade each week's annotated

bibliography and provide you feedback to help you improve the quality of your critiques. We will work together to make sure that your efforts are not duplicated in the class.

Examples of critical annotations can be found at the following websites:

<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill28.htm>

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated_bibliographies.html

There are links to other examples of annotated bibliographies from these two websites.

You will use the SAA (American Antiquity) bibliographic format, which you can access at: <http://www.saa.org/Portals/0/SAA/Publications/new%20style%20guide.pdf>

I **strongly** urge you use EndNote or some kind of bibliography construction program to make your annotated bibliography. I can provide you will a file so that your EndNote references print out in the exact format I will require in this class. I will also teach you how to use EndNote, so please bring your laptop to class if you have one. The SNU library also hosts classes on using EndNote. Check the library services list (<http://library.snu.ac.kr/Eng/Board.jsp?type=traininglist>) to sign up for a class on how to use EndNote.

Take Home Exams: There will be two take-home exams. The exams will be non-cumulative and will be in an essay format. For each exam, you will be given three or four questions of which you must answer two. Your answers must each be ~4-5 double-spaced pages long, include a thesis statement and be written as a well-organized essay. Your English does not need to be perfect, but I need to be able to understand what you are talking about in order to give you a grade for the assignment. Your answers must use the class readings and discussions as well as references from the annotated bibliographies that you and your fellow classmates are assembling each week. If everyone is using EndNote, we can easily share files and completing the exams will be very straightforward.

Students who anticipate that English writing will be difficult for them should schedule appointments at the College English Program Writing Center. You need to make a reservation. You can do it online at <http://cep.snu.ac.kr/cepwc/> or you can call them at 02-880-5487.

Class outline:

Week 1 (March 2): Class Introduction.

- DISCUSSION: Brief introduction to African prehistory
- We will discuss in detail what I expect from your annotated bibliographies. I will provide you with handouts and we will work through examples.
- Brief EndNote workshop
- Read for next week: Barham and Mitchell Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 2 (March 9): African geography and paleoecology

- DISCUSSION: Understanding "Africa" as a place
- Read for next week: Barham and Mitchell Chapter 3

Week 3 (March 16): Early tool producers

- DISCUSSION: Early Stone Age industries/theories and underpinnings of human evolution
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 4

Week 4 (March 23): Early Pleistocene technologies

- DISCUSSION: Tool diversification and hominid dispersal across the continent and abroad
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 5

Week 5 (March 30): Mid-Pleistocene foragers

- DISCUSSION: Hunting, fishing and foraging in a rapidly changing climate
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 6

Week 6 (April 6): Modern human origins

- DISCUSSION: Bottlenecks and dispersions
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 7

Week 7 (April 13): Middle to Late Pleistocene cultural and climatic changes across the African continent

- DISCUSSION: Human adaptations during aridification
- Read for April 27 Barham and Mitchell Chapter 8
- Take Home Midterm Exam (**Due April 22, 5:00 pm** in the Archaeology office)

Week 8 (April 20): NO CLASS (TAKE HOME EXAM)

Week 9 (April 27): Pleistocene to Holocene transitions

- DISCUSSION: Advanced foraging and subsistence diversification
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 9

Week 10 (May 4): Intensive hunting and gathering

- DISCUSSION: The Neolithic and dispersal of food producers through Africa
- Read for next week Barham and Mitchell Chapter 10

Week 11 (May 11): Intensification of food production and specialized hunting and gathering

- DISCUSSION: Pastoralists, farmers, and changes to African landscapes
- Read for next week Stahl Chapter 13

Week 12 (May 18): Origins of African urban societies

- DISCUSSION: Towns, cities and states in Africa—different models
- Read for next week Stahl Chapter 15 and Huffman and Herbert (1994-1995). You can access this article on SNU Campus using the following link:
http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/420574_758494928_919633232.pdf

Week 13 (May 25): Southern and East African late Holocene archaeology

- DISCUSSION: Africa and the Indian Ocean World; cores and peripheries
- Read for next week Stahl Chapter 17 and Fattovich (2010). You can access this article on SNU Campus using the following link:
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/v415v5r8q48m4691/fulltext.pdf>

Week 14 (June 1): Central and Northern Africa late Holocene archaeology

- DISCUSSION: Forests and deserts, hunters and pyramids
- Read for next week Stahl Chapter 18

Week 15 (June 8): West African late Holocene Archaeology

- DISCUSSION: Intercommunity conflict, kingdoms and slavery
- Take Home Final Exam (**Due June 15, 5:00 pm** in the Archaeology office)