

Africa in the 21st Century

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Fall Semester, 2013

Updated: October 31, 2013

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Class Time Thursday, 10:00 am –12:50 pm
Location: Engelhard Hall 203,190 University Avenue, Newark
Office hours: Thursday, 2:00-5:00 pm, 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 political scientists, economists, 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 21st 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.

Reading assignments

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings are available in a downloadable electronic format via Blackboard (<http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu>). All readings on the syllabus are required.

The course is divided into two parts. The first, consisting of roughly the first 6 weeks (Topics 1-5), is designed to provide general background on the continent. The second part (Topics 6-10) will be run more as a seminar with heavier writing and in-class participation requirements.

Topic 1. Introduction and Historical geography, September 5

* Video 1: This Magnificent African Cake, by Basil Davidson (1984), 53 min

Topic 2. Demographic trends, September 12

Stock R. 2013. 'Population distribution' and 'Population growth', in *Africa South of the Sahara. A Geographical Interpretation*. Guilford Press: 227-242 and 243-261.

Topic 3. Diasporas and migrations, September 19

Kane O. 2010. 'Senegalese enclaves in New York City', in *The Homeland Is the Arena*. Oxford University Press: 57-92.

* Field trip to Little Senegal in Harlem, New York City

Note: no class on September 26 due to meeting in Europe

Topic 4. Trade and regional integration, October 3

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.

* Lecture 1: Professor Emeritus Allen Howard, Rutgers, "Historical changes in the spatial organization of the Sierra Leone-Guinea system"

Topic 5. Cities and urbanization, October 10

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

* Video 2: "When the mountain meets its shadow", by A. Kleider and D. Michel (2009)

Topic 6. Governance and institutions, October 17

Chabal P, Daloz J.P. 1999. 'W(h)ither the State?' in *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Indiana University Press: 3-16.

Topic 7. Food and famine, October 24

* Video 3: "Price of Aid", by J. El Tahri (2004)

* Book review 1: "Famine and Foreigners" (Maria Rosario)

Topic 8.1. Security and conflicts, October 31

Williams P.D. 2011. 'The terrain for struggle', in *Wars and Conflicts in Africa*. Polity Press: 35-52.

* Lecture 2: Charles Thomas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of African History, USMA, “A Social Network Analysis of Somali Pirate Networks”

Topic 8.2. Security and conflicts, November 7

* Lecture 3: Binneh S. Minteh, Doctoral candidate, DGA, Rutgers, “The Military and Governance in Africa - Experiences of a Former Military Officer”

* Book review 2: “Wars and Conflicts in Africa” (Michelle Bischoff)

Topic 9. Gender, November 14

* Lecture 4: Professor Ousseina Alidou, Director of the Center for African Studies, Rutgers, “Gender, Islam, Migration of Legal Ideologies: Africa’s side of the Indian Ocean”

* Book review 3: “Gender” (Nadine Heil)

Topic 10. Structural adjustment, debt and international trade, November 21

* Book review 4: “The New Scramble for Africa” (Samuel Edmon)

* Book review 5: “The Real Story of China in Africa” (Tony Cheng)

* Book review 6: “African Development” (Ariana Ruela)

Note: no class on November 27 due to meeting in Abidjan

Course wrap up, Questions and answers. December 5

* Book review 7: “Identity Economics” (Chika Okoye)

* Book review 8: “Africa Human Development Report” (William Lent)

* Newark Museum Africa Collection, with Christa Clarke, Ph.D., Curator, Arts of Africa

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance and participation: 25%

Book review: 25%. Students will critical discuss a book dedicated to one of the six main issues discussed during the second part of the semester (governance, food, security, structural adjustment, informality or gender). A list of bibliographical references will be provided.

Research paper: 50%. The final course requirement is a 10-15 page research paper, which should explore contemporary perspectives on development issues on the continent. I will provide some additional guidance on how to select an appropriate topic for this assignment in class. The paper itself is due on December 5. There is no final exam for this course.