

Quarter/Year

Course Number

Day/Time

Instructor

Winter 2017

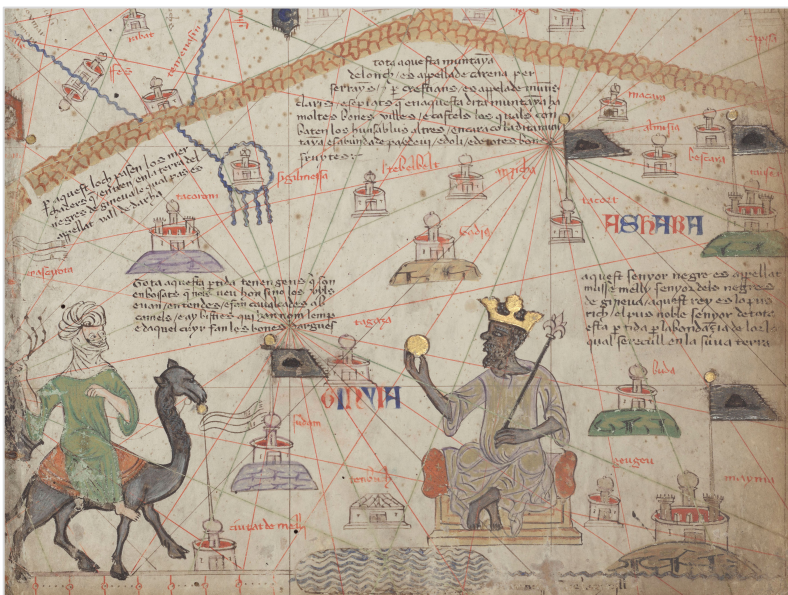
ART-HIST 390

W 2:00-4:50

Berzock; Normore

Course Title

Expanding Medieval: West Africa's Age of Empires and the Trans-Saharan Trade



Between the 8th and the 16th century—a timeframe bracketed by the rise of Islam in West Africa and the development of trade along its Atlantic coast—West African polities rose and fell, actors in a history that was stimulated by trans-Saharan trade and the external quest for West African gold. In this course students will learn about major sites that reveal the history of West Africa’s “Age of Empires” and trans-Saharan trade and will gain exposure to scholarship that addresses the expansive impact of this period. Additionally, students will consider the methodologies that are used to study cultures in the absence of expansive written and material records; ponder the usefulness and relevance of terms including “global”

and “medieval” for thinking about this epoch beyond Eurocentric frames of reference; and be exposed to issues relevant to the trade and collecting of antiquities from Africa.

Required Textbooks

Hopkins, J.F. P. and Nehemia Levtzion. *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000; all other readings on Canvas.

Assessments

Short map assignment; weekly reading response; mid-term paper (6-8 pages) and final (7-10 pages) OR final 15-minute presentation and 12-15-page research paper