

AFRICAN PREHISTORY (ANTH 264)
McBREARTY, FALL, 1997
TUES & THURS, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m

This course examines the African archaeological record from the appearance of the first artifacts about 2.5 million years ago up to historic times. Africa was the home of our earliest ancestors, and we will look in detail at the behavior and surroundings of these early hunter-gatherers at ancient East African sites such as Olduvai Gorge and Koobi Fora. We will then consider the African record of technological development during the stone age. In the second half of the semester, we will explore the domestication of indigenous African crops, the way of life of early African herding societies, the development of African metal working technology, and the rise of the early African kingdoms.

READINGS.

1. Textbooks:

Phillipson, D.W. 1993. *African Archaeology*, 3rd edition. Cambridge University Press.

Connah, G. 1987. *African Civilizations*. Cambridge University Press

2. Reserve readings. The textbooks contain only the sketchiest outline of the course material. Much of your essential reading consists material on reserve in the Babbidge Library reserve room.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS.

EXAMS: There will be a map quiz, a midterm, and a final exam.

RESEARCH PAPERS: You will write **two** research papers. The first will be a short essay (5-10 pages) on a topic you will pick from a list I will circulate early in the semester. The second paper will deal with a topic of your choice in somewhat greater depth (10-20 pages). You will meet with me to discuss your topic for this writing project, and you will hand in a written abstract and outline as part of your progress with it. If you choose, you may turn in a first draft two weeks before the deadline which I will return to you ungraded but with comments; you may then submit a second revised draft for your paper grade.

ORAL PRESENTATION: Toward the end of the semester, you will give a brief oral presentation in class, summarizing the findings of your second research paper.

GRADES will be based upon your performance in the exams and the quality of your research papers and class presentation. The map quiz will contribute 5% to your final grade, the midterm, 20%; the final exam, 30%, the first paper, 15%, the second paper, 25%, and your oral presentation, 5%.

MY WHEREABOUTS:

Office: 433 Beach Hall, tel: 486-2857, message: 486-2137, fax: 486-1719.

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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30-3:30, or by appointment.

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CLASS SCHEDULE

Weeks of August 25 & September 1: Introduction to a continent. The nature of the archaeological record: chronology & stratigraphy. Beginnings of the record: the earliest artifacts.

September 11 (Thursday) **Map quiz.**

Weeks of September 8 & 15: What was it like to be an early hominid? Plio-Pleistocene environment, behavior, and social organization.

Weeks of September 22 & 29: African *Homo erectus*, the Acheulian industry.

September 25 (Thursday): **First essay due.**

Weeks of October 6 & 13: Beginnings of regional diversification: the African Middle Stone Age. The earliest modern human beings.

October 14 (Tuesday): Midterm review and sign up for appointments to discuss topics for second paper.

October 16 (Thursday): **Midterm exam.**

Week of October 21: Increased technological complexity & tangible symbolic behavior: the Later Stone Age. Individual meetings to discuss topics for second paper take place this week.

Weeks of October 27 & November 3: Early fishing & herding societies; African food production.

October 30 (Thursday): **Abstracts for second paper due.**

Week of November 10: African metallurgy, and the spread of the Iron Age way of life.

November 13 (Thursday): **Outlines for second paper due.**

Weeks of November 18 & 25: Increased social complexity and the rise of early African kingdoms.

November 20 (Thursday): **First drafts of second paper due** (for those who choose to do them).

November 25 (Tuesday): No class; Friday schedule.

November 27 (Thursday): No class; Thanksgiving.

Week of December 2: Review & overview.

December 4 (Thursday): **Oral presentations.**

December 9 (Tuesday, last day of classes): **Final drafts of second paper due.**