

## Unit 1: Continental Comparison: Africa and the Americas

### Essential Questions

- What are some common features of historical development in Africa and the Americas? What are some key differences?
- What is civilization? Is this a useful concept? What are the key distinctions between societies within the zone of civilization and those outside of it?
- What are some of the historical myths about Africa and the Americas that historians have developed? How have other historians critiqued and revised these histories?

### Unit Outline

Class 1: Introductions; what do historians do?

Homework: Fill out introductions sheet

Class 2: Look at Canvas page; give out textbooks; Hershey's Bar activity

Homework: Read pp. lviii-lxi in the prologue

*Reading Questions:*

What's the point of studying world history?

What are some of the key contexts Strayer advises us to keep in mind as we learn about it?

Class 3: Go over the syllabus; discussion on the prologue; start reading *A Learning Secret: Don't Take Notes with a Laptop*

Homework: Finish *Learning Secret* article (no need to take notes); also read pp. 261-264 in Strayer

*Reading Questions:*

To what extent did human culture evolve similarly across the continents?

What was different about Africa and the Americas from Eurasia during the "second-wave" era?

What was different about Africa from the Americas during this period?

Class 4: Discuss reading for the big idea (and the key supporting details); big-picture comparison between Africa and the Americas in this period; activity on the making of history

Homework: Read pp. 265 (Civilizations of Africa), skip section on Meroë, and read pp. 267-269 on Axum

*Reading Questions:*

What are some of Africa's key environmental regions and constraints?

What were the key factors that allowed a powerful, centralized state at Axum to emerge?

Class 5 (September 9): Look at notes; work on Africa Atlas Activity

Homework: Read primary source 6.2 (p. 294) on Axum: *Inscription on a Stone Throne*. Make sure to read the background information Strayer gives before the source (start at the top of p. 294, at *The Making of an Axumite Empire*) and to think through the questions he poses after you finish reading the source.

Class 6: Finish Atlas Activity; go over *Inscription* source and discuss the SPARC approach to evaluating evidence

Homework: Read pp. 270-272 on the Niger Valley Civilization

*Reading Questions*

What are the key distinctive features of the Niger Valley civilization?

Historically speaking, what is particularly unusual about its development?

Class 7: discuss Niger Valley; start worksheet Myths of the “Dark Continent”

Homework: read *Ellsworth Huntington and Environmental Determinism* (no need to take notes - just highlight or underline key ideas)

Class 8: Discussion; continue worksheet

Homework: Finish Myths worksheet; read *Taking on Myths about Africa*

Class 9: Go over activity; talk how feedback and grading will work; start the night’s reading

Homework: Read pp. 272-275

*Reading Questions*

What are some of the general characteristics of Mesoamerica and its civilizations?

What were some of the defining features of the Maya?

Class 10 (September 20): discuss the Maya and look at pictures of Uxmal

Homework: Study for Reading Quiz

Class 11: Reading Quiz; look at Mayan primary sources

Homework: Read pp. 275-277

*Reading Questions*

How would you describe the city of Teotihuacán?

How was this civilization similar to and different from the Maya?

Class 12: discuss Teotihuacán; start reading *Amazonia: Part I*

Homework: Read up to p. 321 in the packet (to the section titled “Green Prison”). You don’t need to take notes, but do highlight or underline the main ideas.

Class 13: Discussion on *Part I*; read *Part II* as a class and in small groups;

Homework: Finish *Amazonia: Part II* and continue to read *Amazonia: Part III* (up to “Raindrop Physics”)

Class 14: discussion; go over the Dismantling the “Pristine Myth” Assignment and begin work on Part 1 of your letter to Betty Meggers

Homework: continue work on your letter

Class 15 (September 30th): Use the first half of the class as a work period - turn in Part 1 of your letter to Betty Meggers at the end of it; read pp. 282-283 together

Homework: Split into groups - Group A (Bantu peoples) read pp. 283-285; Group B (Ancestral Pueblo) read pp. 286-288; Group C (Mound Builders) read pp. 288-289

Class 16: Group work - identify distinguishing features of these groups, then teach them to peers from other groups.

Homework: Read *Amazonia: Part IV* (Gift from the Past) pp. 344-349

Class 17: Discussion on *Part IV*; look over feedback on on Parts 1 & 2 of your letter and start making improvements

Homework: start working on Parts 3 & 4 of your letter

Class 18: work period

Homework: finish your letter - due at the start of the next class