

Africa and African Diaspora Archaeology (AFRO/ANTH 3016/5016) Narrative Proposal

Africa and African Diaspora Archaeology (AAFRO/ ANTH 3016/5016) will fulfil the Historical Perspectives Core and Global Perspectives Theme Liberal Education requirements as follow:

Student Learning Outcome: *Can identify, define, and solve problems*

- Explain the methods used to identify archaeological artifacts and how to use them to reconstruct past ways of life.
- Define the emergence of humankind in Africa and subsequent migration to other continents.
- Evaluate the quality and authenticity of evidence used to sustain our understanding of Africa's history.
- Understand and appreciate the complexity and diversity of ancient Africa.
- Identify the impacts of climate change on African archaeological and heritage sites.
- Write a well-organized research paper and conduct a coherent presentation.
- Recognize the role of archaeology in understanding Africa's connections with the rest of the world.

In addition, graduate students will be able to:

- Effectively scrutinize the validity and authenticity of the body of knowledge and its intellectual formation
- Pursue independent studies using robust data collection, analytical and interpretation skills relevant to their program
- Communicate, organize, and lead collaborative projects more effectively at work and in the community
- Develop cultural competence and skills to deal with different perspectives to make impacts at local and global levels

How this outcome will be addressed in the course? To achieve this learning outcome, students will engage in the following course related activities:

- **Small-Group Discussions:** Students will organize small group discussions focusing on weekly topics and readings during each class session. The discussion will be based on the weekly readings, analyzing ancient rock arts, stone tools, and stone structures readily available in the online archaeological database (e.g., Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Archaeology Data Service) as well as on the classroom artifact collections.

- **Archaeological Class Activities & Group Reports:** Students will write group reports on the classroom artifact collections (which include stone tools representing different stone ages, potsherds, skeletons) made available by the course instructor. The students will be expected to identify, classify, analyze, and interpret the artifacts collections to derive conclusions.
- **Article Reviews:** Students will independently write three review projects on selected compulsory readings provided, ranging between 400 and 500 words for each project. In the reviews, students will: 1) Identify the overall objective of the article, 2) State the theoretical foundation of the paper, 3) Discuss the methodological approaches used in the data collection, 4) Examine whether the overall objective of the article has been achieved, 5) Share their own reactions and opinions with their classmates.
- **Final Research and Presentation:** Undergraduate students will write a seven to ten-page, double-spaced research paper, and present. As well as completing all the required coursework assigned to undergraduates, graduate students will write a research proposal and present, and write a fifteen to twenty-page, double-spaced comprehensive research paper and present their findings. They will collect data, undertake critical analyses, and produce a clear and coherent paper and present their findings to their classmates. The research and presentation can be based on library research, classroom artifact collections or a combination of the two.
- **Exams:** There will be four take-home essay exams based on the learning materials, readings, lectures, and interpretation of artifact collections made available by the course instructor. In each exam, undergraduate students will write one comprehensive essay ranging between 1000 and 1500 words. Undergraduate students will write a 1000 to 1500-word response to each question, and graduate students will write a 1500 to 2000-word response to each essay question.

Historical Perspectives Core:

The Africa and African Diaspora Archaeology course fulfills Historical Perspectives Core criteria:

- The course includes hand-on experience, group discussion, and group report writing. Students will identify, classify, and interpret artifact collections including skeletons, potsherds, metal objects, charred seeds, and stone tools. The course instructor has over 100 artifacts (including artifacts representing Early Stone Age (ESA), Middle Stone Age (MSA) & Late Stone Age (LSA), potsherds, and ethnographic animal bones and other objects with

diagnostic features, etc.) available for use in-class activities to introduce to students to the interpretation of archaeological artifacts through practical engagement.

- Students will learn to classify artifacts based on form, shape, and any evidence of use/wear/use alteration to understand how archaeologists interpret artifacts to reconstruct past ways of life.
- Students will learn archaeological research methods, and their use with primary sources such as artifacts. They will learn how to organize, analyze, and interpret the artifacts and derive arguments and conclusions. They will write individual, and group reports.
- This course examines the history and culture of Africa from some 2.6 million years ago and looks at how its inhabitants made tools from stone and acquired their food from the continent's rich and diverse plant and animal resources. It also discusses the beginnings of agriculture, sedentary ways of life, social complexity, African global connections over the last 600 years, the creation of African diaspora communities, and recent advances in African diaspora archeological inquiries.
- The course covers changes over time from the use of stone tools to metal tools, from hunting-gathering to agriculture, from pre-class social organizations to the development of more social complexities (cities and states), and the development of the African Diaspora community.
- The course introduces students to archaeological methods. Students will gain hands-on experience in terms of how primary sources (artifacts, skeletal remains, ecofacts and ancient structures like footprints) are used by archaeologists to learn about human history before written history became available. Students will learn how to apply the principles of archaeological research and how archaeological artifacts are recovered, analyzed, and interpreted to produce historical knowledge that sustains our understanding of the human past.
- Students will learn how to undertake archaeological fieldwork (such as archaeological surveys, archaeological excavations, and identifying archaeological records) and post-fieldwork archaeological activities (organizing, analyzing, and interpreting archaeological objects).

- Students will work on primary sources such as stone tools, ceramics, skeletal or related artifacts to master how to identify, organize, analyze, contextualize, and interpret the meaning of artifacts as well as write reports independently or as part of a group.
- Students will critically examine the limitations of primary sources derived from archaeological research, oral traditions, and written sources. They will analyze how these sources can result in conflicting interpretations or how they can complement each other.
- The course discusses how ethnocentric presumptions shaped African archaeological interpretations during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Specifically, students will be offered the opportunity to examine how the media and broader popular imagination have shaped our understanding of past and present Africa and how genuine scientific research in archaeology is now helping to deconstruct the negative imaginary about the history and culture of peoples of the continent.
- This course has no prerequisites beyond the University's entrance requirements.

Global Perspectives Theme:

The Africa and African Diaspora Archaeology course will help teach students how to become knowledgeable, ethical, and engaged public citizens by cultivating the following important habits:

- The course offers students the opportunity to examine African heritage and archaeological sites under threat from climate change, the rise of sea level, changing rainfall patterns and the drop in water levels (e.g., Suakin in Sudan, Lamu Stonehouse in Kenya, coastal sites of the Island of Comoros, Ghana's coastal forts and castles, heritage sites at the Island of Gorée in Senegal, rock art in Namibia and Sahara, and the Sukur Cultural Landscape of Nigeria).
- Students will also learn how conflict threatens African heritage sites by looking at the destruction of Mosques, shrine centers, and ancient manuscripts by Ansar Dine extremists in 2012 in west Africa, and the destruction of the 800 years old al-Nejashi mosque in Ethiopia in 2021 in the civil war).

- Students will learn to listen to others with patience and respect while thinking independently. The course will teach students about other cultures and cultural diversity, and will help them build positive social relationships and healthy communities.
- Students will learn archaeological methods such as identifying, analyzing, and interpreting archeological artifacts and ecofacts. They will acquire the necessary skills required to pursue independent research in archaeology.
- Students will learn and appreciate the heritage resources past societies have left behind and the role they can play individually or as part of a group in preserving cultural heritage resources and promoting sustainable tourism.

The Africa and African Diaspora Archeology course satisfies specific global perspectives theme requirement:

- The course focuses on how scholars use archaeological artifacts, ecofacts, structures, and related remains to reconstruct African and African diaspora's past lifeways.
- The course addresses how archaeological data can help us understand history and culture before the beginning of writing, as well as the importance of archaeology in constructing a history of Africa and African diaspora in the absence of written evidence, as well as challenging the biases in the written record.
- The course critically examines how the remote origins of humanity can be traced only in the African continent. It also discusses the way Atlantic trade, colonialism, and post-colonial political power relations have shaped African and African diaspora archaeological interpretations. It also looks at the effects of the Black Lives Matter movement on the African Diaspora's public archaeology in the United States, and discusses future research directions.
- The course discusses the evolution of human behavior in Africa, offers students the opportunity to understand where humankind came from and how it spread to the rest of the world. In other words, it examines how African archaeological evidence is key to essential debates such as the origins of stone tool-making, the emergence of recognizably modern forms of cognition and behavior, and the expansion of successive hominins from Africa to other parts of the world.