ARCLG225
Archaeologies of African Political Traditions

2010-2011 MA Option, 1.0 course unit

Course Co-ordinators:

Dr. Kevin C. MacDonald
room 114  tel. 0207679-1534
e-mail: Kcmacdonald7@aol.com or kevin.macdonald@ucl.ac.uk

Dr. Andrew Reid
Room 111  tel. 0207679-1531
e-mail: a.reid@ucl.ac.uk
Archaeologies of African Political Traditions

Introduction
This course takes as its inception social complexity in Africa and sets out to provide a survey of the diversity of African political traditions from an archaeological perspective. Each session will take a detailed look at a particular society or area, and as a result students will gain a broad understanding of the nature of political traditions across the continent. It is recognized that defining social organization is one of the key goals of archaeological work but that there are significant limitations posed by existing frameworks for exploring social organization in the past. In particular we will explore the relevance of general archaeological theory for understanding past African societies and indeed will consider the significance of these African examples for generating new theoretical perspectives. We have avoided the word “state” in discussion of this course because it is a term loaded with evolutionary preconceptions that we wish to avoid. It will be argued that each African political tradition has unique aspects that cannot be simply or neatly typologised.

Aims
The essential aims of the course are to:
- Familiarise students with current developments in the archaeology and history of African political traditions (states) and their implications for the archaeology of social complexity beyond Africa.
- Make students aware of the basic framework of the later prehistory and history of Sub-Saharan Africa
- Put the interpretation of African later prehistory and historic archaeology in the context of wider theoretical debates within the discipline
- Understand the opportunities and limitations posed by archaeological data for studying ancient settlement landscapes and socio-political systems, including variants ranging from stateless and heterarchical social structures, to systems of warfare and enslavement.

Outcomes
The students will as a result be able to:
- critically assess interpretations of African complex societies and put them into a wider context
- have a general understanding of the Sub-Saharan polities of the Western Sahel, Middle Niger, Great Lakes region, Zimbabwe plateau and the southern Highveld from the second millennium BC up to the colonial era.
- participate in general discussions on African socio-political traditions, their attributes and their archaeological study.
- develop a basic knowledge of the relevant material culture and important sites

Themes that will be explored through the course will include:
- Critical re-assessment of social evolutionary categories
- Archaeological Recognition of Heterarchy versus Hierarchy
- Attribute-based analyses of historical African political, ideological and economic systems
- Archaeologies of slavery/ enslavement
- the economic role of long distance trade and agro-pastoral systems

Class Times: 2-4pm Mondays in Room B13

Classes: Each class will involve either two lectures or a lecture followed by a seminar. The seminars are intended to provide a forum for discussion of issues drawn from preceding lectures.

Individual readings will be assigned one week in advance for each seminar.

Core Texts: Students may wish to purchase the core text for this course:
Beyond Chiefdoms: Pathways to Complexity in Africa (New Directions in Archaeology, Cambridge University Press) edited by Susan Keech McIntosh, available from Amazon for c.£24
Readings & Library Resources: Readings for this course should occupy on average four hours of the students' time each week. Reading lists and essay titles will be given out on the first day of class. Readings are held at the Institute Library, the Science Library (DMS Watson) and the Main UCL Library. A few sources are at the University of London Senate House library or SOAS.

Assessment: Students are to write one essay counting for 40% of the final mark (ca. 2000 words, approximately 8 typewritten double-spaced A4 pages excluding references) and one project paper counting for 60% of their final mark (ca. 3000 words, approximately 12 typewritten double-spaced A4 pages excluding references). Essay titles are provided at the end of this syllabus as well as initial guidance for project papers.

Retaining Copies of Written Work: Remember that all marked essays must be returned to the lecturer within one week of receipt so that they may be available to the external examiner. Please note that it is an Institute requirement that you retain a copy (this can be electronic) of all coursework submitted.

Word-length: Strict new regulations with regard to word-length have been introduced UCL-wide with effect from the 2010-11 session. If your work is found to be between 10% and 20% longer than the official limit you mark will be reduced by 10%, subject to a minimum mark of a minimum pass, assuming that the work merited a pass. If your work is more than 20% over-length, a mark of zero will be recorded. The following should not be included in the word-count: bibliography, appendices, and tables, graphs and illustrations and their captions.

Turnitin Codes: The Turnitin ‘Class ID’ is 202685 and the ‘Class Enrolment Password’ is IoA1011
Further information is given on the IoA website. Turnitin advisors will be available to help you via email: ioa-turnitin@ucl.ac.uk if needed.

Workload: There will be 13 hours of lectures and 7 hours of seminars for this course. Students will be expected to undertake around 100 hours of reading for the course, plus 80 hours preparing for, and producing, the assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of some 200 hours for the course.

Library Resources: In addition to the Library of the Institute of Archaeology, other libraries in the University of London with holdings of particular relevance to this course are the DMS Watson Library (UCL) and the SOAS library.

NEW UCL-WIDE PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK:
· The full allocated mark should be reduced by 5 percentage points for the first working day after the deadline for the submission of the coursework or dissertation.
· The mark will be reduced by a further 10 percentage points if the coursework or dissertation is submitted during the following six calendar days.
· Providing the coursework is submitted before the end of the first week of term 3 for undergraduate courses or by a date during term 3 defined in advance by the relevant Master’s Board of Examiners for postgraduate taught programmes, but had not been submitted within seven days of the deadline for the submission of the coursework, it will be recorded as zero but the assessment would be considered to be complete.
· Where there are extenuating circumstances that have been recognised by the Board of Examiners or its representative, these penalties will not apply until the agreed extension period has been exceeded.
Submission procedures (coversheets and Turnitin, including Class ID and password): Students are required to submit hard copy of all coursework to the course co-ordinators pigeon hole via the Red Essay Box at Reception by the appropriate deadline. The coursework must be stapled to a completed coversheet (available from the web, from outside Room 411A or from the library). Please note that new, stringent penalties for late submission have been introduced UCL-wide from 2010-11. Late submission will be penalized in accordance with these regulations unless permission has been granted and an Extension Request Form (ERF) completed. Date-stamping will be via ‘Turnitin’ (see below), so in addition to submitting hard copy, students must also submit their work to Turnitin by the midnight on the day of the deadline. Students who encounter technical problems submitting their work to Turnitin should email the nature of the problem to ioa-turnitin@ucl.ac.uk in advance of the deadline in order that the Turnitin Advisers can notify the Course Co-ordinator that it may be appropriate to waive the late submission penalty. If there is any other unexpected crisis on the submission day, students should telephone or (preferably) e-mail the Course Co-ordinator, and follow this up with a completed ERF. Please see the Coursework Guidelines on the IoA website (or your Degree Handbook) for further details of penalties.

Timescale for return of marked coursework to students: You can expect to receive your marked work within four calendar weeks of the official submission deadline. If you do not receive your work within this period, or a written explanation from the marker, you should notify the IoA’s Academic Administrator, Judy Medrington.

Citing of sources: Coursework should be expressed in a student’s own words giving the exact source of any ideas, information, diagrams etc. that are taken from the work of others. Any direct quotations from the work of others must be indicated as such by being placed between inverted commas. Plagiarism is regarded as a very serious irregularity which can carry very heavy penalties. It is your responsibility to read and abide by the requirements for presentation, referencing and avoidance of plagiarism to be found in the IoA ‘Coursework Guidelines’ on the IoA website.

Dyslexia: If you have dyslexia or any other disability, please make your lecturers aware of this. Please discuss with your lecturers whether there is any way in which they can help you. Students with dyslexia are reminded to indicate this on each piece of coursework.

Feedback: In trying to make this course as effective as possible, we welcome feedback from students. All students are asked to give their views on the course in an anonymous questionnaire which will be circulated at one of the last sessions of the course. These questionnaires are taken seriously and help the Course Co-ordinator to develop the course. The summarised responses are considered by the Institute’s Staff-Student Consultative Committee, Teaching Committee, and by the Faculty Teaching Committee. If students are concerned about any aspect of this course we hope they will feel able to talk to the Course Co-ordinator, but if they feel this is not appropriate, they should consult their Personal Tutor, the Academic Administrator (Judy Medrington), or the Chair of Teaching Committee (Dr. Mark Lake).

Attendance: A minimum of 70% attendance is required at both lectures and seminars. An attendance sheet will be passed around at each class meeting. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the lecturer by email. Departments are required to report each student’s attendance to UCL Registry at frequent intervals throughout each term.

Information for intercollegiate and interdepartmental students: Students enrolled in Departments outside the Institute should collect hard copy of the Institute’s coursework guidelines from Judy Medrington’s office.
ARCLG225
Archaeologies of African Political Traditions

Syllabus

Lectures/ Seminars
Note: MacDonald will lecture weeks 1-6, Reid will lecture in weeks 7-10

10/1 Introduction to the Course
African Political Traditions

17/1 Beginnings: From Tumuli and Enclosures through the Tichitt Tradition
Mande Political Tradition

24/1 Middle Niger Urbanism: a self-organising landscape?
Seminar: Interpreting Compounds and Settlement Clusters

31/1 What, if anything, was the Empire of Ghana?
Seminar: Written History, Oral Tradition and Archaeology

7/2 Towards an Archaeology of the Empire of Mali
Seminar: Sunjata as King Arthur?

**Reading Week**

21/2 Segou, Slavery and Historical Archaeology
Seminar: The Archaeology of Slavery

28/2 research contexts in eastern and southern Africa

7/3 Cattle and Power: in Southern Africa

10/3 The Zimbabwe Tradition

17/3 Nkore, Buganda and the Great Lakes Region
Reading List (Starred Readings are especially recommended)

**Introduction to African Political Traditions**


Beginnings: From Tumuli and Enclosures through the Tichitt Tradition

**Tumuli and Enclosures**


**The Tichitt Tradition**


**Mande Political Tradition**


**Middle Niger Urbanism: a self-organising landscape?**


*Other ways of looking at clustering:*


**What, if anything, was the Empire of Ghana?**

Sources relevant to both Ghana and Mali:

Additional source on oral history:

Towards an Archaeology of the Empire of Mali

Segou, Slavery and Historical Archaeology

Essay Titles
Essays are due 2\textsuperscript{nd} March to K.C. MacDonald or Andrew Reid:

1. Using at least three case studies, explore the interface of history and archaeology in interpreting African political traditions. In what ways might this interface be improved?

2. Evaluate the comparative utility of new approaches to social complexity in Africa (e.g. McIntosh 1999) versus the social evolutionary perspective (e.g. Earle 1997). Use specific examples from historic/archaeological cases.

3. Archaeologists have used spatial evidence to interpret ‘power’ in the African intra- and inter-site landscape since the 1970s? How reliable do you believe such social reconstructions to be?

4. Consider what is meant by the term ‘segmentary’ in the Anthropological literature. To what extent are lineages and age-sets prime arbiters of political power in Africa?

About the Project Paper
In relatively few instances has a critical mass of archaeological literature built up on trying to explain the socio-political characteristics of African polities. We present below five examples, with key readings. Students will pick one of these options and fully digest the associated key readings, before writing a critical assessment of the viability of these models based upon their learning in this course.

1. R.J. & S.K. McIntosh The Inland Niger Delta

2. Augustin Holl et al. Dhar Tichitt
3. Jan Vansina Central African Forests

4. Thomas Huffman ‘Central Cattle Pattern’

5. Thomas Huffman ‘Zimbabwe Culture Pattern’