

## **Geography 550: Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Fall Semester, 2008**

**Instructor:** Joel Hartter

**Class Time:** 12:10-1p MWF

**Office:** 103B Huddleston Hall

**Location:** Morrill 204

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**Office Hours:** Monday 1-3p, Wednesday 1-2p,  
or by appointment

**Note:** Contacting your instructor by email is preferred. Students are required to put GEOG 550 in the title of the email. There is no guarantee that emails without that subject will be answered.

### **Course Description**

Sub-Saharan Africa has long been depicted in the media as a place of crisis – a region of the world often known for civil strife, disease, corruption, hunger and environmental destruction. This perception is not entirely unfounded, after all, HIV/AIDS in east and southern Africa, civil war in Sierra Leone and Rwanda, or drought in Ethiopia are known problems. Yet Africa is also a place of extraordinarily diverse, vibrant, and dynamic cultures. Therefore, this class seeks to go beyond the superficial media interpretations of the vast African continent. As geographers, we will attempt to place contemporary African developments in a historical and global context.

This course is an introduction to the geography of Sub-Saharan Africa and is intended for undergraduates. While welcomed, no course work on Africa is required prior to taking this course. We will look at dynamic issues facing contemporary African societies and the challenges that the people and nations of this vast continent are working to resolve. You will learn the names of all of the countries and where they are located, as well as environmental and resource issues, historical impacts on development, cultural aspects, peoples, societies, rural and urban organization, industrialization and trade, and prospects for the future.

This course consists of lectures, quizzes, written assignments and exams. Broadly, the course is divided into sections corresponding to different dimensions of Africa's development.

### **Required Texts**

Aryeetey-Attoh, Samuel (Ed.). 2003. *Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (ISBN: 0-13-061025-9).

### **Additional Resource Materials**

Videos, guest lecturers, internet sites, etc. may be scheduled throughout the semester.

## **Format**

The class will meet three times per week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The class will be conducted with both lectures and in-class discussions. Students are expected to have done all assigned reading before coming to class, and be prepared to discuss it.

## **Assignments**

### 1. Country profile

During the first week of class, you will be asked to choose a country in Sub-Saharan Africa that you will follow through the first half of the course. In “following” a particular country, you will be required to extract and compile information on physical and cultural geography, as well as key political, cultural, and social issues of the chosen country. Relationships between the country’s physical and cultural geography should be emphasized. The length of the profile should be between 1200-1500 words (1” margins, Times New Roman 12-point font).

### 2. Challenges and Opportunities for Development in Africa

The objective of this assignment is to expose you to some of the more serious current issues relating to development in one or more of Africa’s countries. For this assignment, you must choose a topic or issues (see list below for examples). If you choose to give a broad overview, that is fine. But if you wish, you can also be far more specific, and address a particular case study, or dimension of one of these issues. You may explore the issue for the whole continent, region, or choose to focus in on one or two specific countries – or you may do a combination and given a broad overview and then focus in. Some of you may feel like exploring the country you covered in the first written assignment – that would be perfectly acceptable. Not only will you report on the issue, but you are asked to give your opinion and evaluate issues based on their own experience and perspective. Do you agree with the current management/plans for action? What are the implications for the course of action? This assignment should be 2300-2500 words (1” margins, Times New Roman 12-point font).

#### AFRICA ISSUES (Broad)

1. Conservation (wildlife, forest)
2. Governance and democracy
3. Urbanization
4. Ethnic diversity
5. Conflict and war
6. HIV/AIDS

#### AFRICA ISSUES (Specific)

- HIV/AIDS in South Africa
- Re-allocation of land to black Zimbabweans
- Genocide in Darfur
- National park and people conflict in East Africa
- Democratic elections in the DRC in 2006

## **Exams and Quizzes.**

There will be two map quizzes, one midterm exam, and one final exam. All quizzes and exams are closed-book/note.

\*\*Make-up exams will not be given other than for a verifiable emergency. In the event of an emergency, it is the student’s responsibility to contact me no later than one class period after the test date to make arrangements for a make-up. Make-up exams will be different than the ones given to the rest of the class.

## Participation

Participation by each student in the classroom is extremely valuable. I encourage you to participate and ask questions during the lectures. This is your education, so do your part to get the most out of it. Always be courteous and respectful to your fellow students.

## Tentative Schedule and Assigned Readings

Wk	Date	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Readings
1	Sept. 3, 5		Overview of the semester	Physical Environment	Ch.1,2 -
2	Sept. 8, 10, 12	Physical Environment	Physical Environment	Human-Environment Impacts	Ch. 2, 3
3	Sept. 15, 17, 19	Human-Environment Impacts  <b>Country Profile choice due</b>	Human-Environment Impacts	Human-Environment Impacts	Ch. 3 - GSSA
4	Sept. 22, 24, 26	History	History  <b>Map quiz 1</b>	History	Ch. 4
5	Sept. 29, Oct. 1	History	Political Landscape	Political Landscape	Ch. 4, 5
6	Oct. 6, 8, 10	Political Landscape  <b>Country Profile due</b>	Conflict	<u>Conflict</u>	Ch. 5
7	Oct. 13, 15, 17	<u>Conflict</u>	Culture	<i>Mid-semester Break – No Class</i>	Ch. 6
8	Oct. 20, 22, 24	Culture	Culture <i>Exam review</i>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Ch. 6
9	Oct. 27, 29, 31	Culture	<i>Review midterm results</i>	Population	Ch. 7
10	Nov. 3, 5, 7	Population  <b>Current Issues paper topic due</b>	Population	Geography & Development	Ch. 7, 8
11	Nov. 10, 12, 14	Geography & Development	Geography & Development	Agriculture	Ch. 8, 13–
12	Nov. 17, 19, 21	Agriculture  <b>Map quiz 2</b>	Agriculture	Urban Africa	Ch. 13, 10
13	Nov. 24, 26, 28	Urban Africa	Urban Africa	<i>Thanksgiving Break – No class</i>	Ch. 13
14	Dec. 1, 3, 5	Medical Geography  <b>Current Issues paper due</b>	Medical Geography	Medical Geography	Ch. 1–2
15	Dec. 8, 10, 12	Industrialization & Business	Industrialization & Business	Review  Last Day of Class	Ch. 14, 15
16	TBD	<b>Final Exam</b>			

## Key Dates for Quizzes, Exams, & Assignments

Wk	Date	
3	Sept. 15	Country profile choice due You must email me ( <a href="mailto:joel.hartter@unh.edu">joel.hartter@unh.edu</a> ) your first and second choice for your country profile
4	Sept. 24	Map quiz 1 Quiz 1 will cover physical geography (lakes, mountains, vegetative cover, climate, physical features, etc.)
6	Oct. 6	Country profile due
8	Oct. 24	Midterm Covers first half of semester – including material covered in lecture and ALL readings Exams will be about 1/3 multiple choice and 2/3 essay and short answer questions.
10	Nov. 3	Current issues paper topic due You must email me ( <a href="mailto:joel.hartter@unh.edu">joel.hartter@unh.edu</a> ) your paper topic. You must have your topic approved for it to be graded.
7	Nov. 19	Map quiz 2 Quiz 2 will cover certain aspects of human geography (countries, major cities, etc).
15	Dec. 3	Current issues paper due
16	TBD	Final exam Covers second half of semester – including material covered in lecture and ALL readings Exams will short answer and essay questions.

### Grading

- 25% Midterm exam: 100 points
- 25% Final exam: 100 points
- 10% Map quizzes: 2 quizzes, 20 points each
- 15% Country profile: 60 points
- 20% Current issues paper: 80 points
- 5% Participation: 20 points

Total: 400 points (100%)

95-100%	A	77-79%	C+	67-69%	D+
90-94%	A-	73-76%	C	63-66%	D
87-89%	B+	70-72%	C-	60-62%	D-
83-86%	B	60-69%	D	below 60%	Fail
80-82%	B-				

### Dissemination of Information

Information will be posted regularly to the course website. It is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly for any changes to the course schedule, and for updates on quizzes and exams.

### Class Demeanor

Students are expected to be punctual, decently dressed, and to turn their cell-phones off prior to the commencement of lectures. Students are expected to attend every class.

**Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disability Services for Students in the Memorial Union building, Room 118 (862-2607) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. accommodate you.

**Academic Misconduct**

Please note the University has no tolerance for students who break the University Academic Honesty Policy. Please see the Students Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities Handbook for a full description (<http://www.unh.edu/student/rights/srrr0708.pdf>).

Plagiarism and cheating are both academic crimes. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and further ramifications at the University level. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will be reported to the college.

**This is your class!**

This is your class, and I want to know how it's going. Please let me know if you would like to see changes or if you have comments about the class. You are welcome to speak with me after class or to visit me in my office. The surest way to contact me is to send me an email.