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AAS 232 African Civilizations

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LEHMAN COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Department of Africana Studies

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AAS 232.K301 -- African Civilizations

Fall 2019

M/W. 2:00-3:15 pm

Carman Hall-Room 224

e-mail: bertrade@lehman.cuny.edu

Professor Bertrade Banoum

Office Hrs: M.3:30-4:30 pm

And by Appointment-287CA

Tel. 718-960-7803/960-8283

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Exploration of the development of African civilizations from the origin of humankind to the present day. Their contributions to the development of the continent and the major world civilizations. The course carries us through Africa's major civilizations clusters, and offers a comparative survey extending from the Nile Valley Civilizations, through the Niger River Civilizations, to the Bantu cluster comprising the Central, Southern and Swahili Civilizations. Particular attention is paid to religious and philosophical beliefs, literature and the arts, social and political organization, economic, scientific, and technological developments. Also highlighted are contributions of African women in the history and development of civilization, as well as contributions of Africa and Africans to the World.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

The course is part of the World Cultures/Global Issues Flexible Core and a requirement for the Africana Studies Major at Lehman College of the City University of New York (CUNY). Through an eclectic methodology, various resources will be used to elicit new concepts and gain a better understanding of African civilizations. AAS 232 satisfies the following skills: critical thinking, oral expression, writing skills, library/data base/information literacy.

Students are expected to:

- Recognize and critique common misrepresentations of Africa, Africans and their cultures.
- Identify (Pan-African) Movements that have contributed to an understanding of Africa.
- Recognize Africa as a continent (not a country!), Egypt as part of Africa, and Africa as part of the World

- Learn the Physical & Cultural Evolution of Humankind in Africa, the diversity of Africa (peoples, land, vegetation, cultures, arts, oral traditions, languages, religions, political systems, sciences and technologies
- Learn comparative developments of diverse civilizations across the continent
- Learn various ways in which African peoples have interacted with one another and beyond.
- Learn key terms and concepts, historical and geographical sites, historical events and figures.
- Learn the contributions of African women to the development and history of civilization.

- Identify global historical processes that have had a lasting impact on African civilizations.
- Gain a cultural and historical background to think critically and comparatively about African

civilizations/cultures/societies/peoples.

- Develop an ability to read reflectively, analyze and synthesize scholarly material; to write a well focused essay organized around a sustained argument; and to participate actively in class discussions, making informed arguments and treating peers' contributions both critically and respectfully.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Regular class attendance is mandatory. More than four unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade. You are expected to come to class prepared, i.e. having done all assigned readings and writings in advance, to take an active part in class discussions on the issues raised.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

- **Blackboard Discussion Forum** interactive responses to every course unit: 2-3-paragraph posts
- **Team Work Project Presentation** on the case study: Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mt Kenya: ...Gikuyu*
- **Written Response Papers** to 2 designated course readings and viewings – 1-2 pages.
- **Midterm Examination** and **Final Examination** cover course core concepts and new terms. Both in-class tests consist of fill-in-the-blank exercise and essay questions. Exam essays are **2-3 pages**.

COURSE FORMAT

The course is multimedia and built around lectures, readings, viewings, artwork, story maps, on-line databases, TEDTalks, and more. It is participatory through open pedagogy with student active involvement in new resource searches, Blackboard discussion fora, class discussions and presentations. It is multidisciplinary and draws on archaeological, artistic, architectural, anthropological, genomic, linguistic, historical, geographical, philosophical, sociological, literary sources, and oral traditions.

AAS 232-African Civilizations is a “Zero Textbook Cost” course

No textbook is required for this class. All course materials are Open Educational Resources (OER) found at <https://aas232.common.gc.cuny.edu>, and also posted on our course Blackboard site for your perusal.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Cheikh Anta Diop, *African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* Ali Mazrui, *The Africans*.
Ivan Van Sertima, *Blacks in Science; They Came Before Columbus; Black Women in Antiquity*.
Claudia Zaslavky, *Africa Counts*. Tariq Sawandi, *African Medicine: A Complete Guide to Yoruba Healing*.
Henry Louis Gates, *Wonders of the African World*. Gus Casely-Hayford, *Lost Kingdoms of Africa*.
John G. Jackson, *Introduction to African Civilizations*. P. Bohannon & P. Curtin, *Africa and the Africans*.
Curtis Keim, *Mistaking Africa*. Christopher Ehret. *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*.
Kevin Shellington. *African History*. Basil Davidson. *History of African Civilizations*
Schwarz-Bart, *In Praise of Black Women vol.1: Ancient African Queens & vol. 3: Modern African Women*.

SAMPLE WEBSITES

www.journalofafricancivilizations.com
www.guide2womenleaders.com

www.ancient-egypt.org
www.metmuseum.org

www.pbs.org/wonders/fr
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa
www.schomburgcenter.org
<http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/maps/atlas/africa-geophysical.html>

www.bu.edu/africa/outreach
www.mnh.si.edu/africanvoices
<http://allAfrica.com>
<http://nmaahc.si.edu>

COURSE OUTLINE -- I reserve the right to adjust the course outline if the need arises.

August 28 Introducing the Course. Correcting Terms, Myths and Stereotypes

Readings: Binyavanga Wainana: "How to Write About Africa."
Videos: Tony Guida's NY: Pamela Newkirk: *Spectacle: The ...Life of Ota Benga*
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: *The Danger of a Single Story*.
The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NYPL
The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
Brooklyn Museum, MET, MOMA, Museum of African Art, Studio Museum

Sep. 02 LABOR DAY. COLLEGE CLOSED. NO CLASSES.

Sep. 04-09 Africa and the Origin of Humankind. [Sep. 05 follows Monday schedule of classes]

Readings: *Smithsonian*: "How Africa Became the Origin of Humankind?"
"Where Is the Birthplace of Humankind: South or East Africa?"
Videos: PBS: "Mitochondrial Eve and Homo Sapiens in Africa's Rift Valley"
National Geographic "Short Introduction to Human Evolution"

Sep. 11-18 Nile Valley Civilizations: Nubia, Kush, Aksum, Kemet/KMT/Ancient Egypt

Readings: *Boundless LibreTexts*: Ch. 4, 1-6; Ch.16, 2 & 5. Jackson Ch.3
Videos: Gus Casely-Hayford's documentary film: *Lost Kingdoms of Africa: Nubia/Ethiopia*.
Henry Louis Gates' documentary film: *Wonders of the African World I*

Sep. 23-25 Niger River Civilizations: Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kanem Bornu, Hausa States, Benin, Asante, Yoruba

Readings: "West African Civilizations". *Boundless LibreTexts*: Ch.16, 4. J. Ch. 5
The MET, "The Birth of Islam & Trade"
Videos: *The Legend of Timbuktu*. BBC – *Lost Libraries of Timbuktu*.
Casely-Hayford's *Lost Kingdoms of Africa: West Africa*.
Henry Louis Gates' *Africa's Great Civilizations I*

**Oct. 02-07 Bantu Expansion: Swahili Civilizations: Lamu, Mombasa, Mogadishu, Kilwa
Central & Southern Civilizations: Great Zimbabwe, Kongo, Shona, Xhosa, Zulu**

Readings: *Boundless LibreTexts*, Ch.16, 1 & 6; Jackson Ch. 8
Video: *Africa's Great Civilizations 9k2: The Great Zimbabwe. Lost Kingdoms of Africa ¾*

Oct. 09 COLUMBUS DAY. COLLEGE CLOSED. NO CLASSES.

Oct. 14 COLLEGE CLOSED. NO CLASSES

Oct. 16-23 Africa and the Sciences

Reading: Gloria Emeagwali, "The History of Science in Non-Western Traditions: Africa
Video: Ivan Van Sertima, *Afrikan Sciences. The Ishango Bone: Oldest Mathematical Tool*
IBOGAINE –Rite of Passage (Full Documentary)
Saki Mafundikwa, *Afrikan Alphabets.* Ron Eglash, *African Fractals.*

Oct. 28/30 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Nov. 04/13 Students' Presentations on Gikuyu Case Study: Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mt. Kenya.*

Nov. 18-27 African Women in the History and Development of Civilization

Readings: Dinknesh – A Peek into the history of humankind. Smithsonian
Women Leaders in African History, MET. Dahomey Women Warriors, Smithson
Sylviane Diouf, "Remembering Women of Slavery"
Video: The Legendary Yaa Asantewa and the War of the Golden Stool
Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai

Dec. 02/09 Africa in World Civilization

Readings: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, MET.
The Colonization of Africa, Ehiedu Iweriebor, The Schomburg Center
African Resistance to Colonization, Benjamin Talton, Schomburg Center
Contemporary Africa , Sylvie Kande, The Schomburg Center
Videos: Alex Haley's *Roots I.* Bimbia Slave Port, Cameroon
Mandela the Man. The African Burial Ground in New York.

Dec. 11 Review. Last Day of Class Meetings.

Dec. 18 FINAL EXAMINATION

GRADING

The following is a general guide to determining your final grade:

Attendance & Participation Evaluation _____ 20%

Class Presentation	20%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	30%

A = 92+	A- = 90-91	B+ = 86-89	B = 82-85	B- = 80-81	C+ = 76-79
C = 72-75	C- = 70-71	D+ = 66-69	D = 62-65	D- = 60-61	F = 0-59

GROUND RULES

Accommodating Disabilities: Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. **For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238, phone number, 718-960-8441.**

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC) are two of the tutoring centers on campus. The ACE provides appointment-based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing and academic skills workshops. The SLC provides drop-in tutoring for natural science courses. For more information, **please visit their websites or call 718-960-8175 (ACE) or 718-960-7707 (SLC).**

The Counseling Center (Old Gym Bldg, Rm 114) creates inclusive spaces and fosters open dialogue with students, faculty and staff by providing Counseling, Consultation, Confidential Therapy, Coaching, and Psycho-Educational services. All students are treated with respect and are seen as individuals with unique strength.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of Lehman College and are binding upon all its members. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Included among the most rigorous sanctions for student academic misconduct is a lowered overall course grade, a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, and/or expulsion from the College. **For more information on the academic integrity policy, please refer to the relevant College website.**

Attendance/Absence/Lateness: If you are going to be absent due to an emergency, please email me to let me know but remember it is your responsibility to get the lesson notes and/or assignments from one of your classmates. It is imperative that you **get contact information for at least three (3) of your classmates** to ensure that you keep up to date with course material. Students who are consistently late tend to not do as well as students who arrive on time. So be punctual! **Excessive absence and/or lateness will affect your participation grade.**

Assignments: With the exception of examinations, your assignments must be typed double spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font, contain one-inch margins, and be free of spelling and grammatical errors. **Assignments are due at the start of class on their due date.**

Blackboard is an excellent course tool that we will be using primarily for announcements, assignments, documents, links, and discussion boards. To have access to Blackboard, you need to activate your Lehman

College e-address immediately at the IT Center located in the plaza level of Carman Hall or call # 718 960 1111.

Cell Phones et al: Please turn your cell phones on **silent** before class starts. Everyone can hear your phone on vibrate! Please **do not answer your phone and do not text during class**. If you must use your phone because of an emergency, discreetly and politely walk out to the hall. **Excessive attention to your phone during class will affect your participation grade.**