

Geography 243
Geography of Africa: Local Resources and Livelihoods in a Global Context¹
Spring Semester, 2024

Class Time and Location: 9:40-11:10, Tuesdays & Thursdays, Rm 105, Carnegie Hall

Instructor: Bill Moseley (he/him/his)

Office: Rm 104d, Carnegie Hall

Office Hours: 1-2pm M&W, 1:30-2:30 T&R, or by appointment. Sign-up by cutting/pasting this link into your browser (<https://calendar.app.google/xK6Pb5PSvnk1R3ot8>)

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Class Email: sp24-geog-243-01@groups.macalester.edu (for sharing information w/ entire class)

Writing Assistant. Jane Slentz-Kesler. Email: jslentzk@macalester.edu. Office hrs: 7-8:30pm Wed and 4:30-6pm Thursday, Geography Dept Office Lounge, Carnegie 104.

Course Description and Objectives

From the positive images in the film *Black Panther*, to the derogatory remarks of President Trump, the African continent often figures prominently in our collective imagination. This class goes beyond the superficial media interpretations of the world's second largest region to complicate and ground our understanding of this fascinating continent. Africa South of the Sahara 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, Ebola in west and central Africa, the kidnapping of school girls in northern Nigeria, or civil war and hunger in Somalia are known problems. Yet Africa is a place of extraordinarily diverse, vibrant, and dynamic cultures. Many Africans also expertly manage their natural resources, are brilliant agriculturalists and have traditions of democratic governance at the local level. As such, the African story is extremely diverse and varied. The thoughtful student must work hard to go beyond the superficial media interpretations of the vast African continent and appreciate its many realities without succumbing to a romanticized view. As geographers, we will place contemporary African developments in a historical and global context. Africa has a long history of influencing and being influenced by the outside world. Among other issues, we will explore how colonialism, and even more recent 'development' initiatives, have influenced current structures in Africa. Furthermore, we will examine what restrictions, if any, the current world economic system places on development possibilities for the continent.

The course provides a basic background in African history and bio-physical environments, leading to discussion of advanced topics in contemporary African studies. We will cover a broad range of sectoral themes, including: health and population dynamics; food and agriculture; cities and urbanization; rural life; parks and peoples; development and underdevelopment; politics and governance; and sociocultural geography and music. This course fulfills the argumentative writing (WA) requirement.

¹ This course counts toward the geography major, the African studies concentration, the Food, Agriculture & Society concentration, the int'l requirement & the social science distribution requirement.

Format

The class will meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 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. In addition to normal classroom banter, we will have several designated discussion days during the term (see schedule). This is your class, and I want to know how it's going. Please let me know if you would like to see changes, from lecture topics to grading. 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 e-mail (moseley@macalester.edu), which normally will be responded to promptly during normal business hours.

Health and Wellness

You are encouraged to make your health and well-being a priority throughout this semester and during your career at Macalester. Taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, cultural, financial, etc., and how they can have an impact on your academic experience. I encourage you to remember that you have a body with needs. In the classroom, eat when you are hungry, drink water, use the restroom, and step out if you are upset and need some air. Please do what is necessary so long as it does not impede your or others' ability to be mentally and emotionally present in the course. Outside of the classroom, sleeping, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient at Macalester. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don't hesitate to contact me and/or find support from the Health & Wellness Center. I have included contact information for health and wellness resources on the course moodle page.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability which may affect your ability to perform well in this class, please see me early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

Academic Misconduct

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 possibly even suspension from the college. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will be reported to the provost in line with recognized college procedures.

Texts

1) Moseley, W.G. and K. Otiso (eds). 2022. Debating African Issues: Conversations Under the Palaver Tree. London: Routledge / Taylor & Francis Group (ISBN 9780367201494).

2) Spindel, Carol. 1989. In the Shadow of the Sacred Grove. New York: Vintage Books (ISBN: 0-679-72214-9) (this book is out of print and is available via the course moodle site).

Some readings via the course moodle site (see reading list below). Handouts will be distributed from time to time in class. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts for students who are absent from class.

Assignments/Exams

Participation and Discussion days: The course will be oriented towards discussion for roughly one quarter of class time (see schedule). The purpose of the discussion classes is to facilitate critical analysis and lively dialog on controversial issues related to African studies. I have organized discussions around a key set of issues in African Studies with pairs of readings representing contrasting viewpoints on each topic. While no issue in African studies has a simple yes or no answer, discussion readings have been organized as such to encourage debate and, hopefully, accelerate your heart rate.

The majority of class participation points will be derived from your comments in discussion & from your competence as a student discussion leader. A few participation points will also be derived from my assessment of your participation in the lecture sessions (based on cogency of comments, questions, & answers to questions). Participation points are relatively easy to obtain if you keep up with the reading & speak up during discussion. Please see me if you have difficulty speaking in class. Student discussion leaders will be assigned to facilitate these sessions.

In my opinion, the best discussions are those in which: 1) students listen (and learn) from one another and build on what each other is saying; 2) the discussion is focused on understanding the main argument of each reading and breaking down and analyzing this argument to see if it makes sense; 3) making connections between readings (when several are assigned on the same day) by identifying where authors agree and disagree; and 4) relating insight gained from reading and discussion to other texts or real life events. In sum, I want you to approach discussion as an on-going scholarly debate in which we (as a community of scholars and learners) are attempting to advance our collective knowledge. After the first discussion day, student discussion leaders will be assigned to facilitate our scholarly debates.

Reaction essays: Reaction essays are brief essays (1-2 page or 550-650 words) in which you respond to three or more assigned readings for a given discussion. Your essays should include a succinct but detailed summary of the argument(s) to which you are responding & develop your reaction, which may be one of skepticism, all out agreement or disagreement, epiphany, or whole-hearted endorsement. Regardless, your essay should exhibit a line of reflective thought in which you explain the logic & rationale that supports your reaction to the reading(s). Your essays must include at least one question, relevant to the readings, which you would like to ask of your classmates. Thus, the reaction essays should help you prepare for participation in class discussion of the readings. Reaction are submitted via Moodle. The essays are due by 11 pm the day before a discussion. You are required to complete six essays, not doing essays for the two times you will be a discussion leader. Each essay is worth .83% of your grade. Proof read your essays so that they are free of grammatical and spelling errors. The essays are marked in in terms of three levels: excellent, satisfactory or non-satisfactory. Reaction essays submitted late will receive no credit.

Map quizzes: Two map quizzes will be given during the semester. The first will cover physical geography (lakes, mountains, vegetative cover, etc) while the second will cover certain aspects of human geography (countries, languages, major cities, etc). Study guides will be given out.

Africanist geographer profile: In order to gain a better understanding of how geographers have gone about investigating issues in Africa, students will write a 5-6 page paper reviewing the career and writings of a geographer whose work is (largely) Africa related. Ideally you will select a geographer who does research on a topic (or uses techniques) that are of interest to you. Such geographers may be deceased or living, based in the US or abroad, faculty or research scientists. In writing this paper you may wish to: locate the scholar's cv/resume on-line, interview the person in question (if they are alive), review some of their publications, read other people's reviews of their publications, and assess how their ideas have contributed to broader understanding in the field. Guidelines for this paper will be distributed well in advance of the due date, as well as suggestions for identifying scholars who may be of interest.

Final Project - Regional Development Analysis: The class will be divided into 3-4 groups who will work individually and collectively to assemble a development assessment and action plan for a major region of Sub-Saharan Africa: 1) West Africa, 2) Central Africa, 3) East Africa, or 4) Southern Africa. Each report will be composed of 3-4 chapters – each authored by an individual student in the group (15-20 double spaced pages in length for each chapter). Each of these chapters should cover a specific development sector for the region such as health/population, education, agriculture, environment, politics/governance, urban development, commercial development, etc. Chapter authors should review the main development challenges in a specific sector for the region, and then focus on one or two issues and how they might best be addressed. More specific guidelines will be distributed in class.

Final Project Presentation: Each group (3-4 students per group) will make a 30 minute presentation of their regional development assessment during the last week of class.

Midterms: Two midterms will be given, each covering material from ½ of the term. Exams will be about 1/5 multiple choice & 4/5 essay questions. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of illness or other verifiable emergency. In the event of an absence during an exam or quiz, it is the student's responsibility to contact me no later than one class period after the test date.

Grading and Exams

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|---------------------------------------|------|---|------|
| <u>Grade Components</u> | | Reg'l dev't policy draft (4/19): | 2% |
| First Midterm (3/5): | 22% | Reg'l dev't policy peer review (4/21-22): | 1% |
| Second Midterm (5/3): | 22% | Reg'l dev't policy report (4/29): | 20% |
| Map quiz 1 (2/1): | 3.5% | Group presentation (4/25): | 5% |
| Map quiz 2 (3/26): | 3.5% | Participation and discussion leadership: | 9% |
| Africanist geographer profile (2/23): | 7% | <u>Reaction essays:</u> | 5% |
| | | Total: | 100% |

Final grades are based on a weighted average for the term. Grade cutoff points (in terms of percentage) are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 67-69%; D = 63-66%; D- = 60-62%, NC = < 60%.

Tentative Schedule and Assigned Readings For Lectures

Please note that this is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any modifications. All readings are in *Debating African Issues: Conversations Under the Palaver Tree* unless otherwise noted.

| Wk | Dates | Lecture and Discussion Topics | | Lecture Readings /assignment due dates |
|----|----------------|--|--|---|
| | | Tuesday | Thursday | |
| 1 | 18 Jan | | Introduction to the Course | |
| 2 | 23-25 Jan | Lecture: Intro to African Geography | Lecture: Physical geography of Africa | “Africa in a Global Context” (see pdf on moodle) |
| 3 | 30 Jan - 1 Feb | Lecture: Physical geography of Africa | Map quiz 1: Physical Geography | Select geographer for paper #1 by Fri, 2/2 @11pm |
| | | Lecture: Africa in historical perspective | Lecture: Africa in historical perspective | |
| 4 | 6-8 Feb | Lecture: Africa in historical perspective | Lecture: Agriculture & livelihoods | Chaps 2,4,5 |
| | | <u>Discussion 1: Africa in Historical and Global</u> | | |
| 5 | 13-15 Feb | Lecture: Agriculture & livelihoods | Lecture: land tenure and reform | Chaps 7,12, 13 |
| | | <u>Discussion 2: Agriculture</u> | | |
| 6 | 20-22 Feb | Lecture: Village life & time geography | Lecture: Population debates, dynamics and health | Pdfs on moodle, Africanist geog profile due Fri, 2/23 @ 11pm |
| | | <u>Discussion 3: Village life</u> | | |
| 7 | 27-29 Feb | Lecture: Population dynamics and health | <u>Discussion 4: Population debates, dynamics & health</u> | Chap 16 and pdfs on moodle; Final paper proposal due Fri, 3/1 @11pm on moodle |
| 8 | 5-7 Mar | Midterm exam | Lecture: environmental issues | |
| 9 | 12-14 Mar | Spring break | | |
| 10 | 19-21 Mar | Library Session for final paper (Library Rm 206) | Jane S-K Lecture: environmental issues | Chaps 10, 11 & pdfs |
| | | | <u>Discussion 5: Human-Environment Interactions</u> | |
| 11 | 26-28 Mar | Map quiz 2: political geography | Lecture: Development and Underdevelopment | |
| | | Lecture: Urban Economies | | |
| 12 | 2-4 April | <u>Discussion 6: Development & Cities</u> | Lecture: Political Geography | Chaps 6,8,9 |
| 13 | 9-11 April | <u>Discussion 7: Political Geography</u> | Lecture: socio-cultural geography and music | Chaps 18,19,21 |
| 14 | 16-18 April | Film about anti-Apartheid struggle: “Amandla: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony” | No class: writing day | Final Paper draft due Fri, 4/19 @11pm; peer review Sun-Mon (4/21-22) |
| 15 | 23-25 April | <u>Discussion 8: Socio-cultural geography</u> | Final Paper Presentations | Chaps 14,15,20; Final paper due Mon, 4/29 @11pm; Final Exam, Fri, 5/3, 8-10am |

Discussion Reading Schedule

Note: All discussion readings are in *Debating African Issues: Conversations Under the Palaver Tree* (unless otherwise noted by **).

1) Tuesday, Feb 6: Africa in historical and global context

Chapter 2: Did European trade with Africans (including the slave trade) prior to 1700 damage or ruin economies on the continent?

YES: TOBY GREEN

NO: JOHN THORNTON

Chapter 4: Did colonialism distort African development?

YES: SEGBEGNON MATHIEU GNONHOSSOU

NO: OGECHI E. ANYANWU

Chapter 5: Is Africa's border geography problematic?

YES: SABELO J. NDLOVU-GATSHENI & INNOCENT MOYO

NO: MARINA OTTAWAY

2) Tuesday, Feb 13: Agriculture, land tenure and food security

Chapter 7: Are foreign land acquisitions the latest form of neo-colonialism in Africa?

YES: KERSTIN NOLTE

NO: SAMUEL LEDERMANN

Chapter 12: Is the New Green Revolution approach the best way to address hunger in Africa?

YES: GLENN DENNING

NO: HANSON NYANTAKYI-FRIMPONG

Chapter 13: Does scholarship on African food insecurity have a rural bias?

YES: JANE BATTERSBY

NO: EUNICE NJOGU

3) Tuesday, Feb 20, Village Life

**In the Shadow of the Sacred Grove (all chapters) (moodle)

4) Thursday, Feb 29: Health and Population Dynamics

Chapter 16: Are Africa's health resources overly focused on HIV/AIDS?

YES: JOSEPH OPPONG

NO: KWADWO ADU BOAKYE

****Did COVID-19 impact Africa less than other world regions? [see pdfs on moodle]**

YES: Nolen, Stephanie. 2022. "Trying to Solve a Covid Mystery: Africa's Low Death Rates." *New York Times*. March 23.

NO: Moseley, W.G. & J. Battersby. 2020. "The Vulnerability & Resilience of African Food Systems, Food Security & Nutrition in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic." *African Studies Review*. 63(3): 449-461.

****Is overpopulation a problem in Africa?**

YES: Bish, Joseph. 2016. "Population growth in Africa: grasping the scale of the challenge." *The Guardian*. January 11.

NO: Fofack, H. 2021. "Changing the Africa Population Narrative." *Project Syndicate*. October 12.

5) Thursday, March 21, Human-Environment Interactions

Chapter 10: Are parks the best way to protect African wildlife?

YES: MOSES MOSONSIEYIRI KANSANGA & DANIEL KPIENBAAREH

NO: RACHEL DEMOTTS

Chapter 11: Are Africans adapting well to climate change? 137

YES: MUTHONI MASINDE

NO: JULIUS R. ATLHOPHENG

****Is drought the cause of famine in Africa?**

YES: Agence France Press. 2022. "Horn of Africa drought places 22 million people at risk of starvation, says UN." *The Guardian*. August 19.

NO: Moseley, William. 2022. "The trouble with drought as an explanation for famine in the Horn and Sahel of Africa." *The Conversation*. February 15.

6) Tuesday, April 2: Development, Underdevelopment & Cities

Chapter 6: Is Africa truly rising?

YES: THOMAS JAYNE & RICHARD MKANDAWIRE

NO: FRANCIS OWUSU

Chapter 8: Is China better than other outside powers in fostering African economic transformation?

YES: KWAME ADOVOR TSIKUDO

NO: PÁDRAIG CARMODY

Chapter 9: Are cities engines for economic development in Africa?

YES: BENJAMIN OFORI-AMOAH

NO: SARAH L. SMILEY

7) Tuesday, April 9, Political Geography

Chapter 18: Is multi-party democracy the best form of governance in African countries?

YES: NIC CHEESEMAN

NO: GEORGE AYITTEY

Chapter 19: Is the growing foreign military presence in many African countries counter-productive?

YES: BRENDON J. CANNON

NO: ANDREWS ATTA-ASAMOAH

Chapter 21: Has the proliferation of cell phones strengthened social movements in Africa?

YES: FRANKLINE MATANJI

NO: TANJA BOSCH

8) Tuesday, April 23: Social Issues and Gender

Chapter 14: Is modern African education counterproductive?

YES: IDDAH OTIENO

NO: APOLLOS O. NWAUWA

Chapter 15: Is the focus on the development of the girl child counterproductive?

YES: ROSE ADHIAMBO NYAONDO

NO: WANDIA M. NJOYA

Chapter 20: Do more women in politics lead to better governance in African countries?

YES: MARY NJERI KINYANJUI

NO: PAMELA ABBOTT

Welcome to the course! I look forward to working with you this semester.