

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, FALL 2015**

HISTORY 3752: Pre-Colonial Africa

**Instructor:** Dr. Vernal, History Department

**Class Times:** T/TH 2-3:15pm

**Office (Vernal):** Wood Hall 332

**Office Hours:** WED, 10-12 & by appt.

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Photos: Djenne mosque, Dogon villages, Black Pharaohs, Market and Truck Scenes



**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND THEMES**

This course provides a broad historical survey of civilizations in Africa. Rather than cover the entire scope of African history, the course uses case studies from different areas

of the continent to elucidate key themes in the early history of Africa. Some of the major themes we will explore in lecture and discussion include:

- The science and politics of the origins of human life in Africa
- Subsistence systems (hunting and gathering, pastoralism, agriculture)
- The socio-economic and political structure of African indigenous societies
- African state formation, trade, commerce and urbanization
- Slavery and the slave trade
- Nineteenth century revolutions in commerce and politics
- Indigenous systems of belief and world religions (Christianity and Islam) in Africa



Nairobi, Kenya; The Maasai of East Africa

## II. COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is divided between lectures and discussions. The lectures and readings comprise two distinct segments of the course. While the readings complement the broad themes of the lectures, they also have their own organizing themes, which are discussed specifically on the designated days. Please be prepared to be called on randomly—even if you have not raised your hand. The readings are closely integrated with lecture themes and require you to assess the arguments and debates, weigh the evidence and come to a conclusion. A further reason the readings require disciplined, careful attention is because the themes from the readings also appear on your exams

**Prerequisites:** A commitment to disciplined reading and writing

## III. READINGS.

The following books are available from the CO-OP

Author	Title
Christopher Ehret	<i>Civilizations of Africa</i> (Textbook, full text online via UConn)
D. T. Niane	<i>Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali</i>
John Thornton	<i>The Congolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita</i>
Jan Vansina	<i>How Societies are Born</i>
Chinua Achebe	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
James Webb	<i>Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change along the Western Sahel, 1600-1850</i>

**Please check Electronic Course Reserves via HUSKYCT for the Sahlins and Urbanization readings and hand-outs and any other course items that you have not purchased**

#### **IV. CLASS POLICIES**

**Class Conduct:** Respectful behavior is expected from everyone in the classroom. This includes raising your hand and waiting when you want to speak, turning *off* cell phones and other electronic devices and showing up to class on time. Texting in class and using your computers in ways not connected to the class is not allowed during class time.

**Email:** While many of you use other email addresses, please notes that all matters related to this class will be conducted using your official UCONN /HUSKY mail. All messages automatically generated from peoplesoft and HUSKYCT such as course related announcement, messages about class cancellations are conducted via the UConn email system.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and is included in your participation grade; if you are absent, you cannot participate. Medical and Athletic absences will be excused with the appropriate paperwork from the health services or coach. If you miss a lecture, be sure to get notes from your classmates. The professors' notes and lectures are not available on HUSKYCT unless we have inclement weather. If you miss a discussion on for a verifiable medical or athletic reason (meaning you are on the team), *your regular 2-page report on that week's reading is due within one calendar week of your absence and no later*. You can bring the paper to class or to my office, Wood Hall 332 or upload to HUSKYCT. You must make an appointment to make up the discussion within that timeframe as well.

**Academic Integrity and Assistance:** There is a zero-tolerance policy for any form of cheating and plagiarism on this campus and in this class. This consists of behavior such as: copying another student's answers, sharing answers with others, doing someone else's work or having someone else do your work, using information without giving credit to the author(s) or source, copying information from the internet without proper attribution. If you are having academic difficulties, do not hesitate to contact the professor. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss any difficulties you may be having in class. There are tutoring resources available on campus as well. Knowing when to ask for help is a sign of strength and responsibility on your part.

#### **V. GRADING**

**10% (2) Map Quiz**

**15% Mid-Term #1** Consists of a choice of five identifications, a short essay, (In Class)

**35% Take Home Essay**

**20% Oral Participation** in discussion

**20% Written Reading Responses:** The strength and quality of this course depends partly on your engagement with the assigned readings and on participation in weekly

discussions. While there will be time for discussion during lecture, class time is set aside for delving into the readings. While you will learn from your peers, please do not rely on them to “speak” so you don’t have to. You will be called on to share what you have written. See the guidelines below for format and content information for your reading responses.

## VI. Reading Response Formats

As a part of your weekly assignment you are required hand in a reading response of approximately 2 (two) pages minimum at the end of class. The purpose of the response is to give your brain an opportunity to digest the material in a thoughtful, engaging manner and for you to practice taking good notes on your reading so that you have a repository of decent notes to use for your exams. Please do not obsess about the length; the 2–page length is an approximation. I am far more interested in a clear, thoughtful, and engaging response to the discussion questions. Here are some guidelines. The reading responses are worth 10 points each. Here is a spread of the points you can earn; you need to answer all questions properly to earn a 10.

**A range 9/10   B range 7/8   C range 5/6   D range 3/4   F 1/2 or below**

What should your reading response contain?

- (a) Please create a blank reading response template in your word program, with your name and title as a “header,” save it as “reading response template,” and use the same one each week.
- (b) Answers to the questions listed on the syllabus or distributed in class and each week should be thorough; none of these question can be answered satisfactorily by a “yes” or “no” answer so please be sure to elaborate where necessary
- (c) Be sure to discuss what the source materials/evidence the author is using: (for example archaeology, travelers’ accounts, literary dramatization, linguistic evidence)
- (d) Your reading response can be answered in narrative form, or you can answer each question individually. Your response should be 12 point font, with one inch margins. You should single space to conserve paper. Your name, date etc., do NOT count as part of the page requirements—so keep them to the “header” line for all your responses. The focus will be on the **quality** of what you are writing, not the quantity
- (e) You should be prepared to be called on to share your reading response. They will be collected in class; please do not email the responses unless you are out of town, ill, or have otherwise have a problem with HUSKYCT. The professor is NOT responsible for printing, stapling, or paginating your reading responses; please have the courtesy to do so yourself. There will be a 1 point deduction for each instance when I have this if there is more than once incident of this. Email submissions will not be allowed unless you have a legitimate absence from class, but HUSKYCT should be considered your default. .

## VII. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Week One. 9/1, and 9/ 3

*Introductions; Africa's physical, social and economic landscapes*



Readings/Discussion: **Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa*** (Textbook; full text via UCONN library), **Pages 1-25, due 9/10**

Binyavanga Wainana, "How to think about Africa," *Granta (HUSKYCT)*

- a. Introductions; Class structure and Policies
- b. Distribution of Blank map of Africa for map quiz (See HUSKYCT for blank map of Africa, vegetation zones images, tsetse and malaria distribution maps on HuskyCT)
- c. "Perceptions of Africa" written exercise in class, to be discussed in class on Friday 9/10
- d. Please check out this website and listen to the stories under the HUMAN EDGE series on NPR (National Public Radio). You need to listen to the specific stories (about walking, weapons, food, tools, the brain and human mental acuity) and make a list of major questions and postulates in the various stories about tools, walking upright, brains, talking, fish, shoulder, story, telling etc., along with the discussion questions for Ehret listed below. Please allot time to do this—the segments are short but there are several of them and they run for a few minutes each. You may need a total of 1 hour to listen to the segments but you can pause and come back to them whenever you want. Here is the website; please cut and paste; if the URL doesn't work, then look up "human edge" and "npr" and follow the links.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128245649>

**Lecture:** Theme: *Africa's physical landscape and major diseases, (tropical rain forests, grassland and woodland savannas, deserts, the Rift valley, rainfall and altitude; rivers; malaria and tsetse fly; mortality rates, soil quality, and land use patterns, and practices; Africa's social and economic organization (age grade, ages sets, marriage systems, polygyny, bridewealth, brideservice, matrilineal and patrilineal descent, clans, lineages). All the terms here will be on your map quiz and are a mini list of your some of the IDS for your midterms*

September 8 Map Quiz

Map Quiz Reminder: Your first map quiz is 9/8. Please check out the google map of Africa via HUSKYCT or you can google it yourself; practice your blank map.

### Week Two. 9/8 and 9/10

**September 8** Map Quiz #1 Blank Map of Africa plus basic questions on malaria, physical landscape and disease. Review lectures to help you study.

**September 10.** Discussion and RR#1: **We will discuss the first 25 pages of Ehret, Wainana as well as the "Perceptions of Africa writing exercise." If you have not done so, please listen to the series and post your answers under the journal link on HUSKYCT**



**Reading Response #1; Please include the NPR series, Wainana, and Ehret**

1. Why are the terms *civilized*, *primitive*, *animist/animism* and *tribe* loaded terms? 2. What specific themes will Ehret explore in this textbook? 3. What is the multi-regional view of human origins and how does Ehret challenge this perspective? 4. What kinds of evidence does Ehret use to support his arguments for human origins in Africa? What are the three most compelling postulations about human evolution offered in the *Human Edge* series and in what ways did they overlap or pursue a different angle from Ehret? How did Wainana's article overlap or not with your own perceptions of Africa from your exercise in class?

**Week Three. 9/15 and 9/17, "Original Affluent Society:"  
Thinking about hunting and gathering Societies**



Readings/Discussion: **Ehret**, *Civilizations of Africa* (Textbook), Pages 26-58; and **Marshall Sahlins**, "The Original Affluent Society," Pages 1-39, HUSKYCT

**9/15. Lectures, Distribution of population groups in Africa**

**Reading Response #2 due 9/17**

1. What kind of changes are taking place in terms of how people got their food? 2. Ehret outlines the four major civilizations and their offshoots that he will be discussing in this book—create a table or chart for the next few questions. 3. What are these four civilizations? 4. What are their (a) kinship and social institutions (b) leadership/ power/authority structures? (c) how did they get their food/livelihoods (d) What were the religious features of these civilizations? 5. Discuss Ehret's use of evidence. For Sahlins, please answer the following questions: 6. What kinds of myths or stereotypes about the Paleolithic past is Sahlins trying to debunk—meaning how have academics portrayed this era and its lifestyle? 7. What are the component elements of the "original affluent society"—how is Sahlins measuring affluence? 8. Why did the vast majority of Africans reject this way of life if it was so "affluent?" You will be asked to define and engage the concept of an "original affluent society" on the mid-term.

## Week Four. 9/22 and 9/24 Egypt

9/22. Lecture, Egypt



**9/24 Readings/Discussion:** Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa* (**Textbook**), Pages 59-101; Please note that the lectures will focus on Egypt while the text book will focus on what is going on in the rest of Africa leading up to the emergence of Egyptian civilization.

**Chip Brown**, “The King Herself,” *National Geographic*, vol. 215, Issue 4 April 2009, Pages 88-111. (You may find this article using HOMER or you can read it via google on the National

Geographic Website where you will see the accompanying color images for the article)

(See Hatshepsut’s photo gallery at this website—but be forewarned about how graphic they are—look when you are in the mood to look at a long-dead, hollow mummy)

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/04/hatshepsut/garrett-photography> **Continued . . .**

Class discussion will focus mostly on Hatshepsut **but** be sure to answer all of the questions in your reading response

### Reading Response #3

*1. What are the major developments that Ehret outlines between 9000 and 3500 BCE in terms of the major changes in material and cultural life? 2. How did aquatic hunting and gathering ways of life surpass Sudanic agriculture in terms of its advantages? 3. Why was the invention of pottery important? 4. What kinds of relations did the pre-dynastic Egyptians and the Sudanic peoples of the Middle Nile Basin have with each other? 5. In what ways did developments in Africa between 9000 and 3500 BCE parallel or not parallel the courses of change on other continents and what notable contributions did Africans make to world agriculture and technology before 3500 BCE*  
*6. What, briefly, is the biography of Hatshepsut? 7. What does her history teach us about Egyptian society, politics, and history? 8. What do you think about the evidence being used to make the claims about this female pharaoh? 9. What can we know for sure and what is still a postulation?*

**Week Five. 9/29 and 10/ 1**

**Lectures: Case Study Nubia: Axum, Meroe and Napata, Ethiopia; Commerce and Urbanization**



Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa (Textbook)*, Pages 200-215; 143-153; 290-302; 305-309; Anderson, *Africa's Urban Past*, Introduction (Pages 1-17) and Chapter 3, "Aksumite Urbanism" Pages 52-65. **HUSKYCT**

**Reading Response #4**

Note that the contemporary area that comprises the landmass of Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Somalia is the focus of this week's readings.

1. What processes are leading to centralization and decentralization in this region? 2. What is the role of Christianity and Islam in political and commercial developments in this region? 3. What is the difference between sacral and divine kinship? 4. How do you explain urbanization in a particular pre-colonial locale? For example, what are the stimuli? What is the purpose of the city? Is it a religious, ritual or trading center, a marketplace, an entrepôt. Be sure to answer these questions for Napata, Meroe, and Aksum. 5. How is power represented spatially, for example monuments, or other symbols of power and authority? Who can reside in the city? Why or why not? 6. What causes a city to decline? Provide examples of your answers.

**Review Session 10/6 ; Mid-Term Exam is coming up on 10/8**

**Week 7. 10/13, East Africa/West Central Africa**



**Readings/Discussion for 10/15:** Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 1-4; 11-21; 23-106.

**Continued . . .**

Please note that while there is no reading response this week, you will have to read and include the information in next week's reading response so take notes carefully as we will continue with this same book for the next three weeks and it will comprise the bulk of your second mid-term examination. This book can be unfamiliar at times because of many of the terminology in English is drawn from anthropology, and African languages, but if you keep the big picture in focus, you should be able to digest it. Moreover, unfamiliar need not mean difficult. You are, after all, taking a class on Africa to make yourself literate about the intellectual concepts that have framed the study of this place. The big picture means you need to consider what Vansina is trying to say about how societies are created? We are currently in this country talking about generation X and generation Y; about baby boomers, millennials. We are talking about the digital revolution that is happening and how that is changing notions of how to be social; we are talking about social media.



Maybe you are not self-reflexive about the age you are living it because it is your norm, but thinking critically and thinking historically does mean that you have to be aware of your own intellectual and cultural grounding and how that shapes you and the way you perceive and understand the world; you have to consider what questions are universal to the human condition and how each generation, and historical era confronted these questions. So this gets us back to the questions of where societies and social structures come from. What have humans done with “humans” as a raw material in the economic, social, cultural, and political realms?

Societies do not emerge spontaneously; consider the questions we discussed from the NPR series. Societies begin with the creative decisions people have made about what to do with the natural resources in their vicinity, including what they do with their bodies/what their bodies allow them to do. Economic and environmental factors also influence the decisions people make about their food and their labor resources; and about what kinds of institutions they create to make their societies stable, self-sustaining, and reproducible. What does that mean for coming of age, making a living, marrying, configuring wealth, status, identity and choosing leaders? The meaning of life; notions of death and the hereafter (consider Egypt, for example) (*American contemporary corollaries would be: coming of age—rites of passage through the education system as a norm—kindergarten, elementary, middle and high school, the yearbook, the prom, college etc*); *making a living—career and non career paths; blue/collar, white collar; the meaning attached to work; the way we procure labor—slavery, indenture, wage labor. As for food, consider the rise of supermarkets, debate about agribusinesses, organic food! In terms of marriage etc, consider how societies have changed, the rise of romantic love as an ideal, sexual mores, child-bearing, and women’s employment. In terms of leadership just consider the current debates about democracy given what is going on in the Middle East and our own local debates about the presidency and the multiple meanings associated with the terms immigrant. So we need to figure out what the corollaries and baselines are for early societies and for societies that are completely foreign to us*

Depending on the society certain knowledge becomes extremely valuable and critical—like metallurgy for example, or even farming. Many people, once introduced to the agricultural revolution, still opted for a different way to supply their food needs. Why? The transition to farming, therefore, isn’t a linear aha moment when everyone says, “This is a great idea, let’s do it, and let’s leave hunting and gathering behind!” Farming is difficult, risky and had to be weighed as an economic endeavor within the context of each local environment. Eventually individual decisions to experiment with farming become collective decisions to transition to agriculture as a way of life and that knowledge then becomes specialized and spreads across regions and involves more experimentation as people figure which crops grow well in certain regions and which were too difficult to cultivate because of labor access or water; the same observation goes for pastoralism—people figure out which animals thrive in certain regions and how to get the labor to herd them, and the pasture and water to maintain them and then have to make crucial decision about who can own and inherit them and under what circumstances they can be slaughtered.

These are the kinds of questions Vansina is pondering, so if you get stuck on a concept, come back to these core ideas and ask how Vansina is using an institution (like marriage, for example) to demonstrate his larger points. Vansina uses many local terms you will be unfamiliar with—the only way to define these terms is to write down their meaning based on what Vansina says and then there

are terms in English whose meanings will still be difficult to understand and will need to be defined based on what Vansina says (for example *joking relationships*, *monocephalic rule*, *vicinage*, *collective imagination*, *corporate matrilineages*, *matriliclans*, etc). It is essential that you take clear notes on this book because neither memorization, nor copying from the internet, is not the most useful aid, in this case, to get through this particular material.

Finally, when we discuss this book next week we will begin with a debate about the advantages and disadvantages of the ways of life Vansina discusses in the first half of the book (agropastoralism, foraging, farming so you can begin to ask yourself these questions—what are the characteristics of these lifestyles and what are the relative advantage and disadvantages; what values does each lifestyle promote?).

Readings Response # 5 includes these questions and next week's

1. Explain why changes in ceramics, agriculture (horticulture) and pastoralism (animal husbandry—be sure to make a note of the animals and crops involved) and the creation of metal are radical changes; 2. What evidence is Vansina using in this section and provide an example of what a specific type of evidence can tell us 3. Vansina argues that there is variety in the foraging way of life and that there are some values that emerge in foraging society; what does that variety look like? and what kinds of values emerged to help foragers deal with risk 4. In the transition to farming/horticulture, what are the advantages and disadvantages/challenges and how does this transition actually begin? And what crops are we talking about? What happens when it's animals that are introduced? 5. What is the difference between introducing new animals and crops versus introducing a new language? What can the linguistic evidence tell us?

(Please take good notes on Divuyu—you will have to compare it to another settlement called Nqoma)

6. Metallurgy –what happens when societies start experimenting with metal? What are the advantages? How does society change? 7. West Central Africa is NOT yet a single historical region at the beginning of this section; why does Vansina make this argument and how/why does this begin to change? 8. Think about the full-fledged transitions to pastoralism and agriculture? What happens with how people organized their social structure (consider matrilineages, matriclans, inheritance, succession, diet, settlement patterns, concepts of wealth, leadership etc) and be sure to delineate where gender fits into all of these developments?

**Week Eight. 10/20 and 10/22 Theme West Central Africa/Southern Africa: Bantu Migrations; Great Zimbabwe**



**Readings/Discussion:** Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 107-205 (we will discuss this on both days)

*Reading Response 5 continued—please include questions from last week and feel free to combine the questions in whatever way is easiest for you*

In class we will debate the advantages and disadvantages of the ways of life Vansina discusses in the first half of the book

1. Make a table comparing the characteristics/ features (social, economic, political) of Divuyu to Nqoma. You may have to review information from the first section of the book you read last week. Provide as many details as you can. What accounts for Nqoma's success and then its decline? What accounts for such instability in the political entities that emerged in this region? What did this instability look like? 2. What can cattle remains (as evidence) tell us? 3. The Herero are taken as one case study--what are the features of the Herero society that Vansina is using to make his arguments? 4. Vansina argues that there is a difference in environments and a difference in governance/government for pastoral nomads and agropastoralists. Explain what those differences are? 5. What happens to those who are cattleless? 6. What kind of networks joined individuals together? For example special skills/ crafts etc. 7. Describe the role of chiefs/chieftaincy. Note that there is one extended description in chapter 3 and another in chapter 4, including a discussion of sacral chiefship (remember Ehret describes this; Vansina provides a further in depth explanation. He is quite interested in "governance" as a theme so pay close attention to these sections; he is also discussing the concept of "collective imagination" which he will develop further so also pay attention to this) 8. What is a joking relationship? How does it work? 9. Describe the Okavango area including the people who make a life there 10. What does Vansina mean by collective imagination; there are two main sections where Vansina discusses collective imagination 11. What is Feti? 12. Who are the Jaga? What did Jaga society look like?

**Week Nine. 10/27 and 10/29 Discussion and Lectures:** West Central Africa/ Southern Africa



**Readings/Discussion:** Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born*, 206-272.

**Reading Response #6**

1. What is happening in the Kalahari Sands? 2. What are vicinages and sodalities—discuss how rites of passages are related to environmental conditions and further details about governance? Be sure to discuss masks, circumcision/coming of age? 3. Vansina discusses collective imagination in further detail. What does he mean by that term and what makes up a collective imagination in the societies he is describing? Does this concept work for the overall aims of the book?

**Week Ten. 11/3 and 11/5 Lectures:** State Formation, Trade and Religion in West Africa)



**Readings/Discussion: Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali* (entire book);**  
Ehret, *Civilizations of Africa (Textbook)*, Pages 309-328

**Reading Response #7**

*1. Make a list of the main characters in the book: i.e. Balla Fasseke, Sogolon, Maghan Kon Fatta etc. Who are they and how do they figure in to the story? How do they move the plot along? 2. What are the most symbolic events that make this an epic: the difficult childhood, the wicked co-wife, Soumaro's secret weakness exile? 3. What is the role of the griot (the final "t" is not pronounced) 4. What is the role of women? 5. How does Sundiata accomplish his victory? In what way is he a hero? Is this story solely about him? 6. What is the relationship between Islam and the local religions? What is the attraction, advantage of both religious traditions? 7. In what way is the supernatural conceptualized and materialized in the book? 8. What is the structure of Sundiata's post war empire? 9. How does this differ from conventional historical accounts of state formation? 10. What kind of villain is Sumaro? 11. What is the nature of his authority and what is the nature of resistance to his rule?*

**Week Eleven 11/10 and 11/12: Northern African Frontiers I (The Trans-Saharan commercial system)**



**Readings/Discussion: Webb, *Desert Frontier*, Chapters 1-3, Pages 1-67**

**Reading Response #8**

*The author discusses the uses of the term "black" and "white" to understand the emergence of ethnic identities in the desert 1. What is a desert frontier and what do the terms black and white mean on this frontier (For example you should be thinking about how the desert is a geographical, linguistic, cultural frontier? 2. What impact does climate have on the sorts of identities and lifestyles that develop on this frontier? 3. What is the nature of the warrior/clerical distinction among the various groups in the desert frontier? 4. What is the relationship between those who are living in the desert frontier and their other African neighbors? 5. How do migration patterns change the relationship between these two groups? 6.*

*What is "Arabization;" how does it help us to understand the processes of assimilation and cultural change in the desert frontier and how is this related to the emergence of a "new Sahelian ethnicity?" 7. What is the role of Islam in all of these developments? 9. What role does the immigration of Bubazzul play in delineating a particular North African and Islamic heritage? 10. How does the coming of the French change regional configurations of power?*

**Week Twelve November 17 and 19**

Map Quiz II—November 17



**Readings/Discussion:** Webb, *Desert Frontier*, Chapters 4-Conclusion

**RR #9 Prepare a minimum of 250 words on** the interactions of the horse and slave trades, the trade in gum Arabic and the impact of the French on the changing relationship in the region; all of this information will be on your exam so you do have to do the reading even without a formal response.

**Week Thirteen. 12/1 and 12/3**

**Lectures:** *The Heart of Africa, Portuguese Spheres of Influence, Religion and Civil war: Case Study Kongo*



**Readings/Discussion:** John Thornton, *The Kongolesse St. Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706*, skim pages 1-59; read carefully pages 59—214

**Reading Response # 10**

This week we will back track chronologically to consider the emergence of states in Africa and the role of the Portuguese in the area known as Kongo (Angola)—not to be confused with the contemporary Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is a story of religious and political intrigue involving a huge cast of characters. You need to understand who the major players are and what the major social, economic, religious, and political issues are.

1. Who are the major players in this tale? 2. What is Dona Beatriz's biography and under what social, religious, economic, and political circumstances is she able to make the amazing claim she does? What are those claims? How does her movement actually work to reach ordinary folks—consider the Little Anthonys and Mafuta, for example? Who supports her and why? Why is Sao Salvador so important? 3. What is the story of Catholicism in Africa as it is propagated and assimilated by the Kongolesse—meaning what would the Catholic Church like Catholicism to look like and what does it actually/really look like in reality? Consider the local meaning of *kindoki* and *nkisi* 5. What is at stake for the church in terms of dealing with how the Kongolesse view Catholicism? 6. What is at stake for the Kongolesse political elite? 7. What is the role of slavery and the slave trade in diving people into factions and fueling the religious and political turmoil? Why did Dona Beatriz eventually suffer the fate she did—meaning who benefited from this outcome and why?

**Week Fourteen. 12/8 and 12/10**

**Lectures:** *A Sign of Things to Come: From Abolition to Colonialism*



**Readings/Discussion:** Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (all)

**Reading Response #11**

*In this fictional account of an Ibo society on the eve and in the immediate aftermath of early colonial contact, consider the use of literature as a means of dramatizing African societies and their particular experiences of colonialism as we did in the previous two weeks.*

*1. What are the distinguishing features of Ibo society that defines how people belong in terms of gender, age, and religious beliefs and in terms of how they define the good life—wealth, happiness, ambition? 2. What are its strengths and weaknesses/cleavages? 3. How is the society portrayed in terms of the openness and flexibility of its customs and traditions to change? 4. How does colonialism insinuate itself into Ibo society? What are the perspectives of the various characters on what colonialism means for their community and society? 5. In what ways is Okonkwo, the main character, the quintessential African or not? Is he a hero, a victim, a villain? Do you come to sympathize with him? Why or why not? 6. Does Ibo society, as it is portrayed in the novel, agree with Okonkwo's ultimate solution to the problem of colonial encroachment? 7. What is the significance of the title? What things "fall apart?" 8. What do you think of the character of Nwoye; for example, is he the new modern man who will be able to navigate the changes colonialism has wrought on his generation, and on his society?*

**Final Exam: Take Home: Due Dec 15 in Dr. Vernal's Office, Wood Hall 332**