



Dear Students

Welcome to the *African Civilizations Up to 1870* online Summer 2025 eight-week course that commences on June 2nd and ends on July 25th. If you are going away this summer, ensure you have internet access. I will not accept the excuse that I did not have internet access. After all, this is an online course. The course is set up on Brightspace, and the syllabus, which is a comprehensive guide to the course, will provide more details of the course layout and other important information. It's crucial that you read it in its entirety to understand the course requirements and expectations.

Often, "Africa" conjures up certain predictable, negative images: poverty, disease, tribalism, warfare, and corruption. While much attention is paid to Africa's problems, the World rarely gets a sense of how African societies and their issues have developed and changed. This course offers a unique perspective, challenging the popular belief of the "primitive" and "dark" continent. It explores how ancient African communities developed and interacted with others, providing a continental overview and understanding of African history beyond the stereotypes.

It is important to remember that no single course can cover more than the tiniest sliver of the complexity and variety of "Africa," the second-largest continent on Earth. However, students completing this course will be able to write about and discuss major themes in early African history. They will also be challenged to engage with the African past in a way that will make them empathetic citizens of the world in the twenty-first century.

There are no assigned textbooks for this course. Short-selected readings, internet articles, PowerPoints accompanied by detailed notes, and documentaries/movies will be posted in the weekly folders. These materials are as important as the required books and will play a key role in class discussions. So, read them and take detailed notes. Because we will be covering a lot of material in a relatively short time, it's very important that you keep up with the material weekly. The weekly folder on the course home page content tab will walk you through the weekly materials and expectations.

The first week will be a course introduction intended to familiarize you with the technological tools we will use, an introduction to the course, and an introduction to everyone in this course. I will post a video introducing myself, and you will be required to introduce yourself to the class by responding to the Discussion tab on Brightspace entitled All About Me. Read the instructions on how to complete this assignment and other assignments for Week 1. The remaining weeks of the course will follow the Week 1 format. Please, read the weekly expectations as we have different assignments in some weeks.

We will use Brightspace Discussion as a forum for class dialogue. Class discussions will be student-led, but I will offer support, guidance, and evaluation. Be sure to regularly reference both syllabi to stay current on your assignment deadlines. For individual writing assignments, we will use Brightspace.

Assignments drop box. All written individual assignments (excluding discussion posts) must be submitted as Word documents to Brightspace Assignments. Assignments are due on the date and time specified on Brightspace and the syllabus.

Some of the issues we will discuss in this course may be controversial. Given this possibility, we must respect each other's needs, values, and views. The class is only successful when we take time to prepare thoughtfully, participate in the discussion, and create conditions for others to participate. Disagreements and discussions are important for learning, but we must do so with respect. I reserve the right to remove posts and/or address students individually if I determine such action is necessary.

Sincerely,

Dr. Fungisai Musoni-Chikede,
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