Introduction to the Arts & Aesthetics of Sierra Leone & Liberia, with a focus on Sowei

Monday, February 24
Above left: Jorge de Aguiar, Detail of a chart of the Mediterranean, Western Europe, and the African Coast, 1492. Below left: Sierra Leone coast with Sugar Loaf mountains to the east.
Upper left: Jodocus Hondius, Map of Guinee, circa 1620. Lower left: Jan Kips, Map of the Coast of Guinea and Bay of Sierra Leona, 1732.
Clockwise from left: Tellem peoples, Mali, Fragment of a blanket, 11th century CE. Cotton; Mende weaver operating a tripod loom, Sierra Leone, early 20th century. Mande-speaking peoples, Either Sierra Leone or Liberia, Three bolts of “Country cloth,” 20th century. Cotton.
Left: Temne peoples (Sierra Leone), *Female figure*, late 19th/early 20th century. Wood, cloth, beads, cowrie shells, buttons, fiber. Center: Dan peoples (Liberia or Cote d'Ivoire), *Deangle mask*, early 20th century. Wood, pigment, cowrie shells. Right: Mende or Sherbro peoples (Sierra Leone), *Sowei or Humui mask*, late 19th century/early 20th century. Wood, metal, pigment.
Left: Temne villagers surrounding nowo, Sierra Leone, 1976.
Mende peoples, *Ndoli jouei* leading a group of sande initiates and members, Sierra Leone.
Mende peoples, Ndoli jowei dancing in a public setting, Sierra Leone, 1980s.
Examples of *souei* and their assorted characteristics and visual elements.
Left: Mende peoples, Sande initiates and members alongside ndoli jowei, Sierra Leone, 1959. Right: Mende peoples, Sande members teaching initiates the society’s songs and dances, Sierra Leone, 1980s.
Upper right: Mende peoples, Sande members alongside ndoli jowei, Sierra Leone, 1980s. Lower right: Mende peoples, Newly installed Sande members after undergoing initiation, Sierra Leone, 1980s.
Upper left: Mende peoples (Sierra Leone), Postcard showing newly installed Sande members alongside *ndoli jowei*, Sierra Leone, 1910s. Lower left: Mende peoples, Sande initiates in the bush, Sierra Leone, 1980s.
Vai peoples (Northwestern Liberia, Southeastern Sierra Leone)
Vai-Gola peoples (West/Northwestern Liberia & Southeastern Sierra Leone)
Sherbro-Bullom peoples (Coastal Sierra Leone)
Kpa-Mende peoples (Western branch) (Central Sierra Leone)
Sewa-Mende peoples (Central branch) (Central Sierra Leone)
Ko-Mende peoples (Eastern branch) (Central Sierra Leone)
Temne peoples
(Northwestern Sierra Leone)
Bassa peoples (Southwestern Central Liberia)