GEA 3600
Population and Geography of Africa

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Office: SIPA Level 3, room 308
Office hours: MW 2pm-3pm (or by appointment)
Class meets: MWF 1pm-150pm in Golden Panther Arena 121
See our Moodle page on your MyFIU for sign-up pages, assignments, message boards, announcements etc.

Course Description

How are popular representations of Africa reflected in development policy?
What are the historical and globalized roots of ‘underdevelopment’ in Africa?
What were the outcomes of big dam and fishing projects in Ghana and Tanzania?
Is global warming the cause of the conflict in Darfur, Sudan?
What are the ethics around diamond mining in Sierra Leone and oil drilling in Nigeria?
How have women combined feminist and environmentalist efforts in Kenya?
How has the ‘War on Terror’ reshaped African geopolitics?

Welcome to GEA 3600 Population and Geography of Africa! This course critically examines the major approaches to development on the African continent with a focus on African resources. We will review how these approaches are connected to and underpinned by historically persistent representations, policies and political inequalities and the ways in which they have changed over time. Using a case study approach we will consider one major resource each week, from water to wildlife, forests to farms, airways to rangelands, and including a consideration of African bodies themselves as resources and sites of development. Through these examples we will explore, discuss and debate the ideological foundations of varied development approaches and their political, social and economic outcomes for African people and places. In doing so we will also examine the ways in which African people and places are linked to broader international process. Finally we will pay attention each week to the ways in which dominant development practices have been taken up, resisted and reworked by Africans in varied ways.

Key theoretical goals of the class:

- To critically examine changing ideas of development in Africa in the context of a range of resources
- To historicize the construction of varied contemporary environments in Africa and related ecological and development issues
- To examine the links between representations of Africa and African bodies and historical and contemporary forms of extraction, exploitation, and development
- To consider the ecological, social and political outcomes of oil and mineral resource extraction, water, forest and rangeland management projects, conservation efforts and agricultural development in Africa
- To explore how ecological challenges are being addressed across a range of scales; from the global to the local
Key learning goals of the class:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Describe and critique the dominant approaches to development in Africa
- Connect key problems around ecology and development in Africa to histories, ideologies, policies, and resistances within and beyond the continent
- Critically evaluate a range of visual, textual and oral evidence relating to development and ecology in Africa
- Participate in key debates about the role of the environment in African ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment’
- Write in varied styles and review your peers’ written work

Key Global Learning (GL) goals for the class:

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelations of actors, agencies and ideologies that operate at local, global and intercultural scales and that underpin development policy and practice on the African Continent.
- Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems that affect African communities.
- Students will demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving as it relates to the historical and political processes shaping the African continent.

Required Texts
- A series of articles and book chapters are available on our Moodle page.
- Film material is available on course reserve from the library (level 5).

Using Moodle
Our course will be on ecampus moodle at https://ecampus.fiu.edu/ Plan to use and check the website regularly. You will log in to the site with the same username and password that you use for your email. For tech support with ecampus moodle, contact them at: 305-348-2284 or in the Green Library Room 249. It is your responsibility to assure that you have access to the course moodle page. If you have technical difficulties that cannot be resolved, contact myself or Alessandra Rosa (aless12@gmail.com), our teaching assistant.

Requirements

1. In-class participation (15%)
   Due during class session

You will be expected to come to all classes and to be prepared to discuss the reading material for that day. All students can expect to be called upon for participation. Examples of ‘participation’ include the following and will be a useful way to prepare for in-class quizzes and writing exercises.

- Noting down the key words that arose for you from the readings
- Commenting on the readings and connecting readings to lecture/ other student’s comments
Raising questions about the content of the reading or lecture material
Responding to the preparatory questions that may be posed
Providing insights into your understanding of the key concepts
Connecting different students' comments and ideas together

In addition, during class we may complete a variety of short exercises intended to help you make connections between the class material (perhaps a lecture, radio or film clip, photograph, newspaper article etc) and the course readings for that day. These exercises may take the form of a peer review on your written work, pop quiz on the readings, a worksheet connected to a film or another class material, a short written reflective piece, or a group activity. A portion of these exercises will be collected at the end of session for grading.

2. Weekly blogs (~2% each = 15%)
Due by 6pm on Wednesdays OR Fridays (one blog per week, set to a consistent day)

Each week, prior to ONE of the week’s sessions you will be expected to write a short (400 word) post to the moodle blog. These blogs should provide a thoughtful commentary and critical engagement with the readings, highlighting the connections and contrasts and listing 1-3 key words/concepts that tie them together. Discuss the most interesting/frustrating/engaging etc aspect of the pieces for you, closing with 1-2 thoughtful questions raised by the readings to prompt in-class discussion. Posts are due by 6pm on the day before the class session for which the reading is set. Bloggers in particular will be called upon to comment, raise questions and facilitate discussion. You can find a grade guide used to assess these essays at the course moodle site. Please sign up for your chosen regular blog day in week 1 of class. If you join the class after week 1 I will assign you a blog day and the list will be posted on Moodle.

3. Short Film/Video Mash Up Presentation (15%)
Due on assigned dates from week 5 on (one presentation per student only, groups of 3 students)

From week 5 on, groups of 3 students will produce and present a short film to the class aimed at teaching and reviewing a key course concept. These films can include visual and audio material produced originally by students and/or collected from a range of sources and edited together into short films no longer than 5 minutes. Students should introduce their video with a brief (1-2 minute) discussion of why they chose their theme and what they would like students to think about as they view the film. The presentation will close with a Q and A session and a discussion of the key themes raised. We will review these as a class on Fridays as a way to stimulate discussion, to learn about new case studies researched and to review key concepts of the class so far. You will be asked to sign up for your chosen presentation week in week 1. If you join the class after week 2 I will assign you a group and the list will be posted on Moodle.

5. Three course tests (35%)

You will complete three tests during the semester. These are designed to encourage you to review the key concepts, case studies and ideas presented in the class as we move through it. The tests will include a series of multiple-choice, short and mid-length written responses in
which you will be asked to define key concepts and discuss the class lectures, film and reading material. More information to come.

6. Final research paper (20%)
(5% = preliminary paper drafts, 15% = final paper)
Format: 10-12 pages, 12 font, 1.5 space, 1-inch margins, stapled. Include a bibliography in Harvard or Chicago Reference Format. No late or emailed final assignments will be accepted.

In your final research paper I would like you to take up one key issue that we have covered in class (the history of colonialism, debt, unfair trade, corruption, nationalism, land ownership, food aid, ethnic conflict etc). Your paper should make an argument as to why this is a key challenge and/or opportunity for Africa and Africans. You may choose to frame it around a critique of one of the class readings or one of the class films. What is the history of this issue, how did it develop and why? What models of development are connected to this issue (if any)? What are the impacts of this issue on the people and places within Africa (and which people and places in particular)? What social, cultural, political, economic and ecological factors are tied to this issue? How are people and places outside of Africa implicated or involved in this issue? Are there other related issues we must consider? How might this issue be addressed and by whom? In your paper you should focus in on a case study that illustrates this issue/problem – in this way you can ground your arguments in a real-life situation that affects people and places in Africa. This is your opportunity to take up an issue that is of particular interest to you and to explore it further independently. The research for your paper should come from a range of sources. Your first stop will be the wealth of resources we have covered in class; lectures, course films and course readings. I have included supplementary readings to assist you. You must then combine this with your own independent library research that may include other films available in the library and scholarly articles and books. Please note that Internet evidence may be used only where the source is considered relatively reliable (eg Governmental or Multi-lateral institutional statistics from the World Health Organization, the UN, or USAID). You will be assessed on:

- The quality of your argument about why your chosen issue is a key challenge for Africa
- Your integration of class concepts and materials
- The quality of research materials you have found yourself
- Your writing style including clarity, structure, spelling and grammar.

Throughout the course of the class you will complete mini-assignments that will build up to the final written piece. No late or emailed mini-assignments are accepted and you can only receive credit for these pieces if you hand them in on time and in class. More information to follow.

Course Content
Please note that all required readings should be completed before class.

Week 1: January 9th – 13th
Representing Africa I: African voices
Due: Sign up for chosen blog days and presentation dates, complete assigned readings, homework blog assignment on Adichie
In our first 2 weeks we will consider the ways in which Africa is commonly understood and represented in scholarly, policy-based and creative materials produced by those outside of it.
Our goal is to be aware of these problematic representations in order to understand their power and to establish a more critical and complex understanding of the Continent.

Monday:
  • This syllabus

Wednesday:

Friday:

**Homework assignment: DUE THURSDAY WEEK 1 by 6pm, 350-400 word requirement**

Read the article by Wainaina and listen to Adichie’s account. Write a few lines on how her story and Wainaina’s piece made you feel (intrigued, bored, frustrated, angry…? Describe your emotions explicitly). At what particular points did you experience particular emotions and why do you think this was the case? In your answer, tie in a discussion of the connections perhaps the contrasts between Wainaina’s piece and Adichie’s words. Close by articulating at least 1 question raised by your reflection of these pieces.

**Week 2: January 16th - 20th**

**Representing Africa II: the myth of the Dark Continent**

In week 2 we continue thinking about the historical and contemporary problematic representations of Africa.

Wednesday:

Friday:

**Week 3: January 23rd - 27th**

**African bodies I: development through extraction**

In this week we will consider historical forms of development in Africa that have focused on African bodies as objects for resource extraction. We will focus here on the slave trade.

Wednesday:
  • Issue 1. Did the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Underdevelop Africa?  

Friday:

Supplementary Readings:
Week 4: January 30th – February 3rd
The People and the Parks: conservation as development

In week 4 we consider national parks and African wildlife as a key ecological resource on the continent. We will review the colonial history of conservation and critically examine the implications of conservation as development for African ecologies and African peoples.

Monday:

Wednesday:
- Issue 12. Is Community-Based Wildlife Management a Failed Approach [pp. 29 in *Taking Sides*]

Friday:

Supplementary Readings:

Week 5: February 6th - 10th
Politicizing Rangelands: debating overpopulation

Monday: In-Class test 1 (weeks 1-4)
Friday: Film presentation

In week 5 we turn to a discussion of rangeland ecologies and rangeland management as a form of development. We will critically review the arguments around overpopulation, climate change and desertification and consider some of the possible political, social and environmental roots of rangeland resource conflicts.

Monday:
- In-class test on class material from week 1 to 4
Wednesday:

Friday:

Supplementary Readings:

Week 6: February 13th - 17th
**The politics of water: modernization and privatization**

Friday: Film presentation
This week we turn to the hotly contested debates around water resources in Africa. We consider the positive and negative outcomes of large dam projects and fish introduction projects as a form of development through modernization as well as the contemporary politics around the privatization of water.

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

**Week 7: February 20th - 24th**

**Whose Farm? Modernization, neoliberalism and shifting land rights**

Wednesday: Draft 1 of final paper (see handout for details)
Friday: Film presentation

Agricultural resources are central both to the everyday subsistence of many Africans and a significant form of internal and external revenue. This week we examine some of the historical and contemporary controversies around agricultural land tenure and land rights on the continent.

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

Supplementary Readings:

**Week 8: February 27 – March 2nd**

**The Green and Gene Revolutions in African farming**

Friday: Film presentation

In week 8 we take a critical look at some of the shifting development policies linked to agriculture focusing on the Green and Gene Revolutions. Here we will debate their varied social, ecological, political and economic impacts.

Monday:
- Conway, G. ‘From the Green Revolution to the Biotechnology Revolution: food for poor people in the 21st Century’

Wednesday:
the problems of poverty and hunger in sub-Saharan Africa. *Food First Policy Brief* No. 12.

Friday:

**Week 9: March 5th – 9th**

**Feeding the famine? Food aid or food trade**

Wednesday: Draft 2 final paper (see handout for details)
Friday: Film presentation

This week we continue our focus on food and agriculture, examining the debates around food aid and the possibilities for fair trade as an alternative form of development.

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

**Week 10: March 12th – 16th**

**SPRING BREAK**

Spend this week resting, reviewing class material from weeks 5-9 for our next test and working on your final research paper.

**Week 11: March 19th – 23rd**

**Forest ecologies: gender and development models**

Monday: In-class Test
Friday: Film presentation

In week 11 we examine African forests. We will use the case study of forestland to examine the rise of Gender and Development approaches in international policy, as well as more localized forms of ‘eco-feminism’.

Monday:
In-class test (weeks 5-9)

Wednesday:
For Issue 14: Are Women in a Position to Challenge Male Power Structures in Africa?


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**Week 12: March 26th – 30th**

**Oceans & Airways: geopolitical shifts and the War on Terror in Africa**

**Friday:** Film presentation

This week we explore the ways in which Africa has been used as a site for geopolitical strategy and conflict between the 1960s and today. In particular we examine the impact of the Cold War on African politics and the contemporary War on Terror.

**Monday:**

**Wednesday:**

**Friday:**

**Supplementary Readings:**

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**Week 13: April 2nd - 6th**

**A resource blessing or curse? Debating dependency and development in mineral and oil extraction**

**Friday:** Film presentation

In week 13 we critically examine the politics around mineral and oil extraction in Africa, focusing primarily on diamond mining and oil drilling. We will review the benefits of such practices for national development as well as the problematic implications of local access to land, ecological destruction and civil conflict.
Monday:
- Testimony by Deputy Assistant Secretary Todd Moss, Bureau of African Affairs, US Department of State Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on African Affairs, Sept 24 2008.

Wednesday:

Friday:

Supplementary Readings:

Week 14: April 9th - 13th
**African Bodies 2: high-tech development and the ‘Brain Drain’**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Full draft final paper (see handout for details)</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Film presentation</td>
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In week 14 we return to a focus on African bodies, here with an interest in African minds as sites of development. We will consider the debates around skilled migration and the ‘Brain Drain’ and explore the exciting developments in the high-tech sector in the last decade.

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

Week 15: April 16th – 20th

Friday: Final Research Paper (in-class, no late or emailed assignments accepted). Please post one copy to turnitin.com by midnight.

This week we will reflect on the key concepts, themes and case studies we have covered over the class and review these together. We’ll return to our discussions on day 1 and consider how our dominant understandings and representations of the continent have been challenged, reworked or reinforced by our readings, in-class discussions and coursework. We’ll close by considering how this process might reshape our encounters with and
understandings of Africa and our next steps as critical scholars of population and development.

- No new assigned readings. Review any missed/difficult readings

Friday:
- Final research paper due

Final test: Week 16, Monday April 23rd, 12pm-2pm.
See www.myfiu.edu for details regarding date, time and location