

History 207 03
North and East Africa through the Middle Ages
Fall Semester, 2017
MHRA 1214, 11:00-12:15 TR

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Course Description:

This course will examine the cultural, religious, and political developments of a world region that underwent significant changes from the origin of human history through the fourteenth century. Influenced by dynamic exchange networks spanning the Sahara Desert, the Mediterranean and Red Seas, the Nile River, and the Indian Ocean, several prevailing civilizations arose in North and East Africa. The course will examine these civilizations as well as the impact of outside influences such as the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans. The class will also study the influence of religions, most notably Islam and Christianity, on the political and cultural transitions of North and East Africa.

Secondary Source Reading:

This course requires reading from a broad range of scholarship. I have created a reading list (which will be available on Canvas). The works that this course will draw from are listed below:

Shillington, Kevin, *History of Africa*, Palgrave, 2012
Mathisen, Ralph W., *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*, Oxford, 2015
Abulafia, David, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*, Oxford, 2011
Andreu, Guillemette, *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids*, Cornell, 1997
Redford, Donald, *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience in Ancient Egypt*, Johns Hopkins, 2006
Naylor, Philip C., *North Africa: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, U. Texas Press, 2010
Abun-Nasr, Jamil, *A History of the Maghrib*, Cambridge, 1971
Burnstein, Stanley, *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum*, Marcus Wiener, 2010
Gearon, Eamonn, *The Sahara, A Cultural History*, Oxford, 2011
Wenke, Robert J., *The Ancient Egyptian State*, Cambridge, 2009

Primary Source Reading:

During the semester I will direct primary source evaluation exercises. Primary sources will either be handed out in class or posted to Canvas.

Class Objectives: The UNCG department of history has composed a list of 4 key learning goals for history majors. While some of you are not history majors, these goals are still important in establishing guidelines for how we approach the subjects. The department guidelines are as follows:

1. Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods. [Historical Comprehension]
2. Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Analysis]
3. Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
4. Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]

This course fulfills the following student learning outcomes:

General Education Category Title: Historical Perspectives (GHP)

Category Description:

Students use an historical approach to a specific region and period to explore the context of events (social structure, economics, political systems, culture, or beliefs), evaluate evidence and divergent interpretations, and communicate historical ideas in writing.

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

General Education Historical Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

General Education Category Title: Global Perspectives (GL)

Marker Description:

In a course in any subject, students focus on the interconnections among regions of the world, interpret and evaluate information on diverse ecologies, human societies, artistic achievements, or political systems, and gain sensitivity to cultural differences on a global scale.

Current Student Learning Outcomes, for period 2012-2016:

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

General Education Global Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures.
2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on at least one culture, nation, or sub-nationality beyond Great Britain and North America).
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

General Education Marker Title: Global Non-Western Perspectives (GN)

Marker Description:

In a course in any subject, students focus on the interconnections among regions of the world other than North America, Great Britain, and continental Europe, interpret and evaluate information on diverse ecologies, human societies, artistic achievements, or political systems, and gain sensitivity to cultural differences on a global scale.

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

General Education Global Non-Western Perspectives Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures.
2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world. (Must include substantial focus on cultures, nations or sub-nationalities in the Caribbean, Latin America, Middle East/North Africa, Asia, Africa, Pacific Islands, or indigenous peoples around the world).
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

Academic Integrity: The student must not misrepresent work that is not their own. This is called plagiarism. Any student practicing plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs for further action, and receive a failing grade in this class. It is very important to me to hear your own interpretation of the material in your own words. If you strive toward this goal, consistently attend class, study for tests and quizzes, and participate thoughtfully in discussion you will do well in the course. For more information on academic integrity see: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete>.

Canvas:

We will be using Canvas for assignments, announcements, and email communication. It will help to become familiar with it as soon as possible. I will post an active syllabus through Canvas that may change through the course of the semester. Keep a hard copy with your notes and refer to the online copy as needed. Supplementary reading material will also be posted on Canvas.

All reading material for this course will be located in the **Files** section of Canvas including secondary texts, primary sources, and any other related material.

CLASS POLICIES:

As your instructor I hope to effectively guide you through this material, but a few rules are necessary to ensure that this process is as enriching and productive as possible.

Attendance: It is very important that you attend every class session. Absences will affect your final grade. **More than five unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.** Habitual lateness will also be reflected in your final grade. Try to be prompt in getting to class. If there is a problem getting to class on time please let me know as far in advance as possible.

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off at all times. If I **SEE** a cell phone it will result in an unexcused absence for the day. **The use of any electronic devices in this class is prohibited.**

All course requirements must be completed to receive a passing grade for the class. Students should keep copies of all graded assignments until the end of the semester.

Assignments are expected to be handed in on their assigned due date; if legitimate circumstances arise (such as an illness) it is your responsibility to contact me. Unexcused late work will be penalized accordingly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assigned Reading and Notes: History requires a great deal of reading. The best strategy for this is to allow at least a couple of hours a day for reading. The quizzes and discussions in this class are designed to assess your understanding and analysis of the material. Taking notes while reading is a very effective way to focus on what can sometimes be dense or complicated subjects. The more you understand the progression and cause of events by careful reading, the easier the other assignments will be.

Each week there will either be an **open notes quiz, an open note discussion, or an in-class primary source exercise**, based on the reading and lecture from the previous week. All of these activities will be counted toward your final assignment grade. The **best** results will come from those who have taken the time to write notes as they read and attend lecture. You will need a **notebook and a reliable writing utensil/s every class. *****Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted.*******

Although many of these assignments will be handed in in class, there may be a need to upload assignments to Canvas. For information about turning in assignments on Canvas refer to: <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212/1/54353?data-resolve-url=true&data-manual-id=4212>

Exams: There will be two exams during the session, a mid-term and a final.

Receiving Grades: Grades for quizzes, assignments, and exams can be viewed on Canvas as the semester progresses. This will also allow for you to track your overall percentage. Remember that some assignments are weighed less than others so the cumulative percentage may not reflect your progress with total accuracy until the end of the semester. See me during office hours for any questions about your progress in the class.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Attendance/Participation 25%
Assignments 25%
Midterm 25%
Final 25%

Week 1: 8/14-8/18

Introduction: syllabus review

Critical thinking exercise

Week 2: 8/21-8/25

African Pre-history

Introduction to Egypt

Readings: Chapter 1, Shillington, *History of Africa*; Chapter 3, Mathisen, *Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations*

Week 3: 8/28-9/1

Egypt continued

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 8/29

Readings: Wenke, "Introduction to the Egyptians and their County; Andreu, "Pharaoh's Subjects, "Public Works," "A People of Believers."

Week 4: 9/4-9/8

The Nubians/Kush and Meroe

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 9/5

Readings: Redford, "Nubia: Egypt's Primary Sphere of Influence;" "Plotting in Their Valleys: Unruly Tribesmen."

Week 5: 9/11-9/15

The Nubians/Kush and Meroe continued

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 9/12

Readings, "The Nubians: Ancient People of the Nile;" Burnstein, "Kush and its Neighbors."

Week 6: 9/18-2/22

Phoenicians and Early Trans-Saharan Trade

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 9/19

Readings: Abulafia, "The Purple Traders;" Shillington, "The Early Trans-Saharan Trade."

Week 7: 9/25-9/29

North Africa in the Graeco-Roman Period/Christianity in N. Africa

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 9/26

Readings: Shillington, "North Africa in the Graeco-Roman Period;" Abulafia, "Lighthouse of the Mediterranean," Naylor, "Rome and North Africa."

Week 8: 10/2-10/6

Review

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 10/3

Mid-term Exam: Thursday, 10/5

Week 9: 10/9-10/13

Fall Break

Week 10: 10/16-10/20

The Origins and Rise of Aksum, The Aksum Empire

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 10/17

Readings: Shillington, “The Origin and Rise of Aksum;” Henze, “The Aksumite Empire.”

Week 11: 10/23-10/27

The Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia

Film: Gates

Readings: Shillington, Chapter 6

Week 12: 10/30-11/3

Berbers and the Trans-Saharan Trade

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 10/31

Readings: Shillington, Chapter 6; Austen, “Caravan Commerce and African Economies.”

Week 13: 11/6-11/10

Arab Invasions

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 11/7

Readings: Abun-Nasr, “The Arab Invasions of the Nile valley and the Magrib,” and “The Establishment of Arab Rule in the Magrib.”

Week 14: 11/13-11/17

Muslim States of North Africa

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 11/14

Readings: Abun-Nasr, “The Almoravids,” Shillington, Chapter 7, to pg. 100.

Week 15: 11/20-11/24

Muslim States continued

Quiz/discussion/source eval, 11/21

Thanksgiving

Week 16: 11/27-12/1

Film: Gates

Exam Review

