ARCL 0048
The History, Ethnography, and Archaeology of African States

2019
Year 2/3 Option, 15 credits

Fridays 2 to 4pm, room 412

Module Co-ordinator:
Prof Kevin C. MacDonald
kevin.macdonald@ucl.ac.uk

Teaching Assistant:
Dr Sirio Canós-Donnay
s.canos@ucl.ac.uk
Room 114
This seminar module aims to critically investigate the structure of historical African states. While lectures will concentrate on West Africa, student projects and discussion will cover the whole of the continent. Conclusions derived from readings and discussions will then be used to assess the validity of traditional models used to conceptualise the historical and prehistoric complex societies of Africa. This module will require a good deal of independent reading and original research, and will involve all participants in presentations & discussions.

**week 1 (11 January)**
1. Introduction, Conceptual Background, Choice of Research Topics
2. Lecture: Deep Time Complexity beyond Egypt: ‘Mande’ West Africa to AD 1100

**week 2 (18 January)**
3. Lecture: Social Evolution and the Understanding of Complex Societies
4. Lecture: Oral History & Ethnography: the ‘Historical Approach’ to African Statehood

**week 3 (25 January)**
5. Lecture: City-centric Approaches to Social Complexity along the Middle Niger
6. Lecture: An Ethnoarchaeology of Segou: the State-Created Landscape (Mali)

**week 4 (1 February)**
7. Lecture: Mande Political Traditions: Kafu and Fanga
8. Lecture: Towards an Archaeology of the Empire of Mali

**week 5 (8 February)**
9-10. Presentations on Initial Readings & Discussion [MacDonald & Canós-Donnay]

** **reading week**

**week 6 (22 February)**
11. Lecture: At the Periphery of the Great Sahelian Empires [Canós-Donnay]

**week 7 (1 March)**
13. Lecture: Ethnicity and Statehood

**week 8 (8 March)**
15-16. Presentations on Further Readings & Discussion [Canós-Donnay]

**week 9 (15 March)**
17-18. Discussion & Practical: What should African Towns & States look like archaeologically?

**week 10 (22 March)**
19-20. Presentations on Final Research Findings [MacDonald & Canós-Donnay]
Class: Fridays 2-4pm, rm. 412

General Concepts Behind the Course: This course is a coordinated attempt at group research on common themes:

- Are archaeological models for African complex societies consistent with known historical examples?
- How can we best research the plethora of social forms known to have existed historically in Africa?
- Can we formulate archaeological criteria to detect different types of complex socio-political organisation in Africa?

As class members each work on the background to their own chosen ‘state’, the module coordinator will provide a series of lectures on aspects of his own research into Mande political traditions. It is hoped that these lectures will provide a model for the sorts of issues students should be examining with their own projects.

The class will begin by undertaking assigned readings and writing reports on them. Each student will then research more complete bibliographies on their study regions and report to the seminar group on their findings and changing perspectives as we go along. By the end, it is hoped that we will reach some consensus as to how we should go about investigating prehistoric and historic African complex societies.

Readings & Library Resources: Readings for this course should occupy on average four hours of the students' time each week. Most periodical sources are available via the UCL internet (the library website or via Jstor). Books are held at the Institute Library, the Science Library (DMS Watson) and the Main UCL Library. Some sources are only held at SOAS.

Assignments: All participants are to write two ‘reading reports’ of 950-1050 words each. Each reading report will critically evaluate the utility of one major source for informing historical archaeological research on the participant’s chosen study region. Special attention should be paid in these reviews to flagging issues of relevance to the aims of the course (e.g. hierarchy vs. heterarchy, spatial organisation of states, presence or absence of material expressions of status, slavery, etc...). Relevant text options are given in the reading list. The starred option should be done in the first instance, unless it is temporarily unavailable. The two reading reports are to be presented in the class meetings of 8th February and 8th March respectively. The Reading Reports will be due for submission on the Friday of the following weeks: the 15th February and the 15th March. Combined, they will count for 40% of the final mark.

Final Report: A 2850-3150 word (ca.12 page) final report on the student’s research region will count for 60% of the final mark. This report will contain an exposition of the economic, spatial and socio-political organisation of the state chosen, and an evaluation of how the state’s organisational system might (or might not) be visible archaeologically. Awareness of the literature on social complexity in Africa (i.e. the lecture reading list) should also be
demonstrated. It is expected that each student will use library resources to significantly enlarge the brief bibliography for their state presented in this syllabus. The final report is due by Friday, 26th April.

**Word-length:** Strict new regulations with regard to word-length have been introduced UCL-wide. Students must adhere to word limits on assessments; they are intended to help ensure equality of workloads between courses as well as to encourage the useful transferable skills of clearly structured arguments and succinct writing. UCL regulations impose penalties on assessed work that exceeds the prescribed word limit, so pay careful attention to the word limits stipulated for each assessment.

The Turnitin 'Class ID' is 3884506 and the 'Class Enrolment Password' is IoA1819. 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.

**Return of Coursework:** The Reading Reports will be available for collection with first mark by 1st March (or in class on the 7th March) and 21st March (in class). The marked final report will be available for inspection from May 20th.

See further IoA Policy Guidance at the end of this document.
ARCL 0048. History, Ethnography, and Archaeology of African States

LECTURE READING LIST
*starred* readings are ‘essential’

Core Text *Everyone should read!*

Readings for Week 1 (re. Deep Time Traditions)

Before Tichitt


Tichitt


Ghana/Wagadu


Readings for Week 2 (re. Social Evolution, Historical & Ethnographic approaches)

**General**


**Africa**


**Readings for Week 3 (re. the Middle Niger)**


**Further Readings for Week 3 (re. Segou)**


**Readings for Week 4 (re. Mande Political Traditions: Kafu & Fanga)**


**Readings for Week 4 (re. Empire of Mali)**


Readings for Week 6 (re. the Periphery of Empires)

Kaabu


Other Senegambian states


Readings for Week 6 (re. External Sources on African States)

Essential Reading


Further reading

Classical sources


China

Chang, K.S. 1971. ‘Ming maritime enterprise and China’s knowledge of Africa’ Terra Incognitae 3:33-44.

Arabic Sources


European sources


Readings for Week 7 (re. Ethnicity)

Readings for Week 7 (re. Igbo Political Tradition)


REGIONAL OPTIONS:

(One option per student. For reading reports do a starred reading first, then choose any other reading for the second report)

1) Asante

2) The Yoruba (Oyo)

3) Benin (Edo)
4) Dahomey

For Dahomey you may also have a look at this Explorer account by Sir Richard Burton (very much ‘of its time’):


5) Jukun

6) Nupe (a.k.a. Bida)

7) The Sokoto Caliphate


8) **Kongo**


9) **Bunyoro**


10) **Zulu - Ndebele [it is possible to split this topic]**


11) The Alur and the ‘Segmentary State’


12) Buganda


*For Buganda you may also have a look at the relevant sections in the journals of these early European explorers:*  


13) The Kingdoms of Western Cameroon


*Warnier, J-P. 2012. Cameroon Grassfields Civilization. Bamenda: Langaa. (worth purchasing this one via Amazon for £20 if you are doing this subject)

14) The Polities of the Niger Coastal Delta 1600-1890s (e.g. Efik Calabar, Aro Confederacy)


15) Mende/ Temne (Sierra Leone)


16) Dagaba/Wala (Northern Ghana)


*If you are a fluent French reader other options are available*
APPENDIX A: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2018-19 (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY)

This appendix provides a short précis of policies and procedures relating to modules. It is not a substitute for the full documentation, with which all students should become familiar. For full information on Institute policies and procedures, see the IoA Student Administration section of Moodle:
https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/module/view.php?id=40867

For UCL policies and procedures, see the Academic Regulations and the UCL Academic Manual:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-regulations; http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/

GENERAL MATTERS

ATTENDANCE: A register will be taken at each class. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the lecturer by email.

DYSLEXIA: If you have dyslexia or any other disability, please discuss with your lecturers whether there is any way in which they can help you. Students with dyslexia should indicate it on each coursework cover sheet.

COURSEWORK

LATE SUBMISSION: Late submission will be penalized in accordance with current UCL regulations, unless formal permission for late submission has been granted.

The UCL penalties are as follows:

- The marks for coursework received up to two working days after the published date and time will incur a 10 percentage point deduction in marks (but no lower than the pass mark).
- The marks for coursework received more than two working days and up to five working days after the published date and time will receive no more than the pass mark (40% for UG modules, 50% for PGT modules).
- Work submitted more than five working days after the published date and time, but before the second week of the third term will receive a mark of zero but will be considered complete.

GRANTING OF EXTENSIONS: Please note that there are strict UCL-wide regulations with regard to the granting of extensions for coursework. You are reminded that Module Coordinators are not permitted to grant extensions. All requests for extensions must be submitted on a the appropriate UCL form, together with supporting documentation, via Judy Medrington’s office and will then be referred on for consideration. Please be aware that the grounds that are acceptable are limited. Those with long-term difficulties should contact UCL Student Disability Services to make special arrangements. Please see the IoA website for further information.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/

RETURN OF COURSEWORK AND RESUBMISSION: You should receive your marked coursework within one month of the submission deadline. If you do not receive your work within this period, or a written explanation, notify the Academic Administrator. When your marked essay is returned to you, return it to the Module Co-ordinator within two weeks. You must retain a copy of all coursework submitted.

CITING OF SOURCES and AVOIDING PLAGIARISM: Coursework must be expressed in your own words, citing the exact source (author, date and page number; website address if applicable) of any ideas, information, diagrams, etc., that are taken from the work of others. This applies to all media (books, articles, websites, images, figures, etc.). Any direct quotations from the work of others must be indicated as such by being placed between quotation marks. Plagiarism is a very serious irregularity, which can carry heavy penalties. It is your responsibility to abide by requirements for presentation, referencing and avoidance of plagiarism. Make sure you understand definitions of plagiarism and the procedures and penalties as detailed in UCL regulations:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism

RESOURCES

MOODLE: Please ensure you are signed up to the module on Moodle. For help with Moodle, please contact Charlotte Frearson (c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk)