

**Geography 450:338**  
**Africa**  
**Spring Semester, 2013**  
Updated: April 19

**Instructor:** Olivier Walther  
**Office:** A352 Lucy Stone Hall  
**Telephone:** (848) 445.32.40  
**Email:** [olivier.walther@rutgers.edu](mailto:olivier.walther@rutgers.edu)  
**Class Time** Monday, Thursday – 10:20-11:40  
**Location:** Livingston Campus, Lucy Stone Hall, Room B105  
**Office hours:** Monday, 1:00-3:00, or by appt.

### **Brief description**

This course offers a critical exploration of the key social, economic and political challenges that sub-Saharan Africa will face in the future. Because Africa is changing rapidly, this course will particularly focus on the main drivers of innovation and change that characterize contemporary African societies. In the first part, we will explore how demography, migrations, urbanization and trade can have a positive impact on the embeddedness of Africa in world affairs. The second part of the course will consider how Africans are addressing, with mixed success, challenges of government, security, food, and the changing environment. In the final part, the course will discuss the tension between external forces of debt, the fluctuation of world markets, and structural adjustment on the one hand, and efforts of Africans to develop from below on the other hand. By bringing together contemporary development issues this course has broad appeal for geographers and other social studies students.

### **Goals and objectives**

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of the main development issues at stake in sub-Saharan Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the end of the course, you should be able to understand both the internal and external factors that affect the social, economic and political development of the African continent. Because this course goes back and forth between the various African perspectives on world affairs and the Western perspectives on African development, the course will also help you synthesize concepts and ideas from other courses and see how they are applied in the context of Africa. In contrast to approaches that consider Africa only in terms of marginality, particular emphasis will be placed on how African societies develop innovative ways of contributing to the globalized world. The course also stresses how external influences are culturally reinterpreted by African societies and ultimately lead to new forms of sociability.

Readings, films and written assignments will primarily aim at developing your familiarity with the diversity of African societies and institutions. Case studies based on the personal experience of the course instructor will illustrate key issues.

## Reading assignments

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings are available in a downloadable electronic format via SAKAI (<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>). All readings on the syllabus are required. We will work in class with reading/ lecture notes. Please bring readings to class on the day assigned. The videos shown in class are also available at the Kilmer Library.

### Introduction, January 24

### Topic 1. Historical geography of the continent, January 28, 31

Stock R. 2004. Imagining Africa: Roots of Western perceptions of the continent, in Stock R. *Africa South of the Sahara. A Geographical Interpretation*. New York, Guilford: 28-39.

Cole R, de Blij HJ. 2007. The colonial interlude, in Cole R, de Blij HJ. *Survey of Subsaharan Africa: A Regional Geography*. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 71-91.

\* Video 1: “Scramble for Africa”, by B. Davidson (1984)

### Topic 2. Diasporas and migrations, February 4, 7, 11

Gagnon J, Khoudour-Castéras D. 2012. South-South migration in West Africa. Addressing the challenge of immigrant integration. Paris, OECD *Working Paper* 312: 9-38.

Whitehouse B. 2011. Enterprising strangers: Social capital and social liability among African migrant traders. *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 4(1): 93-111.

Feb. 4. Lecture: Dr. Bruce Whitehouse, Lehigh University, “Migrants and Strangers in an African City”

\* Video 2: “Dollars and dreams: West Africans in New York”, by J. Rocklin (2007)

### Topic 3. Trade and regional integration, February 14, 18, 21

Howard A. 2010. Actors, places, regions, and global forces: An essay on the spatial history of Africa since 1700, in Engel U, Nugent P (eds) *Respacing Africa*. Brill, Leiden: 11-44.

Walther O. 2012. Traders, agricultural entrepreneurs and the development of cross-border regions in West Africa. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* 25(3-4): 123-141.

Feb. 21. Lecture: Professor Emeritus Allen Howard, Rutgers, “Historical changes in the spatial organization of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system”

Map quiz: Feb. 18

### Topic 4. Demographic trends, February 25, 28

Stock R. 2004. Dynamics of population, in Stock R. *Africa South of the Sahara. A Geographical Interpretation*. New York, Guilford: 149-176.

### **Topic 5. Cities and urbanization, March 4, 7**

World Bank. 2009. Density, in *World Development Report. Reshaping Economic Geography*. Washington, D.C, The World Bank: 48-72.

Gandy M. 2005. Learning from Lagos. *New Left Review* 33: 37-52.

\* Video 3: “When the mountain meets its shadow”, by A. Kleider and D. Michel (2009)

### **Topic 6. Midterm Exam, March 11, 14**

Take home essay exam distributed Monday, March 11; due Thursday, March 14. In class exam Thursday, March 14.

### **Spring Break, March 16-24**

### **Topic 7. Governance and institutions: March 25, 28**

Schroeder R. 2012. *Africa After Apartheid: South Africa, Race and Nation in Tanzania*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press: preface, introduction and chapter 6 (pp. 140-157).

Mar. 25. Lecture: Associate Professor Richard Schroeder, Rutgers, “Africa After Apartheid”

### **Topic 8. Security and conflicts, April 1, 4**

Williams PD. 2010. The terrain for struggle, in Williams PD. *Wars and Conflicts in Africa*. Cambridge, Polity Press: 35-52.

\* Video 4: “The curse of Congo: a story of wealth, exploitation, and ruin”, (2002)

### **Topic 9. Food and famine, April 8, 15, 18**

Stock R. 2013. Food security, in Stock R. *Africa South of the Sahara. A Geographical Interpretation*. New York, Guilford: 374-393.

\* Video 5: “Price of Aid”, by J. El Tahri (2004)

Note: no class April 11 due to the Association for Borderlands Studies Conference

### **Topic 10. Structural adjustment, debt and international trade, April 22, 29**

Moseleya WG, Carney J, Becker L. 2010. Neoliberal policy, rural livelihoods, and urban food security in West Africa: A comparative study of The Gambia, Côte d’Ivoire, and Mali. *PNAS* 107(13): 5774-5779.

\* Video 6: “T-Shirt Travels: The Story of Secondhand Clothes & Third World Debt”, by S. Bloemen (2001)

**Note: no class April 25 due to the field trip to Little Senegal on Saturday April 27.**

## **Topic 11. Course wrap up May 2, Questions and answers May 6**

**Final exam: May 10, 8:00-11:00 am, Lucy Stone Hall, Room B105**

### **Determining the final grade:**

“C” (“satisfactory”) grade means demonstrated basic mastery of all lectures and readings and some contributions to discussion. “B” and “A” mean “good” and “outstanding” work respectively.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 1) **Map quiz** (5%): This quiz is designed to help you learn key empirical facts about African countries, major cities and regional integration bodies. You may want to visit [www.sheppardsoftware.com/African\\_Geography.htm](http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/African_Geography.htm) to prepare for this exercise.
  - 2) **Midterm exam** (20%): The mid-term exam will assess your mastery of issues involving the major drivers of change on the continent acquired during the first half of the course.
  - 3) **Assignments** (20%): The substance of reading assignments, videos, lectures and discussions will be evaluated through short assignments.
  - 4) **Final exam** (50%): A final exam will be administered on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am in Room B105.
  - 5) **Attendance and participation** (5%): The success of this course hinges greatly on full participation, so I place a premium on regular attendance. The rubric I use for assigning attendance grades is as follows: up to 3 unexcused absences, full credit or 5 pts; 4 absences, 4 pts; 5-6 absences, 3 pts; 7-8 absences, 2 pts; 9-10 absences, 1 pt; more than 10 absences, 0 pts.
- Extra credit** (3%) may be obtained one time during the term by attending an extra-curricular activity sponsored by the Geography Department or Center for African Studies (see <http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/events/index.html>), and writing a one-page summary of the event. Write-ups are due the first class after the event. Extra credit (3%) can also be obtained by attending the field trip to Little Senegal in New York City organized on Saturday April 27.