Final Project

African-American Contributions to the World Civilizations

by

Wasif Malik

For

Education Policy and Leadership 863

Autumn 2008
African-American Contributions to the World Civilizations

Overview:
Modern civilization has its root in Ancient Africa. The Nile, which flows out of Africa’s interior, saw some of humankind’s first step towards social organization, writing, science, art and monumental architecture, religion, mathematics and literature. African milestones along the path of human development form the unifying theme of this course. The course provides different disciplinary bases for understanding and analyzing the archeological, artistic, literary and historical evidence of African breakthroughs and contributions. The course also show the ancient as well as the more recent African legacy has evolved into a modern culture, so rich it can only be properly appreciated when it is analyzed from multiple disciplinary perspectives. During this course students will use the Internet along with other methods of research to conduct their investigations. Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon their initial views regarding the contributions of African-Americans to the civilization if their views have changed during the course of the project. Finally students will have the opportunity to creatively convey their thoughts and ideas about this topic to their peers.

Target Students:
This course & project is intended for a general high school class. However this project may be adopted to fit the curriculum needs of any middle or high school science or history course.

Learning Outcomes for the Course:
- Students will be exposed to humankind’s attempts to satisfy universal and eternal needs by solving complex problems and issues (means of communicating (invention of hieroglyphs and papyrus), building lasting structures (pyramids, thereby mathematics and engineering). Food production and distribution (initiation of irrigation and study of rising water (mileometers), social organization and kingship, deal with problem of death (by inventing philosophy and religion.)
• Students will appreciate human achievements such as examining the historical and archeological evidence of the African’s scientific, artistic and philosophical achievements to understand the laws of the universe.

• Students will comprehend the origin and development of problems and issues, and designing effective procedure and methods to investigate them.

• Students will learn to be aware that various personal, cultural and/or procedural biases are and integral part of any research endeavor.

• Students will learn to be willing to present solutions and be aware of the effects solutions may have on existing or newly created problems and issues.

• Students will learn to be aware of the complexity of problems and issues which are specifically related to individuals, communities, societies and experienced and confronted by various cultural/ethnic groups in different ways.

Procedure:
This project is required for the Students, they are to work on the major portion of their projects outside of the class, with the exception of extra time available during the regular class period. They would have to create a visual of the example to be presented (Pyramid, Presentation or Visuals of scientists or important personalities) and a paper is due at the end of the term.

Week One - Ancient Egyptian Civilization
West Might have us think that Egypt is part of Europe. We will have to show where on the map Egypt lies and its geographical location. Ancient Egyptian
civilization from Pre-dynastic through Ptolemaic times: art, archaeology, literature, and religion with research use of Sutro Egyptian Collection. Study atleast ONE of the following topics:- History, religion, culture, economic system, in ONE of the dynastic periods of the world's greatest ancient civilization, Egypt or KMT, the Black country.

**Week Two - Islamic Civilization**

Contribution of Africans in the Islamic Civilization would be the topic of study this week. Students will be encouraged to find personalities that’s have contributed to the Islamic civilization. An example of The Honorable Bilal should be given to the students. Bilal was the companion of the Prophet Mohammad, he was a slave that accepted Islam. The opponents of Prophet use to torture him, he was freed by a friend of Prophet. He became the treasurer, companion and the first to call for Prayer. When Mecca was conquered and all the idols were broken, he was asked to be the first to climb on the roof of the holiest place for Muslims and Call for Prayer. Bilal invented the Muslim Call for Prayer and was an honorable companion of Prophet. In 630 AD it was practically shown that the best among us are not based on color but deeds. Students will be encouraged to find personalities that have excelled and contributed during Islamic civilization. Some examples could be Moors of North Africa, and their contributions in the history, culture and language of Spain. The Muslim kingdoms established in the Andalucia region of southern Spain would give students various examples of contributions in navigation, science, astronomy, architecture and other various arts.

**Week Three - Visual Presentation & Discussion**

Students should be prepared to show the information that they have collected along with resources. Students will have selected an important topic or personality from the first two weeks of study. Students will be asked to explain what topic or Who they picked and Why? Examples of the work such as Pyramids, Call for Prayer(Audio) etc. should be presented. How these contributions effect the humanity? The last question should be dealt as a discussion with the presenter giving their opinion and then students expressing
asking questions and sharing how they think the person or topic had a positive effect.

**Week Four- Southern Africa**

Students should be taught African cultures from the Iron Age to 1880 with emphasis on Africa south of the Sahara. The topics to pick from are: Arts of black sub-Saharan Africa, Artistic traditions within social and historical contexts. Traditional and contemporary dance forms of the Congo and other Central African nations. Social function of dance from ritual contexts to those of daily life activities; interdependence of dance and drumming.

**Week Five - America en route Africa**

Students would be taught that regardless of popular belief that Columbus was the first who discovered America, this theory is not true from historical evidence. Students should be taught the Mayan and Aztec civilizations and their influences and similarities with South Africa as just discussed last week. Students should also been shown the map of the world before the continental divide and show how Americas were connected to Africa and still are through people. Students should also be explained the Northern American discovery by Vikings from Scandinavia through Greenland and Serbian and Chinese from Alaska and Asia. Students can pick topics from any of the above mentioned discoveries but be prohibited from including Columbus’s discovery as an authentic research.

**Week Six – Globalization via Africa**

Students would be shown via the last two week of study that globalization was possible because of the African contribution to the various civilizations. Especially in the field of engineering and major constructions. Africa’s contribution to the Physical, social, cultural, political, technological, economic, and business environment of the global empires starting with Egyptian (Week 1) to American (Week5); policy determinants, influencing economy; politics and business systems; interactions between modern development theory, world
political economy, and domestic policy; strategies and constraints to reverse underdevelopment.

**Week Seven – Future of Africa & Africans**

Students would be taught that Africa has been the silent contributor to the global civilization. Their contribution is just rarely recognized by the civilizations in their historical accounts of Africa’s contribution. Students will be shown that the people of Africa are as talented and the contributions are significant. This will be last week of lecture. Students will be allowed to ask any questions regarding the final paper due next week. Students will sign up for presentation for next week.

**Week Eight – Final Paper & Presentation Due**

Students would have to present a 5 pages paper from any of the topics discussed and mentioned above. The students will have 10 minutes to discuss their paper. There will be a 3 minute question and answer session, where other students would be encouraged to ask questions about the topic being presented.

**Assessment:**

Assessment will be conducted by using the final paper to determine if students have successfully completely the project. In addition, the final paper will be used to determine students’ initial ideas and beliefs about the contributions of African-Americans to the various civilizations. The written report will also be used to assess if students’ initial beliefs may have changed during the course of the project. Peer evaluations should be conducted during the presentation. Each presentation should be evaluated by a maximum of five peers, chosen randomly by the teacher.
Appendix A

African Global Contributions & Resources

Ancient Egypt:
The Egyptians produced early forms of paper and a written script. They developed the calendar too and made important contributions in geometry, algebra, and it seems likely that they understood and perhaps invented the use of zero. They made important contributions in mechanics, philosophy, irrigation and architecture. In medicine, the Egyptians understood the body’s dependence on the brain over 1000 years before the Greek scholar Democritus. Some historians now believe that ancient Egypt had an important influence on ancient Greece, and they point to the fact that Greek scholars such as Pythagoras and Archimedes studied in Egypt, and that the work of Aristotle and Plato was largely based on earlier scholarship in Egypt. For example, what is commonly known as Pythagoras’ theorem, was known to the ancient Egyptians hundreds of years before Pythagoras’ birth.

http://www.eternalegypt.org/
http://www.ptahhotep.com/
http://www.unc.edu/awmc/mapsforstudents.html

Islamic Civilization:
In the year 615 C. E., the Muslims were experiencing such severe persecution that the Prophet commanded a small group to flee from Mecca. He advised them to seek refuge in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), with the Christian king, al-Najashi; this migration is known as the first Hijra, or flight. This is a strong testament to the respect Africans had for Islam and the admiration and respect the Muslims had for Africans. The African king protected the Muslims and eventually accepted Islam; he later sent a delegation, which included his son, to study under the Prophet in Medina.

http://www.muslimheritage.com/
http://www.mideasti.org/library/intro-to-islam/islamic-civilization-overview

Global Africa:
Bringing all of the northern and Southern African history together. Giving a perspective on the globalization and the contributions of Africans in the new civilization. Discussing in detail the discovery of America and the misuse of Africans by the Europeans. This piece will be focused on the Africa as a whole and keeping the history of Africa in mind.

http://www.africancontributions.net/
http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v2/v2i4a2.htm
Appendix B
Visual Presentation

**Topic or Name of Person** ________________________________

**Date** ______

**Sequence** _____

**Directions.**
Using the Internet, identify each person on the bulletin board and write his or her name in the appropriate blank on this worksheet. The sequence is to be decided in the class a week before the presentation and the sheet is due at the end of Week2. Each topic should include the following aids

1. Pictures

2. Why the Topic or Person was chosen?

3. How does this or he/she impact the social fabric (community) of the time?

4. How does this or he/she impact the civilization as whole?

5. The websites used for research
Appendix C

Project Assignments

Procedure:

Part A.

Identify One Person from the fields mentioned above or any other field approved. The project will be presented on a visual format. A card board with pictures or a hand out, Power Point and submit no later than the end of week three. Students will be asked to present their visual depiction and to explain.

Part B.

Prepare a five minute presentation to creatively express your reflections or ideas about the project. This is the oral presentation component and is worth fifty points. Grading for this portion will be based on peer evaluations. The students will use visual aid for the Week three presentation and no visual is needed for the Week Eight presentation. Presentations should be of good taste and approved prior to date of presentation. Presentations will commence in week three and week eight of the project.

Part C.

Prepare a final paper that is five pages long, 1.5-spaced typed. The paper is worth fifty points and should include the following:

- Introduction to your Topic
- Why did you choose this topic?
- Explain contributions that has impacted the community in specific being study
- How the contributions has impacted the larger civilization
- Discuss initial beliefs about African-American contributions to the civilization
- Discuss how your beliefs may or may not have changed during the course of this project
- References-minimum two resources per topic
Appendix D

Name______________________________________________________

Week 3 -- Presentation Grade (50 points)

Time Requirement (5 points) __________
Does not exceed 10 minutes

Visual Presentation (10 points) __________

Creativity (10 points) __________

Loudness (5 points) __________
Can everyone hear you?

Questions & Answers (15 points) __________
Is what you’re saying clear?

Enthusiasm (5 points) __________

Total __________

Name______________________________________________________

Week 8 ---- Presentation Grade (50 points)

Time Requirement (5 points) __________
Does not exceed 5 minutes

Material/Content (15 points) __________
Examples given and the depth of research

Creativity (10 points) __________

Loudness (5 points) __________
Can everyone hear you?

Questions & Answer (15 points) __________
Is what you’re saying clear?

Enthusiasm (5 points) __________

Total __________
Appendix E

Requirements Final Paper

Your paper is to include the following components and will be graded as follows:

1) Introduction - This part should briefly introduce the topic which you have chosen to do your paper on. In addition, you must state why you choose the topic and what interests you in this specific topic or person.

2) Body - This part of the paper must include what are the contributions of Africa and Africans in this specific field. At least three examples should be given in contributions of the people of continent Africa. The paper should also discuss the historical impact of these contributions to the civilization as whole. The biographical information should also be included. Furthermore, you must discuss your initial feelings about the contribution that many Africans have made to various civilizations and how your feelings may have changed by doing this paper. Also, you must discuss your opinion on the importance of learning about African contributions from a variety of cultures.

3) Conclusion - In this part of the paper you should summarize everything up and restate briefly what you have discussed in your paper.

In addition to the above requirements your final paper will be graded on clarity (clearness), grammar, and spelling. Please see the final grade break down for the criteria the paper will be graded on.
Appendix F

Final Grade (235 points)

Final Paper:

Introduction ___________/10 points
Conclusion ____________/10 points

Requirements

Biographical Information ___________/10 points
Contribution to civilizations ___________/10 points
Cultural beliefs ___________/10 points
Reflection ___________/15 points

Content ___________/25 points
Grammar ___________/10 points

Total ___________/100 points

Total Project Grade:

Visual Presentation ___________/35 points
1st Presentation (Week 3) ___________/50 points
2nd Presentation (Week 8) ___________/50 points
Final Paper ___________/100 points

Total Percentage= ___________/235 points

Grade= ________