

**Archaeology 441
Later African Prehistory**

Fall 2008

Instructor: Dr. Mary McDonald
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Office hours: Wednesday 3:30 – 4:30 PM or by appointment
Lectures: TR 3:30 PM ES 822

Course description:

This course surveys the later prehistory of the African continent from the Upper Pleistocene through much of the Holocene. Starting with the evolution and consolidation of modern human behavior, we look at the trend towards sedentism at the end of the Pleistocene, and then the evolution and spread of food production, metallurgy and trade. Archaeological evidence, supplemented by genetic research, linguistic studies and ethnoarchaeology, provides a picture of a distinctive “African pathway” in prehistory. But African archaeology also contributes to, indeed often corrects, widely held interpretations of human cultural development in general.

Classes will entail both lectures and student presentations and discussion.

Required text:

Stahl, Ann Brower 2005 *African Archaeology*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Course evaluation:

3 quizzes (Oct. 7, Nov. 6, Dec. 4)	15%, 15%, 10%
In-class presentation	20%
Research paper (due Nov. 27)	30%
Class participation	10%

Note: there is no final exam in this course.

Grading scheme (%):

A, A+ 85-100	B+, B, B- 79-70	D+, D, D- 59-50
A- 80-84	C+, C, C- 69-60	F <50

In-class presentation:

Each student will lead us in a seminar on some major topic area in later African prehistory. Your topic should be cleared with me by Tuesday Sept. 30. Some suggested seminar topic areas:

Lithic technology: e.g. microlithization or the bow and arrow
Emergence of pottery in Africa.

Interpretation of rock art: North Africa
 South Africa
 African cultivated plants
 Iron metallurgy
 Gender issues in African Archaeology
 Role of linguistics
 Zooarchaeological studies in Africa

Research paper:

A 10-12 page research paper (250 words per page), worth 30 points, is required. It is due Thursday Nov. 27. The topic, normally a different one from your seminar topic, must be cleared with the instructor in advance, by the end of the sixth week, Oct. 16. A research paper should involve at least one source per page of text, so at least 12 substantial sources (e.g. other than textbooks, encyclopaedia articles), from scholarly journals, monographs or web sources. Use the referencing format found in *American Antiquity*. And, of course, avoid plagiarism.

Number your pages, and no plastic binders, please.

Rough outline of weekly topics and readings:

Week 1:

Introduction to African archaeology. Geography, climate, language groups.
 Stahl # 1 & 2

Week 2:

The emergence of modern human behavior.
 Stahl # 4.
 McBrearty & Brooks 2000 in *Journal of Human Evolution* 39:453-563.

Week 3:

Late Stone Age (LSA): consolidation and elaboration. Sequences: S. Africa, S. Central Africa.
 Stahl # 5.

Week 4:

LSA: sequences in Central, East, West, North Africa.
 Kleindienst in Marlow & Mills 2001

Week 5:

Test. Beginnings of sedentism in Final/Post Pleistocene. Nile Valley. Dakhleh Oasis Masara unit.
 McDonald 1991 In *African Archaeological Review* 9:81-109.

Week 6:

Sedentism in Sahara (Aqualithic, Nabta, Acacus, Capsian)
 Sedentism in East Africa, rest of Africa.
 Stahl # 6, 7.

Week 7:

Early farming in Africa: discussion. Developments in the Nile Valley. The sequence towards food production in Dakhleh.

Stahl # 10

McDonald in Churcher & Mills 1997

Week 8:

Pastoralism in North Africa, Horn of Africa, East Africa. Rock art.

Stahl # 8.

Weeks 9 & 10:

Test, reading week.

The spread of plant cultivation in Africa.

Stahl # 9.

Week 11:

African metallurgy and trade

Stahl # 11.

Weeks 12 & 13:

Spread of farming South of Equator: pots and linguistics.

Hunters and herders in Southern Africa.

Stahl # 12, 14.

Reserve list for Archaeology 441: Later African Prehistory

Churcher, C.S. & A.J. Mills

1999 *Reports from the survey of the Dakhleh Oasis, 1977-1987*. Oxbow, Oxford.

DT73 D33 R47

Marlow, C.A. & A.J. Mills

2001 *The Oasis Papers I*. Oxbow, Oxford.

DT73 .D33 027

Please note the following journals:

The African Archaeological Review

The Journal of African Archaeology

Nyame Akuma

West African Journal of Archaeology

Azania

Sahara

The South African Archaeological Newsletter

Useful website for maps:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa.html>