

Department of Geography, University of Illinois

Geog 455: Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa Course Syllabus for Spring 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Africa is the second largest continent in the world by both area and population and the most diverse continent in terms of human culture. It is widely accepted that it is the original home of homo sapiens. It has contributed its fair share to world civilization by generating such great civilizations as Ancient Egypt, Meroe, Great Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. Its universities predated those of the Western world. Its rich natural and human resources constituted an integral part in the economic development of modern Europe and North America. It still has most of the world's strategic minerals, the second largest rain forest region, produces most of the world's tropical foods and other products. Yet Africa is the most misunderstood and most misrepresented continent in the world. The name Africa has become synonymous with poverty, tribal conflicts, political instability, starving people, and recently the HIV/AIDS and Ebola epidemics.

This course is designed to expose you to the true Africa, through a geographic perspective. Geography is concerned with understanding the distribution patterns of phenomena, and their ever-changing nature, in an area of interest. To this end, geographers use every factor that will help them to understand the distribution pattern of whatever they are studying. Such factors could be historical, political, economic or physical. In this course, our phenomena are the current physical and human conditions and our area of interest is Africa south of the Sahara. Such conditions include the patterns of the physical environment, people, livelihoods, and general economic development. We will examine the spatial patterns of these conditions, the factors that have influenced their evolution and past and present efforts to resolve the problems that might be associated with them.

Specifically, at the end of this course you will be able to:

- Describe the physical environment of Africa, and explain the factors that have shaped and continue to shape it.
- Describe in broad outlines the historical evolution, demographic, cultural, economic, political, and current livelihood structures and characteristics of Africa, and explain the factors that have shaped them and continue to do so.
- Describe and explain the differences between the historical evolution of the African people and cultures, and western cultures, and the impact of such differences on the current human conditions in Africa.
- Describe, analyze, and articulate the causes and possible solutions of problems facing the African people in their struggle for development.
- Demonstrate a deeper knowledge about Africa, its people, cultures, and geography

These objectives will be achieved through lectures, discussion, video/films, slide shows, quizzes, and examinations.

OFFICE HOURS FOR PROFESSOR EZEKIEL KALIPENI:

Office: 216 Davenport, Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00am -12:20pm or by appointment in Room 245 Computer Applications Building at the corner of Springfield Avenue and 6th Street. E-mail: kalipeni@illinois.edu; Tel: (217)244-7708

Teaching times for this class: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30PM - 01:50PM in Room 313 Davenport Hall

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is imperative that you attend all lectures. Classes consist primarily of lectures and discussion sessions. A series of videos will also be shown. These videos may or may not be available in the University of Illinois media library. Thus regular class attendance will be advantageous in this respect. The videos are important as they illustrate important case-studies of the materials discussed in lectures. There will also be regular reading quizzes taken in class either as group exercises or individually.

GRADING DISTRIBUTION

Course grades will be distributed according to the following points

1. Midterm (Exam 1)	20%
2. Final (Exam 2)	25%
3. Two video reviews	14%
4. Discussion Quizzes (from readings and case studies)	16%
5. End of term paper	15%
7. Map Quizzes	10%

There is no extra credit requirement in this course. That is you cannot improve your grade by doing additional work for credit. This means that the only way to bring your grade up after a low performance in an examination or an exercise is to work harder on the subsequent ones.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. Stock, Robert. 2013. *Africa South of the Sahara: A Geographical Interpretation* (Third Edition). New York: Guildford Press.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

2. Krabacher, T.; Kalipeni, E. and Layachi, A. 2013. *Global Issues: Africa* (14th edition). Boston, MA, or Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw-Hill Contemporary Learning Series.
3. "Africa: Whatever You Thought, Think Again." 2005. *National Geographic*. September. Web site: www.ngm.com/africa
4. Dugard, Martin. 2004. *Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone*. New York: Broadway (ISBN: 0767910745)
5. There will also be a set of articles posted in the e-reserves folder on the Compass website which we will read as we go along.

WEB RESOURCES

Illinois Compass homepage for this class: <https://compass2g.illinois.edu/>

GRADING SCALE

96 - 100	A+
93-95	A
90-92	A-
86-89	B+
83-85	B
80-82	B-
76-79	C+

73-75	C
70-72	C-
66-69	D+
60-65	D
54-59	D-
<54	F

COURSE OUTLINE

Tue Jan 20	Course Introduction, Syllabus
Thu Jan 22	Introduction to Africa Readings: Stock, Chapters 1-3
Tue Jan 27	The African Past Readings: Stock, Chaps 10-12
Thu Jan 29	The African Past (continued) Readings: Stock, Chaps 10-12
Tue Feb 3	The African Past (continued) Incredible Human Journey - Out of Africa 1/5 HD https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd9sjZNfRCK
Thu Feb 5	Discussion/Reading Quiz for Chapters 1, 2, 10-12
Tue Feb 10	Physical Features Readings: Stock, Chapters 7-9
Thu Feb 12	Physical Features (continued)
Tue Feb 17	Map Quiz 1: Physical features (Lakes, Rivers and Mountains) Readings: Stock, Chapters 7, 8, 9
Thu Feb 19	Africa's Post-Independence Era
Tue Feb 24	Politics and Governance, Case 1: Film: <i>The Last King of Scotland</i>
Thu Feb 26	Finish off viewing <i>The Last King of Scotland</i> Population Distribution, Growth and Mobility Readings: Stock 13-15
Tue Mar 3	Map Quiz 2: Countries Discussion/Reading Quiz for chapters 13-15 Due: Two page reflection paper on the Film: " <i>The Last King of Scotland</i> "
Thu Mar 5	Examination 1 (Midterm) Readings: Class notes; Stock, Chapters 1-15
Tue Mar 10	Politics and Governance, Case 2: Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>
Thu Mar 12	Finish off viewing the Film: <i>Hotel Rwanda</i> Map Quiz 3: Capital Cities and other Major Cities

- Tue Mar 17 Economy: Agriculture
 Readings: Stock, Chapters 19-21
 Due: Two page reflection paper of *Hotel Rwanda*
- Thu Mar 19 Economy: Agriculture
 Video: Land Rush - Why Poverty?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_pKnP-2mOQ
- Sat Mar 21} Spring Vacation**
Sun Mar 29} (No classes)
- Thu Apr 2 Economy: Urban economies and societies
 Readings, Chapter 22-24
- Tue Mar 31 Economy: Fishing and Forestry
 Readings: Stock, Chapters 19-21, 25-27
- Tue Apr 7 Economy: Mineral and Energy Production
 Readings: Stock, Chapter 25-27;
 Video: Stealing Africa - Why Poverty?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNYemuiAOfU>
- Thu Apr 9 Economy: Manufacturing Activities, Chapters 16-17
- Tue Apr 14 Economy: Manufacturing Activities (continued) Chapters 16-17
 Discussion/Reading Quiz for Chapters 16-21 & 25-27
- Thu Apr 16 Social Geography: Poverty
 Reading: Chapter 28
- Tue Apr 21 Social Geography: Health and Disease Readings: Stock, Chap 29
- Thu Apr 23 Modernizing Africa
 Readings: Stock, Chapters 30 & Conclusion
 Film: *The Gods Must Be Crazy*
- Tue Apr 28 End of term paper presentations in class
- Thu Apr 30 End of term paper presentations in class
 Due Two page reflection paper of *The Gods Must Be Crazy*
- Tue May 5 Course Summary and Review for Final Exam
 Due: *End of Term Paper*
- Thu May 14 Final Exam, 7:00-10:00PM in 313 Davenport**