



Press Release

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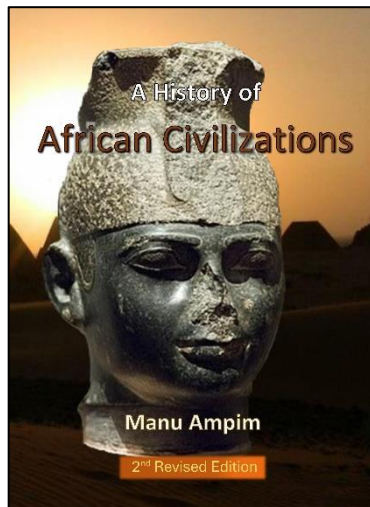
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Noted Historian Reveals A Major Omission in College Courses

California Community Colleges Omit Africa and Lack Equity in Its Curricula

OAKLAND, Calif., August 28, 2023 — The California Community College system is the largest educational system in the U.S. serving more than 1.8 million students. Yet only 2 of the 116 colleges (1.7%) offer a required course on African history for students obtaining an Associate of Arts Degree. Students majoring in History are required to take U.S. history and Western civilization courses, but African history courses are omitted from the curriculum throughout the state.

San Diego City College is one of only two California community colleges which has a *required* course on African history, and the campus requires students majoring in Black Studies to complete Black Studies 145A or 145B. Contra Costa College in San Pablo is the only California campus which requires completing an African history course for *both* History and African



American Studies majors, and its “History of African Civilizations” course (Afram 210) is the only class in the state which focuses exclusively on ancient Africa, without covering modern slavery.

Not only are courses on Africa rare in California, but there is also a scarcity of U.S. textbooks on African civilizations. The few existing books typically emphasize the modern issues of slavery, colonization, and the 20th century independence movement, while minimizing the African civilizations before the continent’s recent decline since the 16th century.

In his new book, *A History of African Civilizations* (revised 2nd edition), Manu Ampim, a tenured professor of History and Africana Studies at Contra Costa College (CCC), covers African

civilizations and the myriad of contributions from these various ancient civilizations, including in fields such as writing, medicine, mathematics, architecture, solar calendar, and social organization. The book has the same title as the course he teaches at CCC each semester. It was originally a course reader, but Ampim explains that he “converted the reader into a retail book and expanded the second edition for the general public, my students, and other professors.”

Ampim’s book is based on his first-hand research in two dozen countries over the past 34 years. He emphasizes the importance of studying ancient African civilizations at the apex of their influence, and explains that “these pre-colonial civilizations give us a glimpse into the African past before the advent of slavery, colonization, and foreigners who derailed African development.”

Ampim states in Unit 3 that it was not until the 20th century that African Studies was viewed as a subject worthy of academic study. In 1922, for example, scholar William Leo Hansberry created the first “African Civilization section” of the History Department at Howard University. However, Hansberry was ridiculed by his peers who claimed that he was focusing on a subject not worthy of scholarly attention. After Hansberry and historian Dr. Carter Woodson led the way, various Black scholars in the mid- and late-20th century wrote pioneering books on African civilizations, but these works are now decades old and do not meet the curriculum requirement that textbooks for transferable courses must be published within the past 7 years.

The California college courses on Africa, including the four-year universities, are rare due to disinterest, lack of faculty training, and a scarcity of scholarly textbooks. Ampim’s book fills this void and presents detailed information on ancient Africa, beginning with the origins of humanity, and the bulk of the book focuses on civilizations throughout the African continent. The first advanced civilization discussed is Ancient Kush, with its political capital in current-day Sudan, and Ampim describes Kush as “the oldest of Africa’s classical civilizations.” The front cover shows a bust of the Kushite King Taharqa, who was the greatest builder in Kush’s long history.

Other professors have adopted the book to supplement their classroom instruction beginning this fall semester. It is distributed by Advancing The Research. [*A History of African Civilizations*](#) (\$29.95), 216 pp. ISBN: 978-1-733652-2-3



Manu Ampim has published three books and numerous scholarly articles on his extensive field research. He is noted for his first-hand research on African civilizations in 24 countries, and his seminars which train various people on first-hand research methods in Africana Studies. He is the Chair of the History, Anthropology, and Geography Department at Contra Costa College, where he teaches about 300 students a year.

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