

GEOGRAPHY 228
GEOGRAPHY OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

BULLETIN INFORMATION

GEOG 228 - Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa (3 credit hours)

Course Description:

A regional approach to the physical, social, economic, and political aspects of Sub-Saharan Africa with emphasis on contemporary problems.

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

Building upon a historical understanding of economic and political relationships both within Sub-Saharan Africa and between Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world, this course examines contemporary patterns of social, economic and environmental change in this highly challenged world region. To better understand the problems and potentials of this world region, this course examines particular local issues (e.g., deforestation, desertification, development) as complex interactions of local situations with regional and global factors.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of Geography 228, students will be able to:

1. Describe the general physical geography of sub-Saharan Africa, and explain how it relates to human life and organization in this region;
2. Identify the historical factors that have shaped the political geography of this region;
3. Recognize the factors shaping and impacting African populations, and distinguish the specific characteristics of, and differences between, urban and rural settings in this region;
4. Discuss the opportunities and challenges facing efforts to develop this region.

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. Stock, R. 2004. *Africa South of the Sahara, 2nd Edition*. The Guilford Press.
2. Additionally, selected articles from a range of sources will be made available as .pdf (Adobe Acrobat) files on Blackboard to complement lectures. Readings tentatively assigned for each class are listed below in the class schedule, but you should check Blackboard for any additions or changes. The lecture and reading content of the course engage a number of themes that relate to cultural identity, including the understanding of and construction of African identities under colonialism, the construction of postcolonial states in multicultural/multiethnic settings, the use of Orientalist viewpoints to create Africa as a useful foil for European state building, and the challenges of culturally specific social roles when addressing challenges to human well-being in this region.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS

- 1. Three exams:** This course has three non-cumulative tests that cover the information presented in the readings and lectures on that section. I will provide specific information about the material to be covered in each test (readings and lectures) in advance. These tests are not meant to be exercises in rote memorization, but efforts to push students to develop critical thinking tools through lectures and reading material, and apply those tools to questions about current or past events and situations in the region. The final exam is non-comprehensive and is given on the final exam date as indicated in the University exam schedule.
- 2. Three map quizzes:** This course has three map quizzes. Lectures and readings include extensive engagement with maps that help students both visualize different patterns of cultural affiliation in the region, but also lead them to question how the categories on those maps were created, and to what end. This opens up questions of the modern African state – who created these states, and for what purpose – which in turn opens up conversations about responsibility and global engagement when looking at Africa’s current situation. None of this is possible without basic map literacy in this region. The first quiz will cover the physical geography of Sub-Saharan Africa. The second will address nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, and the third will focus on capitals, major cities, and other sites of interest. Study guides for the map quizzes will be distributed at least a week in advance.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS

Section 1: Overview (Weeks 1 and 2)

Reading: Stock Ch. 1.

Reading: Stock Ch. 2.

Readings: Stock Ch. 3.; Quammen, D. 2000. “Megatransect.”

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0010/feature1/fulltext.html>

For pictures, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0010/feature1/index.html>

MAP QUIZ 1 (week 2)

Section 2: Physical Geography (Weeks 3 and 4)

Reading: Stock Ch. 4

Readings: Stock Ch. 5; Africa Environment Outlook, Chapter 2

Readings: Stock Ch. 6; Africa Environment Outlook, Chapters 6 and 7

MAP QUIZ 2 (Week 4)

Readings: Cernea, M.M. and Schmidt-Soltau, K 2003. “The end of forceable displacement? Conservation must not impoverish people” *Policy Matters*, Sept 2003 pp.42-70.

Dowie, M. 2006. “Enemies of Conservation” *Range Magazine*, Summer 2006.

Section 3: African History (Weeks 5 and 6)

Reading: Stock Ch. 7.

TEST 1 (Week 5)

Reading: Stock Ch. 8.; Pakenham Ch. 1, 9, 32

Reading: Stock Ch. 9. Africa's missing billions: International arms flows and the cost of conflict. Oxfam Briefing Paper 109.

Section 4: Population (Weeks 7 and 8)

Reading: Stock Ch. 10

MAP QUIZ 3 (Week 7)

Reading: Stock Ch. 11

Reading: Stock Ch. 12

Section 5: Rural Economies (Weeks 9 and 10)

Reading: Stock Ch. 13; Africa Development Indicators 2007. The World Bank. pp.86-89

TEST 2 (Week 9)

Reading: Stock Ch. 14; Africa and the Doha Round: Fighting to keep development alive. Oxfam Briefing Paper 80.

Reading: Stock Ch. 15; Stop the dumping! How EU agricultural subsidies are damaging livelihoods in the developing world. Oxfam Briefing Paper 31.

Section 6: Urban Economies (Weeks 11 and 12).

Reading: Stock Ch. 16; Myers, G. A. *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press. Ch 3

Reading: Stock Ch. 17; Davis, M. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. New York, Verso. Ch. 5

Reading: Stock Ch. 18; City Profile: Accra, R. Grant and P. Yankson, *Cities* 20(1), 65-74.

Section 7: Contemporary Issues: Women, Water and Development (Weeks 13 and 14)

Reading: Stock Ch. 19; Jato, M. N. 2004 "Gender Responsive Programming for Poverty Reduction" UNFPA Technical Paper, Addis Ababa: UNFPA.

Reading: Stock Ch. 23

Reading: Stock Ch. 27

FINAL EXAM according to University exam schedule