

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

**A. DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION:**

DIVISION: Social Science  
DEPARTMENT: History  
COURSE ID: HIST 180  
COURSE TITLE: African Civilization  
UNITS: 3  
LECTURE: 3 Hours  
PREREQUISITE: None

B. Catalog and Schedule Description: A general survey of the history of Africa from the early Nile Valley civilizations to the twentieth century. This course examines the social, political, economic, ideological, and cultural developments in African societies during the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods.

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon successful completion of the course, the student shall be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

- A. Identify, define, and discuss the key interpretations of African history, including the colonial, revisionist, nationalist, Marxist, and Afro-centric approaches.**
- B. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and interpret pertinent themes such as the rise of the great kingdoms and empires, the process of fragmentation and decentralization of political power, and the development of politics and city-states in the Nile Valley, East Africa, and the Western Sudan.**
- C. Analyze and discuss important questions regarding European imperialism, the active role Africans played in Decolonization, the problems created by the Nation-State structure in modern Africa, and Apartheid in South Africa.**
- D. Construct sound arguments regarding the causes of severe political, social, and economic problems in modern Africa.**
- E. Read, discuss, and respond to a variety of controversial interpretations of the African past such as Diop's thesis regarding the racial origins of ancient Egyptians and the notion advanced by several scholars that the term "tribe" cannot be utilized when analyzing the structure of African societies.**

**IV. COURSE CONTENT:**

- A. Introduction and Overview: Distortions, Myths, and Stereotypes of Africa and Africans.
  1. Analyze the various interpretations of Africa's image and history.
- B. Pre-historic Africa: The Dawn of Humankind.
  1. Discuss the evidence and analyze the interpretations, which detail the possibility that early humankind originated in Africa.
- C. African Topography and Geography: Past and Present.
  1. Detail the important role physical geography has played in African history.
- D. Ancient African Societies.
  1. Nile Valley Civilizations
    - a) Taseti
    - b) Kemet/Egypt
    - c) Kerma
    - d) Kush: Meroe and Napata
  2. Ancient to Pre-Modern East Africa
    - a) Axum and Ethiopia
    - b) The Swahili City States and Indian Ocean Trade

- c) Jihad and Crusade: Islam Vs. Christianity in East Africa.
  - 3. Early North Africa: Carthage
- E. Ancient to Pre-Modern South Africa
  - 1. Sofala and the Swahili City States
  - 2. Great Zimbabwe
  - 3. Cattle Kingdoms: Khoi Khoi, Xhosa, and Zulu
- F. Ancient to Pre-Modern West Africa
  - 1. The Great Sudanic Kingdoms
    - a) Mali
    - b) Ghana
    - c) Songhai
    - d) Kanem-Bornu
  - 2. Fragmentation and the Rise of City States and Politics
    - a) The Akan States
    - b) Kingdom of Dahomey
    - c) Benin
    - d) The Kongo Kingdom
    - e) Angola
- G. European Contact With Africa:
  - 1. Discuss the Atlantic Slave Trade and the enslavement of Africans.
  - 2. Detail and analyze the preludes to European Imperialism
- H. The Age of European Imperialism, 1890-1940
  - 1. Technological Factors
  - 2. Berlin Conferences, 1885-6
  - 3. African Responses to Invasion
  - 4. Impact of European Control
- I. World War II and the Erosion of European Domination
- J. African Liberation Movements, 1950s-1960s
  - 1. Discuss the impact wars of national liberation had on decolonization.
- K. Neo-Colonialism in Africa, 1960s-Present: The Creation of the "Third World."
- L. The Cold War and Africa, 1950s-Present.
- M. The Nation-State in Africa: The Source of Instability in Contemporary African Government.
  - 1. Discuss the interpretation advanced by Davidson and Fanon that the Nation-State in modern Africa is the force which has made "tribes" in Africa a social and cultural reality.
- N. South Africa and Zimbabwe: White Supremacy in Africa
- O. The United States and Africa
- P. Pan-Africanism and the African Diaspora
- Q. Solutions to the African Dilemma

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Lecture
- B. Audio-visual
- C. Participation and Discussion
- D. Debates
- E. Primary source references
- F. Group work

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. Research paper on a person, culture, society, nation, or event pertinent to African history. Emphasis is placed on using primary sources.
- B. Response papers for in-class videos, debates, and discussions.
- C. Group Work
  - 1. Debates on controversial issues

2. Discussion of readings and important topics
- D. Reading
1. Read Samatar's "Africa is There Hope?" and compare his discussion of the ecological crisis facing Africa with video clips from *the Africa's Natural Treasures* series.
  2. Read the poem "Coming of the Christians" and compare it to the writings of nineteenth century European missionaries.

## VII. EVALUATION:

- A. Methods of Evaluation:
1. Class Participation
  2. Examinations: Essay and Term Identifications
    - a) Typical essay questions:
      - i) What were the major factors contributing to European supremacy in Africa after 1870? Why couldn't Europeans conquer Africa before the mid-1800s?
      - ii) Why are Africans perceived as primitive, uncivilized, and savage in popular media and by some uninformed scholars? What purposes did those images serve in the minds of Europeans during the Atlantic Slave Trade and the age of Imperialism?
    - b) Typical term identification items:
      - i) Benin
      - ii) Cowries
      - iii) Kwame Nkrumah
  3. Weekly Assignments:
    - a) Audio-Visual presentation typical assignment:
      - i) Discuss how *Gumba the Tyrant* depicts the role of griots and oral culture in maintaining historical and cultural knowledge in West African societies.
    - b) Typical debate issues and questions:
      - i) Were the ancient Egyptians Black?
      - ii) Did Europeans control the slave trade?
      - ii) Can the word "tribe" be truly applied to societies and cultures in Africa?
- B. Frequency of Evaluation:
1. Two tests and periodic quizzes
  2. One final examination
  3. Weekly assignments
  4. One Research Paper

## VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.  
The Arrow of God, by Chinua Achebe. New York: Anchor Books, 1989.  
Discourse on Colonialism, by Aime Cesaire. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.  
The Scramble for Africa, by M.E. Chamberlain. Essex, England: Longman Group Limited, 1986.  
Africa in History: Themes and Outlines, by Basil Davidson. London: The Macmillan Company, 1995.  
Africa Civilization Revisited: From Antiquity to Modern Times, ed. by Basil Davidson. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1991.  
A History of West Africa 1000-1800, by Basil Davidson. Essex, England: Longman Group Limited, 1977.  
The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality, by Cheikh Anta Diop. Paris: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1974.  
Colonial Rule in African: Readings from Primary Sources, ed., by Bruce Fetter. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979.  
Farmers, Kings, and Traders: The People of South Africa, 200-1860 by Martin Hall. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

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African Cities and Towns before European Conquest, by Richard Hall. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976.  
The African Experience: An Introduction, by Vincent Khapoya. New York: Prentice Hall, 1998.  
Perspectives on the African Past, by Martin Klein and G. Johnson. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1972.  
African History in Maps, by M. Poh-Kwamena. Essex, England: Longman Group Limited, 1982.  
The Dark Child, by Camara Laye. New York: The Noonday Press, 1994.  
General Hospital of Africa II: Ancient Civilizations, ed., by G. Mokhtar. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.  
Egypt and Nubia, by John Taylor. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.  
Africa: Opposing Viewpoints, ed., by Carol Wekesser. Boston: Greenhaven Press, 1992.

\*\*or other college level equivalents that specifically deal with African history.

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:**

Floppy disk