

GEOG 2030A: Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa

COURSE OUTLINE

FALL – 2015

Instructor: Dr. Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong

Email: hnyantak@uwo.ca

Office: SSC – Room 2219

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:00 to 1:00 pm, or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesdays 9:30 to 11:30 am

Lecture Room: MC 110

Course Website: OWL <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

TA: Lydia Osei (Email: losei3@uwo.ca).Office Hours: Wed. 11am-12pm (SSC 2256)

ABOUT THE COURSE

What are the historical roots of (under)development in sub-Saharan Africa? How is sub-Saharan Africa typically depicted in the media and why? How can we explain the fact that the Niger Delta provides the bulk of Nigeria's revenue, and yet, it remains the poorest part of the country? Is climate change the major cause of persistent food insecurity in the drylands of Ethiopia and Burkina Faso? How can we make sense of the uneven geography of poverty in Ghana? What explains urban food insecurity in Cape Town, or land struggles in rural South Africa? What are the social processes underlying the spatial disparity in health status in Malawi, or gender differences in HIV rates in Nyanza province, Kenya? And why do land users often resist state conservation efforts in Tanzania?

These are some of the critical questions explored in this course. The primary aim is to provide a critical introduction to the geography of sub-Saharan Africa. We will begin by exploring how “the Africa story” is told by the media, scholars and policymakers. Attention will then shift to understanding the key historical processes that shape (under)development in the region. We will cover a broad range of topics, including governance, colonial history, debt and structural adjustment, foreign aid, food and agriculture, gender, climate change, land grabbing, health, population growth, migration, remittances, and resource extraction. We cannot possibly cover all these topics in greater detail; indeed some are too vast and complex. We will however use specific case studies to illustrate and discuss each of the topics.

KEY LEARNING GOALS:

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of the geographic contexts of sub-Saharan Africa, including an overview of the physical, bioclimatic, cultural, political, demographic, health and economic geographies of the region.
2. Describe and critique the dominant approaches to development in sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Understand the fundamental roots of opportunities and problems faced by sub-Saharan African countries.
4. Assess how geographical concepts such as ‘place’, ‘scale’ and ‘human-environment relations’ could be applied to specific issues in sub-Saharan African.
5. Strengthen skills of critical writing, cartography/map reading, data analysis, and how to use evidence to support an argument.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

There are no prerequisites for Geography 2030A.

CLASS FORMAT:

Geography 2030A encourages critical learning with the full participation of students. The class will be organized using lectures, documentary films, occasional guest speakers and in-class discussions. The class discussions are the most salient aspect of the course. Students are expected to have done all assigned readings before coming to class. Occasionally, I might ask students to prepare and lead a given aspect of the class, or to introduce a guest speaker, or to facilitate a guest speaker's Q&A session. The first twenty minutes of every lecture will be facilitated by students. Perhaps you have visited Africa, and you took a photograph of something that illustrates one of the concepts we are studying in class. Perhaps you have stumbled across a news item that merits discussion or raises questions. Or perhaps you want to talk about some breaking news in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Come up to the front of the room before I begin the day's lecture, and you can take a few minutes to share interesting items/news with everyone in the class. The course will be web-assisted using [OWL](#). You should check this website regularly.

EXPECTATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:

The following are strategies for completing this class with a strong and stress-free grade:

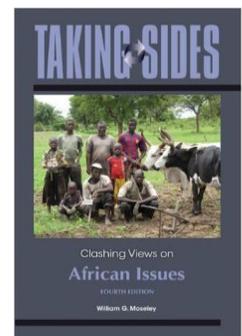
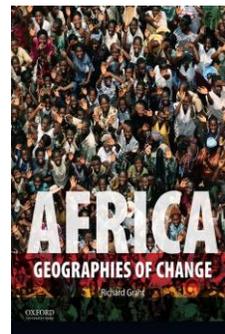
1. Be active in your own learning. Attend all classes and contribute to course discussions.
2. Do not come to class if you plan to sleep, text or surf the internet. It's distracting to me as an instructor and to your fellow classmates.
3. Read ahead, take the assignments seriously, and complete your work thoughtfully.
4. Ask questions and make use of office hours if you need extra help. I will not be able to help you with your course requirements unless you inform me of your circumstances.
5. Do not plagiarize.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Two textbooks are required for this course. The books are available for purchase at the Western Bookstore.

1. Grant, R. (2015). *Africa: Geographies of Change*. New, York: Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 978-0-19-992056-3)
2. Moseley, W.G. (2012), *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues* (4th Edition). McGraw-Hill. (ISBN: 978-0078050084)

- Other key readings and maps will be posted on OWL.



COURSE GRADE:

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Grade Component	% of Final Grade	Dates
Participation	15%	Entire Semester
Weekly Country Updates (10 in total)	10%	Tuesdays by 9:33 am
Map Quiz	10%	October 13, 2015
Assignments (5 in total) <i>Assignment#1 =2%</i> <i>Assignment#2 =3%</i> <i>Assignment#3 =4%</i> <i>Assignment#4 =4%</i> <i>Assignment#5 =7%</i>	20%	Tuesdays by 9:33 am
Mid-Term Exam	20%	November 3, 2015
Final Exam	25%	TBA

PARTICIPATION (15%):

Class participation is one of the most crucial aspects of this course. We will devote considerable class time to discussing the weekly country updates, and the issues in the textbook by William Moseley. Students are expected to have done all assigned readings before coming to class. You can expect to be called upon during each class to provide your thoughts and reflections on the course materials. Whilst I do not keep attendance, I will know each student’s name by the end of the 3rd week. Please note that class attendance is not the same as class participation. Participation is also not just about offering frequent contributions. For this course, I will be looking at how students offer thoughtful comments which pose good questions for the class. Students should strive to show a high degree of maturity and respect during class discussions. Typically, students come to this course with a wide range of views. Thus, you should be mentally prepared to tolerate people who take positions that are markedly different from yours. At any point in the semester, please feel free to ask about your participation grade and how you can work to improve it.

WEEKLY COUNTRY UPDATES (10%):

During the first day of class, each student will be asked to select one country in sub-Saharan Africa. Throughout the semester, students are required to submit weekly updates (10 in total) on any major event in the chosen country. The weekly updates should be **between 400 and 500 words**, and should be formatted as follows: *Times New Roman, 12 point font, single-spaced*. Your essay will be graded based upon **how you contextualize the news and show its relevance to the course materials**. As such, I encourage you to divide your response into two short paragraphs. The first paragraph (~150 words) should summarize the news, its source,

and the date published. Please do not simply cut & paste. Note also that news items must be current (not more than six days old). The second and most salient paragraph (~350 words) should provide **a critical commentary that places the news within the larger context of major themes in the class**. You are encouraged to visit the course website for samples of excellent country updates from previous classes. Country updates are due by **9:33am on Tuesdays**. The following sites provide an excellent coverage, on a day-by-day basis, of news from Africa:

All Africa News: <http://allafrica.com/>

BBC World Services: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>

One World Africa: <http://africa.oneworld.net/>

USA Africa online: <http://usafricaonline.com/>

The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/africa/index.html>

The UK Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/africa/roundup>

MAP QUIZ (10%):

One Map Quiz will be given **on October 13, 2015**. The quiz will be based on maps and materials covered in the course. Students are required to know major physical features (e.g. lakes, rivers, mountains, etc.), the location of each country, as well as all capital cities in sub-Saharan Africa. At the very least, you should be able to distinguish Lesotho from South Africa or Malawi from Mozambique! A study guide will be provided. The following website might be useful in preparing for the Map Quiz:

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/African_Geography.htm

ASSIGNMENTS (20%):

Five homework exercises will be assigned during the semester. Each homework has its own degree of difficulty, and the level of difficulty increases as the semester progresses. More details will be provided in class. Homework should be handed in by **9:33 am on the due date**.

MID-TERM EXAM (20%): The mid-term exam will be cumulative and closed book. It is scheduled for **9:30am-11:30am on November 3, 2015**. The format will be short answer questions. A study guide will be provided.

FINAL EXAM (25%): The final exam will be cumulative and closed book. The date will be set by the registrar's office. The format will include short answer questions, map work and one essay. You cannot take the final examination earlier than the scheduled date.

LATE POLICY, MISSED EXAMS & HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS:

1. All country updates and assignments must be handed in **Latest by 9:33 am on the due date. There will be no extensions.**
2. **All late assignments & country updates will not be graded.**
3. Please do not e-mail your assignment/weekly country update to the instructor or the TA. The Geography Department does not print assignments for students. Print your work and bring it to class.
4. If you will not be in class, make arrangements for someone to submit your work on your behalf.
5. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of verifiable emergencies.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR:

You are welcome to speak with me after class, or to visit me during office hours. I will be happy to see you to discuss the course, to provide additional readings, to help you prepare for the map quiz or exams, or to talk about graduate school in *Human Geography*. Outside class and my regular office hours, the surest way to contact me is to send an e-mail hnyantak@uwo.ca which will be responded to promptly. If you have a question concerning your course grade, come and talk to me during office hours, rather than sending an e-mail.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES
1	September 15	Introduction, Course Organization and Expectations	- This Syllabus	- Introduce Assignment#1
2	September 22	<p>LECTURE 1: Reframing and Representing African Affairs</p> <p>LECTURE 2: The Map of Africa and the Physical Environment</p> <p>LECTURE 3: What is the Current State of Development in Africa?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapters 1 and 2 - Moseley: pp. xxi-xxv - Adichie, C. (2009). The danger of a single story. - Chapter 3 - The UNDP 2014 Human Development Report 	- Country Update#1 Due
3	September 29	LECTURE 4: Africa in Historical Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 4 - Moseley, Issue 4: pp. 53-68 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#2 Due - Assignment#1 Due - Introduce Assignment#2

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES
4	October 6	<p>LECTURE 5: Health and Disease Burden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study 1: HIV/AIDS - Case Study 2: Malaria - Case Study 3: Ebola <p>Map Quiz Review Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 9 - Moseley, Issue 15: pp. 296-326 - Mojola, S. (2014). Love, Money, and HIV: Becoming a Modern African Woman in the Age of AIDS. University of California Press 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#3 Due
5	October 13	<p>LECTURE 6: Gender and Development in Africa</p> <p>MAP QUIZ (MC 110–from 11:00 to 11:30am)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 5 - Moseley, Issue 14: pp. 282-295 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#4 Due - Assignment#2 Due - Introduce Assignment#3
6	October 20	<p>LECTURE 7: Land, Agriculture and Food Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapters 5 and 10 - Moseley, Issue 11: pp. 217-228 - The Global Hunger Index (2014) [Study the maps on pp. 13, 18-19, 23]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#5 Due
7	October 27	<p>LECTURE 8: Climate Change</p> <p>Mid-Term Exam Review Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 11 - IPCC (2014): Read the Executive Summary - pp. 1202-1204 - Moseley, Issue 9: pp. 176-193 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#6 Due - Assignment#3 Due - Introduce Assignment#4

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES
8	November 3	MID-TERM EXAM Venue: MC 110 Time: 9:30am to 11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your Own Notes - All Course Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None
9	November 10	LECTURE 9: Population, Migration and Remittances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 7 - Moseley, Issue 10: pp. 194-216 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#7 Due
10	November 17	LECTURE 10: Resource Extraction and Local Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case Study: Oil in the Niger Delta, Nigeria LECTURE 11: China and Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watts and Kashi (2008). Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta. • Read pp. 36-47 - “Sweet & Sour” • Visit the website and look at all the photos under Gallery • Listen to Interview with Michael J. Watts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 12 - Moseley, Issue 7: pp. 128-156 - Moseley, Issue 8: pp. 157-172 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#8 Due - Assignment#4 Due - Introduce Assignment#5

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES
11	November 24	<p>LECTURE 12: The Informal Economy in Urban Africa</p> <p>LECTURE 13: Information and Communication Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 6 - Chapter 6 - Moseley, Issue 6: pp. 103-127 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#9 Due
12	December 1	<p>LECTURE 14: Politics and Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moseley, Issue 17: pp.352-375 - Moseley, Issue 18: pp. 376-395 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country Update#10 Due
13	December 8	<p>LECTURE 15: African Futures</p> <p>Final Exam Review Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assignment#5 Due

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES:

The Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for persons studying, visiting and working at Western. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Medical Accommodation Policy for Undergraduates

In Order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see:

https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf

Non-medical Issues

Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations or other similar commitments should discuss their commitments with the instructor.

Documentation from Student Health Services

Students obtaining documentation from Student Health Services Should sign a "release of information." This Form authorizes Student Health Services to provide information to the student's home Faculty. Release of information forms are available from, and can be arranged through, the student's home Faculty Academic Counseling Service.

Geography Undergraduate Advisor: Angelica Lucaci alucaci@uwo.ca