

GEOG 2030A – Geography of Africa South of the Sahara

Course Outline: Section 001 Fall 2023

This course is taught in-person

I. Course Information

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



Classes Start	Fall Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 7	Oct 30 - Nov 7	December 8	December 9	December 10-22

September 15, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course.

October 9, 2023: Thanksgiving Holiday

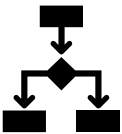
November 13, 2023: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours – SSC 2316
Daniel Amoak	damoak@uwo.ca	Wednesdays, 11 am -12:00

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Office Hours—SSC 2316
Satveer Dhillon	Sdhill84@uwo.ca	Thursday 10-11 am

2. Calendar Description

This course provides an introduction to the geography of Africa south of the Sahara. The course will take a systematic approach. Economic, political, social, health and environmental issues will be examined with a focus on contemporary patterns of change within the context of the global economy.



2 lecture hours, 0.5 course

Antirequisite(s): None

Prerequisite(s): None

Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility

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.”

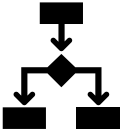
3. Course Objectives and Format

This course provides an introduction to the geography of Africa south of the Sahara. Under the broad theme of geographies of change, this course straddles critical human geography disciplines including urban, health and development geography and offers students the opportunity to analyse contemporary issues relevant to sub-Saharan Africa. The course will analyse some challenges facing African countries including desertification and food insecurity and highlight some unique opportunities that are informing an emerging new story for Africa, such as the youthful population bulge and rapid economic growth prospects in some countries.

It will enable students to critically reflect on the diverse, complex and changing sub-Saharan Africa region, and also think differently about alternative and more positive possibilities for Africa's development. The course will use a mix of class activities, group presentations, case studies, short documentary films and guest lectures to meet these objectives.

A typical two-hour lecture in this course will involve a mixture of lectures, interactive class activities, as well as student led class/group presentations. The lecture structure will be as follows, with modifications as required:

- Recap of the key points from the previous week's discussion and clarification of muddy areas highlighted during office hours (1-5 minutes);
- Lecture on the topic of the day (1 hour);
- Health break /interlude to showcase cultural diversity of sub-Saharan Africa (5 minutes)
- Group presentations (30 minutes- two 15-minute presentations). The student-led presentations are intended to arouse student driven curiosity on a topic based partly on what you perceive as the important issues and reconciling that within the context of the learning material. Group discussions will focus on examples and case studies to complement lecture material. Discussions may also be conducted intermittently during the lecture;
- Class reflections/ discussions (5-10 minutes)
- Conclusion: Instructor to summarize main points (5-10 minutes).



☒ The class environment for GEOG 2030A will be supportive and respectful. The class will be maintained as a space to ask questions and take a chance on an unsure answer. I will treat you with respect as the Instructor and expect the same respect to be demonstrated by all students towards each other, to the Instructor as well as Guest Speakers. You are expected to work cooperatively with other group members for the group presentations. Listen respectfully to the opinions of others, ask questions and give suggestions to each other. The class is a scholarly community where diverging opinions are expected and encouraged as long as we are respectful to one another. As a class, we will develop a set of guidelines in the first week of class in order to maintain a respectful and collegial class environment to support the learning of all students

In order to facilitate an interactive learning environment, you are expected to attend weekly classes having reviewed the assigned readings and materials, and ready to participate actively in discussions. Feel free to ask questions during the class to enhance your understanding as well as that of your peers. In class contributions and reflections will be monitored to contribute towards the class participation component of the final grade.

4. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the geographical diversity of settlements in Africa south of the Sahara desert, including the boundaries, landforms, climatic patterns and historical patterns.
- Explain contemporary political and social issues in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Identify and analyse development challenges and opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Analyze real-world problems and policy applications using geographical concepts, skills and understanding.
- Apply skills of critical and reflective writing and using evidence to support an argument.



5. Textbook

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

All other course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.



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. Communication

Important information about the course will be available on OWL. Announcements will be posted to remind you of key timelines including when assignments are due and on upcoming assessments. Students should monitor the OWL site regularly for updates

Students are encouraged to take advantage of weekly Instructor and TA office hours to clarify any issues you need help with. You are welcome to drop in to discuss your ideas for your essay project or any issues you identify in your country of interest which you may want to explore further.

Outside office hours, you can email your me with quick questions. I typically respond to emails within 24 - 48 hours (except on weekends and holidays). Clearly indicate GEOG 2030 in the subject line of course related messages.

For any other communication, the centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).



7. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings	Reminders
1	September 12	Introduction, course organisation, class expectations Lecture 1: Reframing and representing African affairs	Course syllabus Grant (Chapter 1 &2) Listen to: The Danger of a Single Story, TED talk by Chimamanda Adichie	Group sign up sheet Selection of country of interest in sub-Saharan Africa Assignment 1 introduction
2	September 19	Lecture 2: Africa's environment: Physical geography of Africa	Grant (Chapter 3)	
3	September 26	Lecture 3: Historical perspectives on Africa	Grant (Chapter 4) Watch BBC Documentary: Slavery and Suffering - History Of Africa with Zeinab Badawi [Episode 16]	Group 1&2 presentations Assignment 1 due
4	October 3	Lecture 4: Africa's disease burden	Grant (Chapter 9)	Group 3&4 presentations
5	October 10	Food security and the Green Revolution in Africa	Grant (Chapter 5 &10)	Group 5 & 6 presentations Assignment 1 feedback
6	October 17	Gender and Climate Change in Africa Guest Speaker: Oluwaseyi	Grant (Chapter 11) Watch IUCN Documentary: Adapting to climate change in Eastern and Southern Africa *Other readings would be posted on OWL	Group 7 & 8 presentations Assignment 2 introduction
7	October 24	Mid term test	Personal Notes and Materials	2 hours
9	October 31	No class: Fall Reading Week		
10	November 7	The political ecology of the extractive industry in SSA	*Key readings would be posted on OWL	Group 9 &10



		Guest Lecture: Dr Benjamin Kwao		
11	November 14	Seed systems and agrarian change in SSA	*Key readings would be posted on OWL	
12	November 21	Population, migration, remittances Guest speaker: Senanu Kutor	Grant (Chapter 7) *Other key readings would be posted on OWL	Group 11 & 12
13	Nov 28	The Informal Economy in Urban Africa	Grant (Chapter 6) *Other key readings would be posted on OWL	
14	December 5	African futures Course review	Watch: How Africa can use its traditional knowledge to make progress	Assignment 2 feedback
15	Final exam: Date and time to be confirmed.			

8. Evaluation

Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date
Class participation	Individual and group reflections	5%	Ongoing
Assignment 1	Country update and Map assignment	20%	September 28
Assignment 2	Essay	15%	November 16
Group presentations	In-class presentations	10%	Ongoing
Mid term exam	2-hour exam	20%	October 24
Final exam	3-hour exam	30%	December 10-21 (Date TBA)
Total		100%	



Assessment descriptions

Class reflections (5%)

You will be expected to complete all assigned readings ahead of each class as this will help you to form your own thoughts and develop these further through the lecture and associated class activities. You will be given in-class opportunities to reflect on class discussions and assigned readings. This will include through active learning activities, class discussions as well as in-class individual and group reflections. Class reflections will be counted for participation and not assessed on content. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Instructor if they cannot attend a class and discuss options to learn and make up for their participation.

Assignment 1 (20%)

Component 1: Country update (10%)

Each student will select a country of interest in sub-Saharan Africa and follow the coverage of a topical news item in that country. Provide a 600–800-word synthesis of the news articles and a reflection on the ways in which the news reports contribute to or deviate from a 'single story for Africa'. This assignment is intended to build students capacity to synthesise information and reflect on alternate ways to present a more balanced perspective for a lay audience.

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>

Component 2: Map assignment (10%)

Select a physical feature of interest in your country of interest. Present a map showing this feature. Analyse the importance of this feature to socio-economic indicators in the country. Your analysis should be no more than 500 words. Student must include either a map with the location of the feature on it or a picture of the feature. You are allowed to use pictures acquired online but you **MUST** provide the source(s) of the map/picture. Grading will be based on the map presented as well as the analysis. This assignment is to enhance students understanding of the relationship between physical features of the environment and human processes and interactions.

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.

Assignment 2: Essay (15%)

Select a topic of interest from the lectures/class discussions and critically analyse the factors contributing to this phenomenon. With reference to your identified country of interest and other relevant contexts in sub-Saharan Africa, discuss the impact of the issue and propose solutions. Essays should be 1000-1500 words in length and clearly indicate the reference sources using APA format. Papers will be graded based on how well they explain the chosen concept and the relevance of proposed solutions. The objective of this assignment is to enhance critical writing skills of students. All assignments should be submitted through the assignments tab on OWL and not sent by email to the course Instructor or TA.

Group presentations (10%)

To facilitate student learning, students will be involved in group presentations to demonstrate their knowledge and facilitate the understanding of their peers. This is because studies suggest that small-group activities promote student mastery of material, enhance critical thinking skills and contribute towards learner empowerment. Students will work in groups of five to synthesise and present case studies provided in the course textbook, as a complement to weekly class discussions. The group sign-up sheet indicating the dates and topics for the presentations will be provided via OWL. Students who select the same date will work together

on a fifteen-minute class presentation which should include interactive part to enhance engagement. Group presentations will be assessed collectively by peers, in addition to Instructor's evaluation.

Mid term assessment (20%)

The mid term exam will comprise multiple choice and short answer questions and will be based on the material covered at the stage in the course.

Final exam (30%)

There will be a final exam for this course comprising multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Relevant details shall be communicated in due course.

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 11:55 pm 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.

Click 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

Information about late or missed evaluations:

Students who miss a quiz, mid-term or the final exams will need to acquire the necessary medical or other accommodation services and can learn more by reading Western's Policy on Accommodation for Illness. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and

provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC please refer to the Academic Handbook.

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)

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

Makeups 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.

12. How to Be Successful in this Class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, r contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.



13. Continuity of Education Plan (in-person class pivoting to online learning)

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the university to direct courses move away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

14. 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.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

15. Use of AI in this course

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them

to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

16. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment 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.

17. 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.

18. Support Services

[Western's Support Services](#)

[Student Development Centre](#)