

New York University/Morse Academic Plan

WORLD CULTURES/AFRICA

V55.0505

Summer 2004

**Richard Hull, Professor
Marc Goulding, Preceptor**

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Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 5:00-5:30 P.M.

Course Objectives

Welcome to the beginning of a vicarious journey into Africa! This summer we will explore a range of themes, from the dawn of humanity and civilization to the contemporary era. Our journey will extend from the Nile and Niger River valleys to the Congo basin and southwards to the broad savanna of central Africa. We will also explore the Swahili civilization of the east coast. This is a multi-disciplinary course, drawing upon the research of archeologists, anthropologists, historians, political scientists, novelists, and art historians. We will examine varieties of governance, the construction of cities and the art and architecture of key cultures. We will also investigate the nature and dynamic of ethnic and gender relations. These currents will be woven into the fabric of three periods of African history: the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. It is hoped that by the semester's end you will have a clear understanding and appreciation of the historical roots of key problems and challenges facing Africa and its peoples as they move into the 21st century. You will develop skills in critical analysis and you will also deepen your knowledge of the role Africa has played in the main currents of global history since Classical Antiquity. It should be understood that the course is not all-inclusive. Africa is too large and the semester is too short to cover everything. Instead we shall focus on a few representative communities and cultures as case studies.

Course Structure

Each lecture period will open with a film that poses a set of issues or questions that will be followed by a formal lecture by Professor Hull. The lecture will attempt to elaborate on the film and to introduce new material that amplifies the themes in the film. The final portion of the lecture period will consist of Q & A. The weekly recitations, led by Marc Goulding, our preceptor and a seasoned graduate student of African studies, will discuss issues raised in the required readings. Occasionally, there will be a short film that addresses a specific issue. Recitation discussions will be lively and students are expected to participate actively.

Course Requirements

Students will take two map quizzes at the early stages of the semester to help familiarize themselves with the countries and regions of Africa that the course lectures/discussions will focus on. Students will also be expected to pay at least one visit to the African art collections at either the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Manhattan or the Brooklyn Museum. You will write a brief 500-word response paper on your experience. There will also be two essay examinations, one at mid-term and the other at the semester's end. In assessing your final course grade, we will count the examinations equally at 40% each and your recitation participation at 20%. Students will have an opportunity to participate in the construction of the examinations.

Attendance in all the lectures and weekly recitations is mandatory. Any expected absence must be reported to either Prof. Hull or Mr. Goulding. You will be penalized for more than two unreported absences. Any absence from the mid-term without a medical excuse could result in the grade of 'F' for the exam. This is a very short semester with much to cover. It is therefore imperative that you do the readings when indicated on the syllabus. Falling behind can place you at a considerable disadvantage.

Required Readings

Okot p'Bitek. Song of Lawino/Song of Ocol.

Joseph Conrad. Heart of Darkness.

Peter Garlake. Early Art and Architecture of Africa.

Philip Gourevitch. We Wish to Inform You.

Bamba Suso & Banna Kanute. Sunjata.

Donald R. Wright. The World and a Very Small Place in Africa.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

May 17: Introduction: The Landscapes: Human and Natural
Wright, Intro + Part I Professor's slides on Africa from fieldtrips

May 19: Emergence of Humanity and Human Empowerment
Wright. Part II
Film: The Tree of Iron

May 24: Emergence of Civilizations and Cultural Empowerment
Suso & Kanute. Entirety
Film: Keita: Heritage of the Griot

May 26: Early African Culture: Lost Empires and Cities
Garlake. Chapters 3-6
First Map Quiz.
Film: Great Zimbabwe

June 2: Swahili Civilization
Garlake. Chaps. 7-8
Film. Great Great Grandparents Music

June 7: Mid-term Examination
Film. Yeelen
Wright. Part III

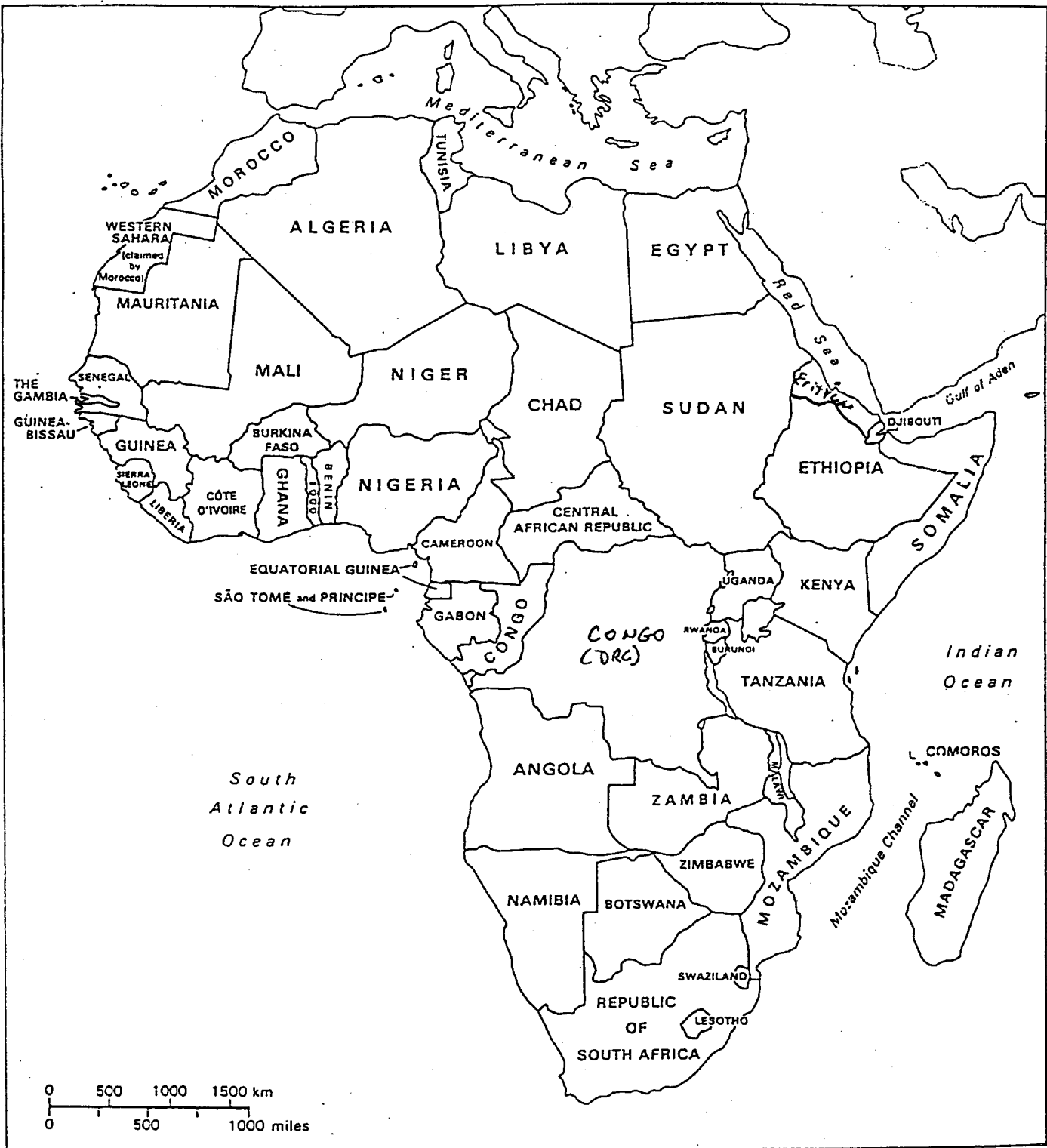
June 9: The Mind of Imperialists and the Myths and Realities of Colonialism
Conrad. Entirety
Film. No Easy Walk: Kenya

June 14: Men, Women and Modernization
P'Bitek. Entirety
Second Map Quiz
Films. Mama Benz and With These Hands.

June 16: Genocide in Rwanda
Gourevitch. Entirety
Film: Rwanda: History of a Genocide.

June 21: Globalization and Sustained development in Africa
Wright. Part IV
Film: Cow Jumped Over the Moon and A continent that Overslept

June 23: Final Examination



Outline Political Map of Contemporary Africa

