

## History 373: Ecological History of Africa

M/W 1:30pm Denny 311

Professor	Office	Email	Office Hours
Jeremy Ball, Ph.D.	Denny 019	ballj@dickinson.edu	Thursday 1-4pm

### Course Overview

This course provides an introduction to the ecological history of Africa. We will focus in some detail on demography, the domestication of crops and animals, climate, the spread of New World crops (maize, cassava, cocoa), and disease environments from the earliest times to the present. Central to our study will be the idea that Africa's landscapes are the product of human action. Therefore, we will examine case studies of how people have interacted with their environments. African ecology has long been affected indirectly by decisions made at a global scale. Thus we will explore Africa's engagement with imperialism and colonization and the global economy in the twentieth century. The course ends with an examination of contemporary tensions between conservation and economic development.

### Required Books

Akyeampong, Emmanuel Kwaku, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon: An Eco-social History of the Anlo of Southeastern Ghana c 1850 to Recent Times*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2001.

Carney, Judith A., *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Freund, Bill. *The African City: A History*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Iiffe, John, *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006.

McCann, James C., *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land: An Environmental History of Africa, 1800-1990*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999.

### Film & Multimedia

*AIDS Warrior*

*Lagos/Koolhaas*

*Darwin's Nightmare*

- Dickinson's Africana Studies Subject Guide:

<http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/Subject%20Guides/Africana%20Studies/>

- The African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania: [www.africa.upenn.edu/](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/)

- EarthTrends: <http://earthtrends.wri.org/>

- The Water Page: <http://www.africanwater.org/>

- Africa Facts

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2008/sep/03/interactive.map.africa>

## Writing Assignments

### Book Reviews (4-5 pages)

You will write a book review either for Judith Carney, *Black Rice* or Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon*. You will summarize the book, and evaluate its arguments, evidence, and conclusions. A good book review explains what a book is about, and then analyzes it to tell us what the reader thought of it. Its subject is the book itself, not just the history the book was written about.

*Book Review for Carney due electronically on Friday 6 February.*

*Book Review for Akyeampong due electronically on Friday 20 February.*

### Research Essay (15-20 pages)

Please choose one of the following options, or propose your own research topic to Professor Ball before March 20.

- a. Assess the changing role of indigenous rights in the creation of one or more African national parks.
- b. Assess the impact of a disease on the demography and economy of a particular African region.
- c. Write the history of an African environmental movement.
- d. Assess the ecological impact of an African export crop or mineral.

Research essay outline and annotated bibliography to your colleagues on **April 20**. For more on annotated bibliography consult:

<http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/CitingRes/ChicAnnotated.html>

## **RESEARCH ESSAY DUE BEFORE 2PM TUESDAY 12 MAY**

### Podcast

Guidelines will be distributed. In groups of 3-4 you will create a Podcast explaining the challenges facing an African watershed and what mechanisms, if any, have been created to manage the watershed.

Podcast script due: **April 6** in class.

Podcast due: **April 8** in class.

### Weekly Question(s) and/or Quiz

Each Wednesday you will either submit responses to weekly questions or write a quiz.

### **Grading**

All graded work received on time will be returned as promptly as possible. Late work will receive a reduced grade (1/3 of a letter grade a day) unless you make arrangements with me well in advance. Class attendance and participation in discussion are worth ten percent of your final grade, and absences and/or lack of preparation will be penalized. For information about how to cite sources using Chicago format consult Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*; or [http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04\\_c10\\_s1.html](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c10_s1.html)

Book Review	20%
Research Essay	40%

Questions/Quiz/Discussion 20%  
Group Podcast 20%

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

In compliance with the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office on the first floor of Biddle House (contact ext. 1080 or [waybranj@dickinson.edu](mailto:waybranj@dickinson.edu)) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to do their own work. Work submitted in fulfillment of academic assignments and provided on examinations is expected to be original, by the student submitting it, and for the course. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of the professor. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Violations of the standards include cheating and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty may result in an “F” in the course or other additional disciplinary actions. For clarification and details of the official College statement on cheating and plagiarism, please see the Dickinson Writing Program’s website:

[www.dickinson.edu/departments/writing/plagiarism.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/writing/plagiarism.html)

## **Class Schedule**

### **Week 1** Introduction

1/19 Introduction

Lecture: “The frontiersmen of humankind”

The National Geographic map below offers a useful study guide:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0509/feature1/map.html>

1/21

- McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land*, pp. 1-48.
- Freund, *The African City*, pp. 1-33.

### **Map Quiz**

### **Week 2** Domesticating food crops

1/26

*Electronic Reserve* [available on Blackboard]

- Merrick Posnansky, “Anatomy of a Continent.”
- Roland Portères “Primary Cradles of Agriculture in the African Continent.”
- McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land*, pp. 109-140.

1/28

*Electronic Reserve*

- Emmanuel Kreike, “Hidden Fruits: A Social Ecology of Fruit Trees in Namibia & Angola 18802-1990s,” in *Social History & African Environments*, pp. 27-42.

**Map Quiz (re-take)**

**Week 3** West African Rice

2/2

- Carney, *Black Rice*, Chps. 1-3.

2/4

- Carney, *Black Rice*, Chps. 4-6.

**2/6**

**Book Review for Carney due Friday February 6 by 5pm.**

**Week 4** Cosmology and Cultural Understandings of the Environment

2/9

*Electronic Reserve*

- Elisabeth Croll and David Parkin, “Cultural understandings of the environment,” pp. 11-35.
- Tim Ingold, “Culture and the Perception of the Environment,” pp. 39-56.
- *National Geographic Magazine* website – look up the 2005 issue that featured Africa, and browse the representations of the environment. Come ready to talk about what you see. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0509/feature1/zoomify/>

2/11

- Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon*, Chpts. 1-3.

**Weekly Quiz**

**Week 5**

2/16

- Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon*, Chpts. 4-6.

Film: *Trokosi: Wife of the Gods*

2/18

- Akyeampong, *Between the Sea & the Lagoon*, Chpts. 7-8.

Film: *Trokosi: Wife of the Gods*

**2/20**

**Book Review for Akyeampong due Friday February 20 by 5pm.**

**Week 6** Challenging Received Wisdom in Africa

2/23 Deforestation

- McCann, “A Tale of Two Forests: Narratives of Deforestation in Ethiopia, 1840-1996,” in *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land*, pp. 79-107.

*Electronic Reserve*

- James Fairhead & Melissa Leach, “Rethinking the Forest-Savanna Mosaic,” in *The Lie*

*of the Land*, pp. 105-121.

2/25 Desertification

- McCann, *Green Land, Brown Land, Black Land*, pp. 55-78.

*Electronic Reserve*

- Jeremy Swift, "Desertification: Narratives, Winners & Losers," in *The Lie of the Land*, pp. 73-90.

**Weekly Questions**

**Week 7** Disease in African History

3/2

Lecture "Disease: An Overview"

*Electronic Reserve*

- K. David Patterson and Gerald W. Hartwig, "The Disease Factor: An Introductory Overview," pp. 1-24.
- Jeffrey Sachs, "The Voiceless Dying: Africa and Disease," in Sachs, *The End of Poverty Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005, pp.188-209.

3/4 HIV/AIDS

Iiffe, *The African AIDS Epidemic*, pp. 1-64

**Film:** *AIDS Warrior*

**Week 8**

SPRING BREAK

**Week 9**

3/16

**Podcast Training with Brenda Landis. Meet in Bosler Microroom (in the basement) @ 1:30.**

3/18 HIV/AIDS

Iiffe, *The African AIDS Epidemic*, pp. 65-159

**Film:** *AIDS Warrior*

**Week 10** Colonialism and Urbanization

3/23

Lecture: "Colonial change, 1918-1960"

- Freund, *The African City*, pp. 65-106.

3/25 Globalization and the African City

- Freund, *The African City*, pp. 170-197.

**Film:** *Lagos/Koolhaas*

**Week 11**

3/30 Wildlife, People, & Conservation

*Electronic Reserve*

- Jane Carruthers, "Nationhood and national parks: comparative examples from the post imperial experience," in *Ecology and empire: environmental history of settler societies*. Edited by Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, pp. 125-138.
- Beinart and Coates, "Nature reserves and national parks: revaluing and renaturing the wild," in *Environment and history: the taming of nature in the USA and South Africa*. New York: Routledge, 1995, pp. 72-91.

4/1

*Electronic Reserve*

- Jane Carruthers, "Past & Future Landscape Ideology: The Kalahari Gemsbok National Park," in *Social History & African Environments*, pp. 255-266.
- Terence Ranger, "Whose Heritage? The Case of the Matobo National Park," 217-249.

Saturday April 4, 10am, Weiss 235

Extra Credit: *Africana Studies Conference "Teaching the African Slave Trade,"*  
Marcus Rediker Keynote.

<http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/africana/>

**Week 12** Indigenous Rights

4/6 Lecture "The Legal Basis for Indigenous Land and Intellectual Property Rights"

*Electronic Reserve*

- "San take Botswana govt to court," *Mail & Guardian*, 22 June 2004.
- Moyiga Nduru, "San community is 'fast losing hope'," *Mail & Guardian*, 9 March 2005.

**Podcast scripts due in class**

4/8

**Podcast Presentations to class**

**Week 13** Ecological Explanations for Conflict

4/13 Rwanda Case Study

Lecture "The Rwandan Genocide: An Overview"

*Electronic Reserve*

- Jared Diamond, "Malthus in Africa: Rwanda's Genocide," in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, pp. 311-328.

4/15

*Electronic Reserve*

- Newbury, David, "Ecology and the Politics of Genocide: Rwanda 1994." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1999), <http://proquest.ummi.com>
- Valerie Percival and Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Case of Rwanda," in Thomas Homer-Dixon and Jessica Blitt, eds., *Ecoviolence: Links Among Environment, Population, and Security*, pp. 201-222.

**Week 14**

4/20

Lecture: "Africa's Great Lakes"

Distribute your Research Essay Outline and Annotated Bibliography to your colleagues.

**Evening screening of *Darwin's Nightmare***

4/22

Present your Research Essay Outline and Annotated Bibliography to your colleagues.

Be prepared to discuss and make recommendations to your colleagues.

**Week 15**

4/27 Holding Politicians Accountable: The Case of Oil

*Electronic Reserve*

- Ian Gary, *Bottom of the Barrel: Africa's Oil Boom and the Poor*. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services, 2003, pp. 5-24.
- Ken Saro-Wiwa, "A Deadly Ecological War in Which No Blood is Spilled but People Die All the Time," in *Speaking of Earth*, edited by Alon Tal, pp. 180-187.
- Osaghae, "The Ogoni Uprising: Oil Politics, Minority Agitation and the Future of the Nigerian State." *African Affairs* 94 (1995), 325-44.

4/29

Conclusions

**RESEARCH ESSAY DUE BEFORE 2PM TUESDAY 12 MAY**