This class surveys the richness and diversity of African cultures. The class covers many different topics, such as broad patterns in religions or continent-wide forms of government, but it centers on the comparative anthropological study of Africa’s people and how they live (and lived) their lives day to day. Anthropology is a holistic social science that examines both human biology and culture to seek ways of understanding or explaining human behavior. In this class, students will be exposed to different theories or concepts, some fundamental to all anthropological studies, and some unique to Africa. Students will also learn more in-depth details about specific African societies.

Core Objectives

**CO 11 – Global Contexts:** Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

Students will be expected to articulate in written and orally the knowledge acquired in this course to discuss African issues, past and present. Additionally, students will gain an understanding of the implications of globalization on Africa and its diverse peoples, comprehending its complex history and how it articulates with the mechanisms of global interfaces.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course,

1) students will have an appreciation of the prehistoric and historic development of African lifeways, and will understand the current state of African life;

2) students will be aware of the complexities of the difficult sociopolitical and economic issues associated with Africa in the modern world; and
3) students will feel engaged enough to continue learning about Africa and the thousand different ethnic groups who live there.

REQUIRED Readings:


(2) *The Harmless People*, by E. M. Thomas

(3) *Dancing Skeletons*, by K. Dettwyler.

The textbook is used throughout the semester. Books 2 and 3 must be read for discussions and papers due in October and December. There are also six required films to be viewed in class, and answers to specific questions about them will be written up and turned in over the semester (see schedule).
ANTH 401C/601C, Fall 2014
Course Requirements (100 points)

1. One oral report answering specific questions about an African country (presented on either September 16 or 18); a simple written report also must be handed in: 10 points
2. Lists of answers to specific questions about two required books and six films --- the written answers will be handed in. These are NOT essays or "papers" – they are to be lists of answers. 30 points
3. Attendance at classes and participation in scheduled discussions. Three unexcused absences from class will be allowed over the semester; after that, your attendance grade will be reduced by 1 point (out of 10) for each absence (example: perfect attendance = 10 points; 4 absences = 9 points; 5 absences = 8 points; etc.). 10 points
4. Five short exams (quizzes) over the semester, each contributing 6 points: 30 points
5. Final exam covering all required readings, films, lectures, quizzes. 20 points

TOTAL POINTS = 100 (10% = report; 30% = discussions and papers; 10% = attendance; 30% = quizzes; 20% = final exam)
A = 100-90 points
B = 89-80 points
C = 79-70 points
D = 69-60 points
F = below 60 points

INCOMPLETES: A Grade of Incomplete ("I" letter grade) will not be given except under unusual conditions, such as financial troubles, health problems, or any other serious condition that makes it impossible for the student to complete the course. "Running out of time" is not an acceptable reason for requesting an Incomplete. The incomplete coursework must be completed within one semester of returning to normal attendance at classes, or the Incomplete becomes an F in the student’s record.

GRADES POLICY

INCOMPLETES: A Grade of Incomplete ("I" letter grade) will not be given except under unusual conditions, such as financial troubles, health problems, or any other condition that makes it impossible for the student to complete the course. "Running out of time" is not an acceptable reason for requesting an Incomplete. The incomplete coursework must be completed within one semester of returning to normal attendance at classes.

GRADE POINT VALUES: The University has adopted a scale of grades that includes Plus/Minus values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Superior</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>B Above Average</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D Below Average</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>F Failure</td>
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<td>P Pass</td>
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<td>S Satisfactory (Grad. = B or better)--</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Incomplete</td>
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<td>AD Audit</td>
<td>no grade given</td>
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Important Information for all students:

**Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, and giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the [University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog](http://www.unr.edu/).

**Disability Services:** Any student with a disability and who needs academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring-center](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring-center)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [http://www.unr.edu/writing-center](http://www.unr.edu/writing-center)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Student Absences:** By NSHE policy in Title 4 Chapter 20 A, Section 3, paragraph 1, [http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf](http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf), there are no official absences from any university class. It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. In the event that a student misses a class because of an official university function or event or because of serious personal issues, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services may, at its discretion, send an explanation to affected faculty. The instructor shall make the final determination on whether the missed work can be done at a time other than during the regularly scheduled class period.

**Religious Holy Days:** It is the policy of NSHE (Title 4 Chapter 20 A, Section 3, paragraph 2, [http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf](http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-%20General%20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf)), to be sensitive to the religious obligations of its students. Any student missing classes, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holy days will (if possible) be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holy day absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor in advance in writing, if the student intends to participate in a religious holy day which does not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the assignment at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the institution which could not reasonably have been avoided.

**Week Preceding Thanksgiving Holiday:** Monday, November 21, Tuesday, November 22, and Wednesday, November 23 are regular class days and academic faculty contract days; therefore, classes will be held on those days and evenings as scheduled.
Fall 2014

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for the VIDEOS/FILMS

NOTE that papers with written answers to these questions must be turned in on the specified dates. Also be prepared to discuss films in class.

The Nuer (viewed September 30; paper due October 2):
Where in Africa does this film take place? What sorts of normal daily activity do the people perform? Where do they get their foods, their clothing, their material goods? How are they dressed? What educational system exists? What can you say about family life, community structure, economy, and political activity in the village? Pay attention to communal activities such as sacrifices, mass bathing, and food-redistribution --- why are these done? What are the male-only and female-only activities in this society? What do the women do to prepare the boys for initiation? What is “bride price?” What sorts of housing do the people use? What do you see the Nuer doing that appears to be religious, ritual, or otherwise special activities? What roles do cattle play in Nuer culture?

The San Bushpeople of the Kalahari (viewed October 7; paper due October 9):
Where does the film take place? What desert do the people live in? When was this film made, and by whom? How does the filmmaker feel about the people he recorded decades ago and more recently? What kinds of foods are eaten by the people, and how are they acquired? How do people learn proper behavior in this culture? What possessions do the people have, and where do they get them? What sorts of changes have occurred in the lives of people seen in this film?

The Afrikaner Experience (viewed November 6; paper due November 13):
Who are Afrikaners? What language do they speak? Where did they or their ancestors come from, and when did they arrive in Africa? Why did they come to Africa? What does “Africa” mean to an Afrikaner? How does their life differ from black Africans’ lives? How do they rationalize their social, political, and economic segregation from the other Africans? Why would the much more numerous African people allow Afrikaners to govern them for so long?

Great Zimbabwe (viewed November 13; paper due November 20):
Two major themes in this film are: 1) the European discovery of the site over 100 years ago (the German geologist Karl Mauch reported the existence of this immense site, and the film’s host David Lewis traces Mauch’s route of discovery), and 2) the Victorian-era and later interpretations of the site. Where is Great Zimbabwe located? When was the site built? Who lived in the site, and who lived around it? Who built the site? Why would some people prefer to believe that non-African people built the site? What sorts of activities may have occurred at the site? What place does the site now occupy in African thought?

No Easy Walk (viewed November 18; paper due November 25):
What countries border Zimbabwe? How did this country make the transition from minority-ruled to majority-ruled? What has happened in the country since this film was made?

Portrait of Altiné in the Dry Season (viewed December 2; paper due December 4):
Who is Altiné? Where does she live (what country, what sort of environment)? What sorts of clothes are worn? What is women’s work in this place? How is water transported from well to village? What are the important things that Altiné wants in life? Can you see how the villagers earn their living? Can you see how children are schooled or educated? How do people decide where to live, whom to marry, what to spend their time doing?
Fall 2014

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for the Required BOOKS

NOTE that papers with written answers to questions are required to be turned in on October 16 (questions about *The Harmless People* book) and December 9 (questions about the *Dancing Skeletons* book).

*The Harmless People*

Who are the "Bantu"? Who are the "bushman"? Where do Kalahari bushpeople live? What are the main events in the book? What is the book author’s attitude towards the people, places, and events she describes? How does her presence change the lives of the people? Identify who these people from the book and the important events that take place in their lives: Short Kwi, Lazy Kwi, Toma.

*Dancing Skeletons*

1. What were the author’s research questions?
2. Why did she leave part of her family behind in the USA?
3. Why did she use numbers instead of names for the people?
4. What role does speaking the local language play in research like the author’s? How did the Dettwyllers end up in Mali?
5. How did the author financially support her research? How did the author live while in Mali?
6. What is malaria, and how is it transmitted? What diseases affect children in Mali?
7. What rationales are offered by cultures that practice female circumcision? What were the attitudes of local people when they found out the author and her daughter had never been circumcised (and never would be)?
8. What sorts of cultural differences are seen in idealizations of the female form?
9. What are baches? How do they operate?
10. Why don’t Malian women carry money in purses?
11. How do the Bozo people interpret red urine?
12. What is a typical day like for a Malian woman?
13. How does the determination of an object’s sale value differ in Mali and the USA?
14. What is a "joking relationship?"
15. How does kwashiorkor develop, and why?
16. Do you think it may make sense to have as many children as possible sometimes?
17. What is the Katoune look? What may cause it?
18. Why did the people of Dogo have such bad teeth?
19. How do the Bambara justify saving the best food for elders?
20. Who was Abi, and how did his parents feel about his condition?
21. How did the author know the villagers of Famabougou practiced clan exogamy?
22. How did the author recognize malnutrition in adults and children?
23. How do the traditional Bambara people view hunting, and how is this changing?
24. Why did the author refuse to join the villagers for food?
25. How is labor traditionally divided between men and women in Bambara society?
26. Why were there tunnels in the millet fields?
27. Why do adolescent girls have larger upper arms than boys?
28. How did the Magnambougou school differ from schools in the USA?
29. Why did Miranda get malaria?
30. Why doesn’t the author equally admire Malian women and men?
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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Topic/Assignment</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 26, Day 1: Geography, climate, health, etc.; textbook pp. 1-32</td>
<td>Aug. 28, Day 2: Geography continued</td>
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<td>Sept. 2: Day 3: Regional Geography</td>
<td>Sept. 4.; Day 4: Prehistory, and forms of Governance; textbook pp. 130-190;</td>
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<td>Sept. 9, Day 5: ☢️ Quiz 1; and Slavery in Africa</td>
<td>Sept. 11, Day 6: “Culture”: Ethnography (old and new)</td>
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<td>Sept. 16, Day 7: Country Reports</td>
<td>Sept. 18, Day 8: Country Reports</td>
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<td>Sept. 23, Day 9: People &amp; languages; textbook pp. 34-45</td>
<td>Sept. 25, Day 10: Subsistence patterns; intro to Nuer film</td>
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<td>Sept. 30, Day 11: FILM: The Nuer</td>
<td>Oct. 2, Day 12: ☢️ Paper Due (Nuer film questions), and Social organization;</td>
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<td>Oct. 7, Day 13: ☢️ Quiz 2; and The ‘Bushmen’ (San, Ju’/hoansi, etc.); FILM: San Bushpeople;</td>
<td>Oct. 9, Day 14: ☢️ Paper Due (San Bushpeople film questions); in-class discussion</td>
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<td>Oct. 14, Day 15: Arts and music; textbook pp. 50-61</td>
<td>Oct. 16, Day 16: ☢️ Paper due (Harmless People bk. questions); Zambezi Valley Tonga</td>
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<td>Oct. 21, Day 17: Religion, life cycles; textbook pp. 116-125</td>
<td>Oct. 23, Day 18: ☢️ Quiz 3; and Resistance and acceptance of change</td>
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<td>Oct. 28, Day 19: Conflict/Rwanda</td>
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<td>Nov. 4, Day 21: ☢️ Quiz 4; and African nationalism and independence;</td>
<td>Nov. 6, Day 22: Apartheid South Africa, and FILM: The Afrikaner Experience</td>
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<td>Nov. 11: ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ NO CLASS – Veterans Day HOLIDAY</td>
<td>Nov. 13, Day 23: ☢️ Paper Due (Afrikaner Experience film questions); and FILM: Great Zimbabwe, &amp; discussion</td>
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<td>Nov. 18, Day 24: ☢️ Quiz 5; and FILM: No Easy Walk, &amp; discussion</td>
<td>Nov. 20, Day 25: ☢️ Paper Due (Great Zimbabwe film questions); Social changes; textbook pp. 240-269</td>
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<td>Nov. 25, Day 26: ☢️ Paper Due (No Easy Walk film questions); Social changes continued; textbook pp. 240-269</td>
<td>Nov. 27: ☻ ☻ ☻ ☻ NO CLASS – Thanksgiving HOLIDAY</td>
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<td>Dec. 2, Day 27: FILM: Portrait of Altiné in the Dry Season</td>
<td>Dec. 4, Day 28: ☢️ Paper Due (Portrait of Altiné film questions); and Climate Change</td>
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<td>Dec. 9, Day 29: ☢️ Paper Due (Dancing Skeletons book questions), &amp; discussion, Prep for Final Exam</td>
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FINAL EXAM Tuesday, December 16; 12:30-2:30 pm