

Geography 243: Regional Geography of Africa¹ Spring Semester, 2009

Class Time and Location: 9:40-11:10, Tuesdays & Thursdays, Rm 107, Carnegie Hall

Instructor: Bill Moseley

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Teaching Assistants: Caroline Rendon (crendon@macalester.edu). Office Hours: Monday, 7-9pm and Tuesday, 9-9:40am. Emily Matthews (ematthews@macalester.edu). Office Hours: Wed, 7-9pm and Thurs 9-9:40am. TAs hold office hours in the geography office (Car 104) or Car 109.

Course Description and Objectives

Sub-Saharan Africa has long been depicted in the media as a place of crisis – a region of the world often known for civil strife, disease, corruption, hunger and environmental destruction. This perception is not entirely unfounded, after all, HIV/AIDS in east and southern Africa, civil war in Sudan, or drought in Ethiopia are known problems. Yet Africa is a place of extraordinarily diverse, vibrant, and dynamic cultures. Many Africans also expertly manage their natural resources, are brilliant agriculturalists and have traditions of democratic governance at the local level. As such, the African story is extremely diverse and varied. The thoughtful student must work hard to go beyond the superficial media interpretations of the vast African continent and appreciate its many realities without succumbing to a romanticized view. As geographers, we will attempt to place contemporary African developments in a historical and global context. Africa has a long history of influencing and being influenced by the outside world. Among other issues, we will explore how colonialism, and even more recent ‘development’ initiatives, have influenced current structures in Africa. Furthermore, we will examine what restrictions, if any, the current world economic system places on development possibilities in Africa.

The course provides a basic background in African geography, leading to discussion of advanced topics in contemporary African studies. I take a systematic rather than regional approach in this course, examining sets of issues, rather than regions of Africa. We will cover a broad range of topics in the course, including: African stereotypes; Africa in historical perspective; Physical geography (physical landscapes, climate, vegetation, soils); Human-Environment Interactions (forest degradation, desertification); Population dynamics (population growth, distribution and mobility); Geography and Development (ideology and economic development, Africa in the global economy); Social Geography (African women and development, education); Agricultural Development (traditional farming systems, cash crops, policy); Urban Economies (evolution of the urban structure, industry, housing); and Political Geography (democratization, conflict).

¹ This course counts toward the geography major, the African studies concentration, the international diversity requirement and the social science distribution requirement.

Format

The class will meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The class will be conducted with both lectures and in-class discussions. Students are expected to have done all assigned reading before coming to class, and be prepared to discuss it. In addition to normal classroom banter, we will have several designated discussion days during the term (see schedule).

This is your class, and I want to know how it's going. Please let me know if you would like to see changes, from lecture topics to grading. You are welcome to speak with me after class or to visit me in my office. The surest way to contact me is to send me e-mail (moseley@macalester.edu), which normally will be responded to promptly during normal business hours.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform well in this class, please see me early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and cheating are both academic crimes. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension from the college. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will be reported to the provost in line with recognized college procedures.

Texts

1) Aryeetey-Attoh, Samuel (ed.). 2010. Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa. 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (ISBN (0-13-605631-8).

2) Moseley, W.G. (ed.) 2009. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues. 3rd Edition. Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill. (ISBN 978-0-07-351518-2)

3) Spindel, Carol. 1989. In the Shadow of the Sacred Grove. New York: Vintage Books (ISBN: 0-679-72214-9) (this book is out of print and is available via electronic reserve).

4) Some readings on reserve in library and via electronic reserves (see reading list below)

Handouts will be distributed from time to time in class. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts for students who are absent from class.

Assignments/Exams

Reading: Reading assignments related to course lectures are listed on the outline of topics that follows. Information from the textbook supplements lecture and forms the basis of a two-way class dialog. Readings for discussion days are listed separately below.

Participation and Discussion days: The course will be oriented towards discussion for roughly one quarter of class time (see schedule). The purpose of the discussion classes is to facilitate

critical analysis and lively dialog on controversial issues related to African studies. I have organized discussions around a key set of issues in African Studies with pairs of readings representing contrasting viewpoints on each topic. While no issue in African studies has a simple yes or no answer, discussion readings have been organized as such to encourage debate and, hopefully, accelerate your heart rate.

The majority of class participation points will be derived from your comments in discussion. A few participation points will also be derived from my assessment of your participation in the lecture sessions (based on cogency of comments, questions, and answers to questions). Participation points are relatively easy to obtain if you keep up with the reading and speak up during discussion. Please see me if you have difficulty speaking in class. Student discussion leaders will be assigned to facilitate these sessions.

In my opinion, the best discussions are those in which: 1) students listen (and learn) from one another and build on what each other is saying; 2) the discussion is focused on understanding the main argument of each reading and breaking down and analyzing this argument to see if it makes sense; 3) making connections between readings (when several are assigned on the same day) by identifying where authors agree and disagree; and 4) relating insight gained from reading and discussion to other texts or real life events. In sum, I want you to approach discussion as an on-going scholarly debate in which we (as a community of scholars and learners) are attempting to advance our collective knowledge. After the first discussion day, student discussion leaders will be assigned to facilitate our scholarly debates.

Map quizzes: Two map quizzes will be given during the semester. The first will cover physical geography (lakes, mountains, vegetative cover, etc) while the second will cover certain aspects of human geography (countries, languages, major cities, etc). Study guides will be given out well in advances of quiz dates.

Africanist geographer profile: In order to gain a better understanding of how geographers have gone about investigating issues in Africa, students will write a five page paper reviewing the career and writings of a geographer whose work is (largely) Africa related. Ideally you will select a geographer who does research on a topic (or uses techniques) that are of interest to you. Such geographers may be deceased or living, based in the US or abroad, faculty or research scientists. In writing this paper you may wish to: locate the scholar's cv/resume on-line, interview the person in question (if they are alive), review some of their publications, read other people's reviews of their publications, and assess how their ideas have contributed to broader understanding in the field. Guidelines for this paper will be distributed well in advance of the due date, as well as suggestions for identifying scholars who may be of interest.

Final Project - Regional Development Analysis: The class will be divided into six groups who will work individually and collectively to assemble a development assessment and action plan for a major region of Sub-Saharan Africa: 1) Sahelian West Africa, 2) Coastal West Africa, 3) Central Africa, 4) Horn of Africa, 5) East Africa, and 6) Southern Africa. Each report will be composed of an executive summary penned by the group (five double-spaced pages in length), followed by five to six chapters – each authored by an individual student in the group (10-15 double spaced pages in length). Each of these chapters should cover a specific development

sector for the region such as health/population, education, agriculture, environment, politics/governance, urban development, commercial development, etc. Chapter authors should review the main development challenges in a specific sector for the region, and then focus on one or two issues and how they might best be addressed. More specific guidelines will be distributed in class.

Final Project Presentation: Each group (3-6 students per group) will make a 20-30 minute presentation of their regional development assessment and action plan during the last two days of class.

Midterms: Two midterms will be given, each covering material from one half of the term. Exams will be about 1/3 multiple choice and 2/3 essay and short answer questions.

**Make-up exams will only be given in the event of illness or other verifiable emergency. In the event of an absence during an exam or quiz, it is the student's responsibility to contact me no later than one (1) class period after the test date.

Grading and Exams

Grade Components

First Midterm (3/10):	22.5%
Second Midterm (5/9):	22.5%
Map quiz 1 (2/10):	4%
Map quiz 2 (4/7):	4%
Africanist geographer profile (3/13):	7%
Regional development policy report (5/6):	20%
Group presentation (4/30 or 5/5):	5%
<u>Participation:</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total:	100%

Final grades are based on a weighted average for the term. Grade cutoff points (in terms of percentage) are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 67-69%; D = 63-66%; D- = 60-62%, NC = < 60%.

Tentative Schedule and Assigned Readings For Lecture

Please note that this is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes. All lecture-related readings are in Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa, 3rd ed. unless otherwise noted.

Wk	Dates	Lecture and Discussion Topics		Lecture Readings
		Tuesday	Thursday	
1	27-29 Jan	Intro	Intro Lecture: Physical geography of Africa	Chap 1-2; preface and intro chap in <i>Taking sides</i>
2	3-5 Feb	Lecture: Physical geography of Africa Lecture: Africa in historical perspective	<u>Discussion 1: Africa in Historical and Global Perspective</u>	Chap 3, 5
3	10-12 Feb	Map quiz 1: Physical Geography ; Lecture: Africa in historical perspective	Lecture: Population dynamics and health	Chap 8
4	17-19 Feb	Lecture <u>Discussion 2: Population Debates, Dynamics and Health</u>	Lecture: Population dynamics and health Lecture: Village Life and Time Geography	Chap 13
5	24-26 Feb	<u>Discussion 3: Village Life</u>	Lecture: Agriculture and Livelihoods	Chap 14
6	3-5 Mar	Lecture <u>Discussion 4 : Agriculture</u>	Lecture: Land Reform	
7	10-12 March	Midterm Exam	Lecture: Urban Economies, Africanist geographer profile due 3/13	Chap 10-11
	17-19 March	Spring Break		
8	24-26 March	Film: Black Gold (on Ethiopian Coffee for global market)	Lecture: Environmental Management	Chap 4
9	31 Mar – 2 April	Lecture <u>Discussion 5: Human-Environment Interactions</u>	Lecture: Development and Underdevelopment	Chap 9
10	7-9 April	Map quiz 2: human geography <u>Discussion 6: Development</u>	Guest lecture to be confirmed: Abdi Samatar (development in Botswana)	Chap 15
11	14-16 April	Lecture: Political Geography	<u>Discussion 7: Political Geography</u>	Chap 6
12	21-23 Apr	Film about anti-Apartheid struggle: “Amandla: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony”	Lecture: socio-cultural geography and music	Chap 7, 12
13	28-30 Apr	<u>Discussion 8: Socio-cultural geography</u>	Student Presentations	
14	5 May	Student Presentations	Final Project due Wed, May 6 @ 5pm	
	May 9	2nd Midterm Exam (Sat, May 9, 8-10am)		

Discussion Reading Schedule

Note: All discussion readings are in Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues, 3rd ed. (unless otherwise noted by **).

1) Thursday, February 5: Africa in historical and global perspective

ISSUE 1. Did the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Underdevelop Africa?

YES: Paul Lovejoy, from “The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of African History* (1989)

NO: John Thornton, from “Chapter 3: Slavery and African Social Structure,” *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (1992)

ISSUE 3: Is European Subjugation of Africans Ultimately Explained by Differences in Land, Plant and Animal Resources?

YES: Jared Diamond, from “Why Europeans were the ones to colonize Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies.*(1999)

NO: Lucy Jarosz, from “A Human Geographer’s Response to Guns, Germs and Steel: The Case of Agrarian Development and Change in Madagascar.” *Antipode* (2003)

ISSUE 4. Did Colonialism Distort Contemporary African Development?

YES: Marcus Colchester, from “Slave and Enclave: Towards a Political Ecology of Equatorial Africa,” *The Ecologist* (1993)

NO: Robin M. Grier, from “Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth,” *Public Choice* (1999)

2) Tuesday, February 17: Population Debates, Dynamics and Health.

ISSUE 9. Is Food Production in Africa Capable of Keeping Up With Population Growth?

YES: Michael Mortimore and Mary Tiffen, from “Population and Environment in Time Perspective: The Machakos Story,” *People and Environment in Africa* (1995)

NO: John Murton, from “Population Growth and Poverty in Machakos District, Kenya,” *The Geographical Journal* (1999)

ISSUE 14: Is the International Community Focusing on HIV/AIDS Treatment at the Expense of Prevention in Africa?

YES: Andrew Creese et al. “Cost-Effectiveness of HIV/AIDS Interventions in Africa: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. *The Lancet* (2002)

NO: Philip Hilt. “Changing Minds: Botswana Beats Back AIDS.” *Rx for Survival: Why We Must Rise to the Global Challenge* (2005)

3) Tuesday, February 24, Village Life

****In the Shadow of the Sacred Grove (all chapters) (e-reserve)**

4) Tuesday, March 3: Agricultural Development and Food Security

ISSUE 2: Have the Contributions of Africans Been Recognized for Developing New World Agriculture?

****YES:** Richard Schulze, “The Rise and Fall of Carolina Gold,” *Carolina Gold Rice* (2005) **e-reserve)**

NO: Judith Carney, from “Agroenvironments and Slave Strategies in the Diffusion of Rice Culture to the Americas.” *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies* (2003)

ISSUE 10: Does African Agriculture Need a Green Revolution?

YES: Kofi Annan, from “Remarks on the Launch of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa at the World Economic Forum.” (2007)

NO: Carol Thompson. “Africa: Green Revolution or Rainbow Revolution.” *Foreign Policy in Focus* (2007)

5) Tuesday, March 31, Human-Environment Interactions

ISSUE 8: Does the Conflict in the Darfur Region of Sudan have environmental causes?

YES: UN Environment Programme. from “Conflict and the Environment,” *Sudan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment* (2007)

NO: Lydia Polgreen. from “A Godsend for Darfur, or a Curse.” *New York Times* (2007)

ISSUE 11. Is Sub-Saharan Africa Experiencing a Deforestation Crisis?

YES: Kevin M. Cleaver and Götz A. Schreiber, from *Reversing the Spiral: The Population, Agriculture, and Environment Nexus in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1997)

NO: Thomas J. Bassett and Koli Bi Zuéli, from “Environmental Discourses and the Ivorian Savanna,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (2000)

6) Tuesday, April 7: Development and Underdevelopment

ISSUE 5. Have Free-Market Policies Worked for Africa?

YES: Gerald Scott, from “Who Has Failed Africa? IMF Measures or the African Leadership?” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (August 1998)

NO: Thandika Mkandawire, from “The Global Economic Context,” *Towards a New Map of Africa* (London: Earthscan 2005)

ISSUE 7: Is Increasing Chinese Investment Good for African Development

YES: Ali Zafar. from “The Growing Relationship Between China and Sub-Saharan Africa: Macroeconomic, Trade and Investment Links,” *World Bank Research Observer* (2007)

NO: Pdraig Carmody and Francis Owusu. From “Competing Hegemons? Chinese versus American Geoeconomic Strategies in Africa,” *Political Geography* (2007)

Are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Effective at Facilitating Community Development?

YES: Bernard J. Lecompte and Anirudh Krishna, from “Six-S: Building Upon Traditional Social Organizations in Francophone West Africa,” *Reasons for Hope: Instructive Experiences in Rural Development* (West Harford: Kumarian Press, 1997) **e-reserve

NO: Giles Mohan, from “The Disappointments of Civil Society: The Politics of NGO Intervention in Northern Ghana,” *Political Geography* (2002) **e-reserve

7) Thursday, April 16, Political Geography

ISSUE 17. Is Foreign Assistance Useful for Fostering Democracy in Africa?

YES: Arthur A. Goldsmith, from “Donors, Dictators, and Democrats in Africa,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* (2001)

NO: Julie Hearn, from “Aiding Democracy? Donors and Civil Society in South Africa,” *Third World Quarterly* (2000)

Issue 18: Is Corruption the Result of Poor African Leadership?

YES: Robert I. Rotberg, from “The Roots of Africa’s Leadership Deficit,” *Center for Public Leadership* (2003)

NO: Arthur A. Goldsmith, from “Risk, Rule, and Reason: Leadership in Africa,” *Public Administration and Development* (2001)

ISSUE 19. Are African-Led Peacekeeping Missions More Effective than

YES: David Gompert. From “For a Capability to Protect: Mass Killing, The African Union and NATO,” *Survival* (2006)

NO Nsonurua Udombana. From “ Still Playing Dice with Lives: Darfur and Security Council Resolution 1706,” *Third World Quarterly* (2007)

8) Tuesday, April 28: Social Issues and Gender

ISSUE 12. Should Female Genital Cutting Be Accepted as a Cultural Practice?

YES: Fuambai Ahmadu, from “Rites and Wrongs: Excision and Power among Kono Women of Sierra Leone,” in B. Shell-Duncan and Y. Hernlund, eds., *Female ‘Circumcision’ Africa: Culture, Controversy, and Change* (2001)

NO: Population Reference Bureau, from “Abandoning Female Genital Cutting: Prevalence, Attitudes, and Efforts to End the Practice,” A Report of the Population Reference Bureau (2001)

Richard A. Shweder, from “What About ‘Female Genital Mutilation’? And Why Understanding Culture Matters in the First Place,” *Daedalus* (2000) (e-reserve**).

ISSUE 13. Are Women in a Position to Challenge Male Power Structures in Africa?

YES: Richard A. Schroeder, from *Shady Practices: Agroforestry and Gender Politics in The Gambia* (1999)

NO: Human Rights Watch, from “Double Standards: Women’s Property Rights Violations in Kenya,” *A Report of Human Rights Watch* (2003)

Welcome to the course! I look forward to working with you this semester.