

Department of Geography
Geography 403: The Geography of Sub-Sahara Africa

Instructor: Dr. James C. Saku

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Office Location: GU 229

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 pm MWF, 9:30 -10:30 am TR or by appointment

Lecture Hours: TR 8:00 am - 9.15 am

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Course Description

The cultural, economic, physical, and political potentials of sub-Sahara Africa. The complex spatial patterns that define the Sub-Sahara African landscape are examined.

Course Objectives

1. The course provides an understanding to the spatial patterns of the social, cultural, political and economic processes in Sub-Sahara Africa.
2. Examines the problems and prospects of development in the sub-region by investigating the intra-regional factors affecting the continent's development.
3. Investigate the colonial influences on the development dilemma of the region.
4. Examine the opportunities and constraints of the physical environment to Sub-Sahara African development.
5. Analyze contemporary global political economy on African development efforts.
6. Explore the measures of promoting regional economic development

Learning Objectives

1. Students should be able to understand the physical landscape of sub-Sahara Africa.
2. By the end of the class, students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the complex cultural, economic and political systems of sub-Sahara Africa.
3. Students should be capable of writing a paper on sub-Sahara Africa.
4. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the location of important geographic features in sub-Sahara Africa.
5. Students will demonstrate their understanding of contemporary issues facing sub-Sahara Africa.

Required Text

1. **Aryeetey-Attoh, S. (2003) Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.**

Academic Dishonesty

Note that academic dishonesty including plagiarism and cheating during examination is a serious offense and carries severe penalty. Refer to the *Pathfinder* for details.

Disruptive Student Behavior

Please refer to *Pathfinder* for details.

Blackboard

To facilitate effective communication between the instructor and students, the course is available on Blackboard site. You are required to visit the site frequently to check on announcements and deadlines. Course outlines and assignments are also posted on the site. You can also check your grades and current average from the grade book.

Policy

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and participate actively during class discussions. To participate actively in class, students are required to read assigned materials on the course outline prior to class. Attendance will be recorded and failure to attend classes will result in loss of marks. Your attendance grade will be based on the total number of days present over the expected number of days multiplied by 20. For example, if you were required to be in class for 24 days in the semester, and you were present for 24 days, your attendance grade will be $(24/24) \times 20 = 20$ points. Students are responsible for informing the instructor about their presence when they arrive in class after attendance has been taken.

Class assignments and term project are to be submitted promptly on the due day. Late submission of term projects carries a penalty of 20 points per day for a maximum of 5 days. No essays will be accepted after the 5th day without a reasonable cause. A reasonable cause is defined as serious illness (doctor's report required) or tragedy within the family (a note from family member required).

It is expected that all written work will conform to high standards of grammar and style. Bad grammar and style will be penalized in the grading of written work. The Writing Center in Pullen Hall will be willing to review your work before you submit it to the instructor.

Grading

All tests including the final examination will consist of short questions and essays. The tests are designed to examine your comprehension of material covered in class. Your ability to think critically and offer convincing arguments of issues raised in the questions will also be examined. Prior approval is required for missing an examination. No make-up examination will be granted if you fail to seek prior approval.

The final grade will consist of the following. These dates are tentative and subject to change except the final examination.

Class attendance and participation	= 20 points
Class assignments (2) (9/23 and 10/16)	= 100 points
Three unannounced quizzes	= 60 points
Map quiz (9/11)	= 50 points
Group project (11/11)	= 50 points
Term Paper (12/04)	= 100 points
Test 1 (To be announced)	= 100 points
Test 2 (To be announced)	= 100 points
Final examination (Thursday, 12/18)	= 100 points

You are strongly encouraged to use office hours or set up an appointment to discuss your grades with me during the semester. Your final grade will be determined based on the total points accumulated over 680. The scale of your final grade is as follows:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F < 60%

Term Paper

Each student is required to select an essay topic related to the Geography of sub-Saharan Africa. The topic may be physical, economic or culturally oriented. Consult me if you are not sure about your essay topic. Essays should be limited to 10 pages (typed doubled space). You are encouraged to build a strong bibliography from journals, periodicals, and the Internet for your research essay. **Headings and sub-headings are required.** You will lose points if you do not use sub-headings.

The purpose of the term paper includes:

- a. Provide students an opportunity to apply geographic concepts to the economic, social and physical issues in Africa
- b. Familiarize students with current issues confronting Africa
- c. Experience in data collection and writing of research essays
- d. Examine the level of student understanding of sub-Saharan issues

Essays will be graded based on the following criteria

- a. format - clear, concise and logical
- b. grammar and typos
- c. presentation - data, charts
- d. background of your work - reference to existing literature

- e. relevance of topic to course
- f. practicality and usefulness
- g. strong bibliography (at least five sources required)

The Internet is a very good source of information on sub-Saharan Africa. The following web sites are useful. You should be innovative by searching other web sites.

1. www.africaonline.com
2. www.vaxxine.com/master.control/bbc/bbcworld.html
3. www.africanews.org/specials/grreatlakes.html
4. www.africapolicy.org
5. [Http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html](http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html)
6. www.sas.upenn.edu/african_studies/as.html
7. <http://www.newafrica.com/cityguides/>

Electronic Journals on Africa

1. African Affairs: <http://www3.oup.co.uk/afrafj/contents/>
2. African News: <http://www.peacelink.it/afrinews.html>
3. African Recovery: <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec>
4. African Studies Quarterly: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq>
5. EcoNews Africa: <http://www.econewsafrika.org/>
6. Internet Journal of African Studies: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/research/ijas/>
7. Jenda: a journal of culture and African Women Studies: <http://jendajournal.com/jenda/>
8. Journal of African Economies: <http://jae.oupjournals.org/current.shtml>
9. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa: <http://publicpolicy.subr.edu/africa.htm>
10. Science in Africa: <http://www.scienceinafrica.co.za/>
11. South African Geographical Journal: <http://www.egs.uct.ac.za/sagj/>

Class assignments (Article Review)

Each student will be required to review and provide critical comments on two controversial issues on Africa. Personal comments about the articles are strongly recommended. There will be a class discussion on the day the review is submitted.

The award of marks for the review will be determined by the quality of the review. The criteria will include a demonstrated understanding of the issue, critical appraisal, logic and clarity.

1. Is sub-Saharan Africa experiencing a deforestation crisis?

Yes: Kevin M. Cleaver and Gotz A. Shreiber, from *Reversing the Spiral: The Population, Agriculture, and Environment Nexus in Sub-Saharan Africa* (The World Bank, 1994)

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

2. Are abundant mineral and energy resources a catalyst for African Development?

Yes: Oliver Maponga and Philip Maxwell, from “The fall and rise of African Mining,” *Minerals and Energy* (2001).

No: Sunday Dare, from “A continent in crisis: Africa and globalization,” *Dollars and Sense* (July/August 2001).

Group project and presentation

All students are required to participate in a group seminar project. Students will be assigned to a group for a class project and presentation. Students have the right to join any of the groups. The instructor however will assign students to one of the groups in order to maintain a balance in the total number of students in each group when necessary.

Students are strongly advised to meet promptly to familiarize themselves with each other and to start their research projects early. Students are required to undertake a detailed research and present their findings to the class. One individual, selected by the group will present the findings of their research to the class. Group members are expected to join in the discussion during question time. Note: Oral presentation will be graded.

As part of the group project, students are strongly encouraged to use maps, graphs, figures and visual aids in support of issues they will raise. Each group presentation will take about 15-20 minutes. It is important that each student participates in the preparation and presentation. Failure to participate will lead to lose of points.

The purpose of this project is to foster group work and promote critical thinking. One copy of the project should be submitted to the instructor on the day of the presentation. Groups are expected to share their work with class members.

Topics for Group Presentations:

- 1. Population growth and economic development in sub-Saharan Africa.**
- 2. Maintaining sub-Saharan cultural heritage.**
- 3. Ethnic conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa.**
- 4. Promoting economic and political unity in sub-Saharan Africa.**

LECTURE SCHEDULE (Tentative and subject to change)

1. Introduction: The size and locational dimensions of sub-Saharan Africa. The regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 1

2. The Physical Environment: The Physical Landscape: The Plateau Continent, The Rift Valley, Climate, Vegetation and Soils.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 2

3. Human-Environmental Impacts: Deforestation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Definitions, Issues and trends. Desertification in SSA. Definitions and spatial coverage.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 3

4. Historical Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa: Opportunities and Constraints. Indigenous heritage of sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic and western influence.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 4

5. Culture, Conflict and Change in Sub-Saharan Africa: Elements of African culture, Religion and Language, Family and kingship relations, Land tenure, Diffusion of non-African culture, Ethnic Conflicts, Modernization and cultural conflicts.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 6

6. The Political Landscape of Sub-Sahara Africa: Sub-Saharan Africa prior to the early 1990s. Causes of political instability in sub-Saharan Africa.

Reading

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 5

7. Population Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa: General population trends, population density and distribution. Dynamics of population change in SSA, Africa and the demographic transition, Internal Migration and Refugee issues, Population control, government policy and family planning

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 7

8. Geography and Development in SSA: Defining and Measuring Development in SSA, Economic dimensions of development, Human dimensions of development, Technological dimensions of development. Development Strategies.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 8

9. Transportation and communication in Sub-Saharan Africa

Transportation systems in Africa, road transportation, rural transportation, urban transportation, The Pan-African highway, Railways, West Africa, Congo basin, East Africa. Air transportation.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 9

10. Urban Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa

Historical evolution of African Cities: Pre-colonial cities, current urbanization trends, Consequences of urban growth, Solutions to urban problems.

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 10

11. Agricultural Development in SSA: Traditional farming systems, Cash crop and commercial farming. Problems of agricultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa and Increasing Productivity in SSA, Policy Options.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 13

12. Medical Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa: Disease ecology of sub-Sahara Africa.

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 12

13. Geography and Gender in SSA, Women and development in Africa, Gender inequality, African women as agents of change. Gender Relations in Africa: Women as wives, mothers, economic persons, and unequal partners.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 11

14. Looking ahead: prospects for Africa in a new global economy: The meaning of globalization Impacts of World Trade negotiations on Africa. Africa's prospects for Greater Integration into global economy.

Reading:

a. Aryeetey-Attoh (2003) Chapter 15

Scholarly journals and magazines for references on Africa

Most of these are not available in the library. However, Research Port offers a good source for information on journals. If you do not know how to use the Research Port to search for journals in the library, ask for help.

African Development
Journal of Contemporary African Studies
African Urban Quarterly
African Economic History
African Studies Review
Journal of Modern African Studies
Review of African Political Economy
African Contemporary Records
Africa South of the Sahara
Journal of Development Studies
Third World Quarterly

African Business
West Africa
African Report
African Confidential
The Courier
Africa Now
Africa Today
Africa Record
World Development
Third World Planning Review
African Affairs

Map quiz

Study the following locations and geographic sites in Africa for a map quiz.

1. Lake Chad
2. Lake Albert
3. Lake Rudolf
4. Lake Victoria
5. Lake Tanganyika
6. Lake Nasser
7. Tombouctou (Timbuktu)
8. Dakar
9. Sudan
10. Lagos
11. Accra
12. Gulf of Guinea
13. Ethiopia
14. Nigeria
15. Addis Ababa
16. Eritrea
17. Mogadishu
18. Somalia
19. Mozambique Channel
20. Lesotho
21. Cameroon
22. River Niger
23. Volta Lake
24. Benin
25. Zambia
26. Congolian rainforest
27. Mali Civilization
28. Axum Civilization
29. Nupe Kingdom
30. Wolof Kingdom
31. Congo
32. Chad
33. Gambia
34. Senegal
35. Dakar
36. Cape of Good Hope
37. Rwanda
38. Burundi
39. Congo River
40. Cape Town
41. Kenya
42. Tanzania
43. Togo
44. Sierra Leone
45. Liberia
46. Burkina Faso
47. Zambia
48. Lusaka
49. Port Elizabeth
50. East London
51. Conakry
52. Freetown
53. Monrovia
54. Mombasa
55. Nairobi
56. Sahelian shrubland
57. Nubia Civilization
58. Karanga Civilization
59. Lozi Kingdom
60. Mende Kingdom
61. Kano
62. Khartoum
63. Equator
64. Tropic of Capricorn
65. Kalahari Basin
66. Fouta Djallon Highlands
67. Northeast Trade Winds
68. Southwest Trade Winds
69. Orange River
70. Equatorial Guinea
71. Mount Kilimanjaro
72. Kalahari Desert
73. Equator
74. Cape Town
75. Seychelles
76. Madagascar
77. Lake Nyasa
78. River Benue
79. Angola
80. Blue Nile
81. Namibia
82. Limpopo River
83. Eritrea
84. River Gambia
85. Mali
86. Noh Civilization
87. Kush Civilization
88. Ashanti Kingdom
89. Moshi Kingdom
90. Kuba Kingdom