



GEOG 2030A: GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA
COURSE OUTLINE: SUMMER 2023

1. Course Information

Delivery Mode	Dates	Times
Online	Posted materials on Wednesdays	Live lectures every other week (attendance not compulsory but encouraged) 1-3pm

*Detail about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Section 5.

Classes Start	Classes End	Last Day to Add	Last Day to Drop	Exams
May 8	July 28	May 12	June 12	July 31-August 3

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Senanu Kwasi Kutor (PhD Candidate)	skutor@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 4-5pm
Teaching Assistant(s)		
N/A	N/A	N/A

Office hours will be held remotely using email and if necessary, by Zoom appointment (made through an email).

2. Course Description

Africa South of the Sahara is still, arguably, one of the most inaccurately depicted regions in the world. Little is known about this extremely diverse area despite its long history and significant advancements throughout the years. This may be what led to a "single narrative" about this area continuing to be one of poverty and underdevelopment. In order to emphasize the region's great diversity, we will examine the region through a variety of perspectives—history, economy, migration, politics, education, health, gender, and governance to highlight its rich diversity and

challenges. In achieving this, some critical questions would be explored in this course, such as: what are the drivers of poverty and underdevelopment in sub-Saharan Africa? Why is the sub-region underdeveloped despite it being the hub of many mineral and energy resources? How is the region typically depicted in the media and why? What are the causes of emigration from the region? What are the governance issues in the region? What are the current health challenges within the region?

Antirequisite(s): None

Prerequisite(s): None

Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility

2.1 Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, "unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

3. Textbook

Required text: Grant, R. (2015). *Africa: Geographies of Change*. New, York: Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 978-0-19-992056-3).

Other key readings and materials will be posted to owl.

4. Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be expected to:

- Develop an understanding of the geographic contexts of sub-Sahara Africa, including a synopsis of the physical, cultural, political, bioclimatic, demographic, migration, governance, social, cultural and health geographies of the region.

- Examine how geographical concepts such as ‘place’, ‘scale’ and ‘human-environment relations’ could be applied to specific issues in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Explain contemporary political and social issues in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Describe and critique the dominant approaches to development in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Strengthen skills of critical and reflective writing and using evidence to support an argument.

5. Course Format

This course consists of two hours of live lectures every other week (attendance not compulsory but encouraged). Lecture slides will be posted on OWL. There is an opportunity for students to meet the instructor during office hours, mainly via zoom for discussion related to the course. The class will be organized using lectures, documentary films, in class discussions, and occasional guest lectures delivered by scholars within the University and policy community with diverse research backgrounds. If you have any experiences that relate to the course content or any of the topics to be discussed, students are encouraged to share with the rest of the class. If students come across interesting news items or readings that are relevant to the course, they can share with their colleagues during class. The course encourages critical learning with the full participation of students. Class discussions are salient aspect of the course and contribute to your class participation. Students are expected to have done all assigned readings before coming to class. The course will be web-assisted using (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>).

You should check this website regularly.

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). [Using the right browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL] If students need assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

6. Expectations and Criteria for Success

Follow the strategies below if you intend to complete this class with a strong and stress-free grade:

- Be active in your own learning.
- Read ahead and complete all assignments on time. Late assignments would attract a penalty
- Ask relevant questions and make use of office hours if you need extra help. The instructor will not be able to help you with your course requirements unless you inform him of your circumstances.
- Do not plagiarize.

7. Course Evaluation

The final grades for this course will be awarded based on the following:

Evaluation Components	Percentage of course Grade	Due Date
Class participation <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Forum discussions	15%	Entire semester
Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Country update	25%	June 14
Mid-Term Assessment	30%	June 21
Final Exam	30%	To be determined

To maximize their final grades, students are encouraged to attend all live lectures.

Assessment Descriptions

Class participation (15%)

Class participation is one of the most central aspects of this course. Class participation in this course will be assessed through weekly Forum discussion. We will devote considerable time per week to discussing salient issues related to the topics discussed for that lecture. For this course, there will be lots of emphasis on critical thinking and as such, I will be

looking at how students offer thoughtful comments which pose good questions for the class or advance the discussions in the forum. Marks would be awarded based on these criteria and not about just offering frequent contributions but thoughtful ones. Students should endeavour to show a high degree of maturity and respect during forum discussions as a wide range of views would emerge.

The forum questions will be posted every Wednesday and due by Friday at 11:55pm on OWL.

Assignment 1 (25%)

Component 1: Country update

Each student will select a country of interest in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and follow the coverage of topical news or major events in the chosen country for one month. Provide a 500-word synthesis of the news articles and a reflection on the ways in which the news reports on topical news or major events contribute to or deviate from a 'single story for Africa'. This exercise seeks to keep students abreast with current issues in their selected countries while applying critical analytical skills from the course in discussing these issues.

Submissions should be typed using Times New Roman, font size 12, single spaced, and uploaded on OWL. Sources of information should be clearly indicated using the APA format. Submission via the Assignments tab in OWL. Further details will be provided via OWL. This is due **June 14, 2023**.

The following news sites – not by any means exhaustive – provide current daily news of happenings in SSA:

All Africa News: <https://allafrica.com/>

US Africa online: <https://usafricaonline.com/>

The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/section/world/africa>

CNN: <https://www.cnn.com/specials/africa/inside-africa>

BBC Focus on Africa: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gbjvb>

***Students should desist from citing Wikipedia.**

Mid-Term Assessment (30%):

The mid-term exam will be cumulative and open book. The exam will comprise of multiple choice and short answer questions and will be based on the materials covered from lecture 1-6. It is scheduled for 1-3pm on **June 21, 2023**. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of verifiable emergencies.

Final Exam (30%):

There will be a final exam for this course. Relevant details shall be communicated in due course. Deadline for the final exam to be determined. **Make-up exams will only be given in the event of verifiable medical emergencies.** Refer to Western's Policy on Accommodation for Illnesses.

Other recommendations

- Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text. Doing weekly readings, completing assignments in a timely manner and, participating in group and class discussions and reflections are essential if you hope to perform well in this course.
- All assignments are due at 11:55pm EST unless otherwise specified.
- Late assignments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 5% of the total marks per late day.
- Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of submission of the last illness self-report.
- Written assignments may be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below).
- Rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days.

- An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class; an alternate assessment will be assigned.
- Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: You are responsible for your grades in this course.

Check here for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. **The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.**

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

8. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Reminders
1	May 10 Live lecture	Introduction, course organisation, class expectations Lecture 1: Reframing and Representing African Affairs	Course syllabus Grant (Chapters 1 & 2) The danger of a single story, TED talk by Chimamanda Adichie	Selection of country of interest in sub-Saharan Africa Assignment 1 Introduction
2	May 17	Lecture 2: Africa's environment: Physical geography of Africa	Grant (Chapter 3).	
3	May 24 Live lecture	Lecture 3: Historical perspectives on Africa	Grant (Chapter 4)	

4	May 31	Lecture 4: Land, Agriculture, and Food Security	Grant (Chapters 5 and 10)	
5	June 07 Live lecture	Lecture 5: Population, Migration, Remittances, and Development	Grant (Chapter 7)	
6	June 14	Lecture 6: Climate change and implications for sub-Saharan Africa	Grant (Chapter 11)	Assignment 1 Due
7	June 21	Mid-Term	Personal notes and materials	Mid-Term Exam
8	June 28	Lecture 7: Governance and Politics in SSA Guest Speaker:	To be assigned	
9	July 5 Live lecture	Lecture 8: Gender and Development in Africa	Grant (Chapter 5) *Other key readings will be assigned	
10	July 12	Lecture 9: The informal economy in urban Africa	Grant (Chapter 6)	
11	July 19 Live lecture	Lecture 10: African Futures	Grant (Chapter 13)	
12	July 26	Exams preparation tips		
13	To be determined.	Final Exams		

9. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

Course Absences due to Daily COVID Screening Questionnaire

Missed assessments (e.g., presentations, essays, quizzes, tests, midterms, etc.) require formal [academic considerations](#) (typically academic counselling).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

10. Make-up Examinations

Make-ups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled exam, otherwise the instructor will assign a grade of zero. The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

11. Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations. Mobile telephones and similar devices should be switched off or put on silent mode during class as they can be distracting to the instructor and other students. Laptop computers used in class should be strictly restricted to course related activities such as note taking and not for surfing the internet, social media, playing games or watching movies.

12. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#). All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

13. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation](#) of exams is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about [“Accessibility at Western”](#) is available.

14. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit [Western's Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

15. Support Services

[Western's Support Services](#)

[Student Development Centre](#)

16. Important Dates

- May 08: First day of classes
- May 12: Last day to add
- May 22: Victoria Day
- June 12: Last day to drop
- June 30: Observed Canada Day
- July 28: Classes end
- July 31-August 03: Exams