

GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA
University of Florida, Department of Geography
GEA 2601
Fall 2025, 3 Credits, Online

Professor: Heidi Lannon, Ph.D.
3126A TURL, Phone: 352-392-0494
Class Time: Online class, Asynchronous
E-Mail: lannon@ufl.edu (best to contact me through Canvas)
Office Hours: Tuesday 8:30 to 9:30am, Thursday, 8:30am to 10:30am in 3126A TURL and online.
Additional office hours by appointment.
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/93668927426?pwd=U0pJVXUyTFNETjdmK1Vib1FqbUM1UT09>
Meeting ID: 936 6892 7426, Passcode: geography
If you need to contact me, please do not use the discussion board or the comments section in assignments. E-mail will be responded to within 24 hours on weekdays only

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Briar Pierce
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PLEASE COPY ME ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS

I am delighted to talk to you about any aspects of your education, including majoring in Geography. I am committed to undergraduate teaching and interaction and if I can help you in any way, please let me know. You will find our teaching assistants are both very experienced and have taught and assisted with this, and other classes previously.

Department of Geography's Main Office Location: TUR 3141. Web site information:
<http://geog.ufl.edu/programs/undergrad/>
[Links to an external site.](#) Geographic Coordinates: 82.34312 West Longitude, 29.64990 North Latitude

Course Description

This course presents the Geography of Africa in a comprehensive and systematic survey of Africa's population, natural resources, and regional geography. The course will emphasize the significance of Africa's economic and political affairs in a globalizing world. The class will incorporate lectures, guests, readings, various media and exercises. Media stereotypes and contemporary questions will be addressed in geographical context and evaluated through assignments. *Rather than the poor, starving, diseased populations impacted by corruption and environmental degradation, we will consider the diverse and resilient landscapes and people. Students will be asked to address their preconceptions and work to understand contemporary Africa.*

Class Objectives and Goals

The objective of this course is the development of an understanding of the importance of the geography of the continent of Africa. The relationships between physical environment and human systems are the basic tenant of geography. The physical and human landscapes of Africa will be evaluated in relation to current events, politics and challenges, while considering the historical perspective.

The course is constructed to incorporate writing and research in the examination of the origin and evolution of the physical and human landscape of Africa. Assignments will emphasize all scales of geography from global economic dimensions to grains of sand, using original research and intensive writing. While the course will be divided into sections, students should anticipate the interconnectedness of the discipline of Geography. The class will follow these general sections:

- Physical Geography (tectonics, landforms, climate, soil, vegetation)
- Human-Environmental Interactions (desertification, deforestation, impact of conservation)
- Social Geography (role of women, education, development perspectives, historical influences), Agriculture (traditional verses cash crops, policy questions, climate impacts)
- Political Geography (colonialism, post-colonial government systems, conflict)
- Population and Medical Geography (birth and death rates, age cohorts, disease, mobility)
- Geography of Development (globalization, economic development, financial systems, transportation)
- Urbanization (city structures, rural urban migration, housing)

This class will NOT be about geography trivia. My goal for this course is to instill an ability to write and think geographically, rather than the requirement to memorize information. While this course is by its nature fact based, the assignments are designed to develop the following important skills: (1) written and verbal communication; (2) research and critical thinking; (3) problem evaluation and analysis; and (4) application of knowledge. Each assignment will provide the opportunity for a student to demonstrate creativity in applied geography.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

This is an Online Class. If you are reading this, you have already mastered the essentials of the Learning Management System (Canvas). I expect you to check the Learning Management System (Canvas) for messages and content at least 3 times a week. I suggest you conduct yourself online as you would in person. To that end, it may help if you assign yourself regular times each week to review the lectures, take quizzes and post discussion items. This is a 3-credit class with a 6,000-word writing requirement. You should anticipate it will be rigorous and you should spend considerable time per week reviewing lectures, taking notes, reading the text, and working with assigned partners and groups. In addition, you should anticipate time needed to be spent on homework, including assignments, discussion posts to the class, quiz completion, and preparation for the final.

Each member of this class will be participating in a group project to prepare a presentation and support from your peers is essential. **YOU MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP CLASS PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION TO PASS THIS CLASS.** While I understand that the requirement to develop a group online presentation may be daunting, every student will participate and I expect demonstrated effort and creativity, and respect for each other.

UF academic policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link.](https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/) (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.) This link provides UF information and regulations in the following:

- Attendance and make-up policies
- DRC information
- Assigning grade points
- Gator Evals
- Honesty policy
- In-class recording
- Academic and wellness resources

Required

- Good Attitude
- No textbooks are required. You will be assigned a group, a topic and side to write on for Assignment 3. Many of the topics are covered in Moseley, W. G., & Otiso, K. M., (ed.), (2023) *Debating African issues, Conversations under the Palaver tree*, Routledge, NY pp 291. ISBN 978-0-367-20154-8., DOI: 10.4324/9780429259784. All materials not in this text (Issue 1, 22, 23, 24, 25) are available in Canvas. Each seminal article is also available from the original scholarly journal source, through the library online databases.
- Proficient use of the library databases for research of scholarly materials for assignments. Library materials and database orientation through the UF library is suggested if you have not done this before. You will use APA citation style in all your work for this class. Your ability to use this style is part of the demonstration of your writing competency. There is a Module in Canvas dedicated to Library resources and APA citation style.
- Good written and oral communications skills. This class contains a substantial expectation for college level writing in the discipline of geography. References to scholarly material must be made in APA citation style. All work should be well structured, clear and concise.

Student Evaluation

Assignment	Points (100)	Words required	Due Dates on Class Calendar
1a – Syllabus Evaluation	1 point		Due Friday Week 1
1b - Introduction Video	2 points		Due Friday Week 1
1c - Written evaluation of the Origin of Personal Stereotypes	6 points	750	Due Friday Week 2. Submitted via Canvas
2a – Select Africanist and define	3 points	250	Due Friday Week 6
2b – Africanist Report	17 points	1250	Due Friday Week 8. Submitted via Canvas
3a -Taking Sides Report	20 points 10 points	2000	Submitted via Canvas, Individual, not group reports required. CHECK THE CALENDAR

			Group 3, Post 1 – Week 6 Group 3, Post 2 – Week 10 Group 3, Post 3 – Week 13
Map Quizzes (2)	10 points (5 each)	0	Given online and timed, complete by Friday Week 4, Week 5
Final Exam – multiple choice, true/false, matching	10 points	0	Taken on Canvas, timed, due on date shown on the course calendar

Canvas e-Learning System

This class will be conducted using the e-Learning System, Canvas. The best method of contact for Dr. Lannon is through Canvas email. Please consult <http://lss.at.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.) If you need help resolving technical issues visit the [helpdesk website](#) or call 352-392-4357. If you experience problems with the e-Learning system, such as log-in issues, please contact the [UF Help](#), or at 352-392-HELP for assistance.

Writing Evaluation

The course has a substantial writing requirement. To obtain credit for the UF writing requirement, students must achieve a C grade. Your writing will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Content
- Organization and Coherence
- Effectiveness of Argument
- Style
- Grammar and Punctuation

Reading and Literature Citation

The material covered each week is outlined on the course calendar in Canvas. I expect you to review the submitted work of your peers, in addition, so that you can participate in class discussion. Discussion posts should critically evaluate and be scholarly in nature, but also include informed opinions. You should be aware that your opinions may not be parallel to others.

In your assignments and presentations, I expect you to cite all sources using APA standards. The suggestion to attend a library orientation will assist you if you are unsure of literature citation standards. Information on APA style is also available in Canvas. It is sufficient under an image or after work attributed to an author, to use Last Name and Date (Lannon, 2021). After a direct quotation you should use Name, Date, Page Number (Lannon, 2021, p. 23). At the end of every assignment and presentation please include a complete reference list. This is a writing intense class, so attention to detail in citation style is imperative.

Discussion Techniques

1. “Listen” to each other and learn a variety of perspectives upon which you can build your opinions in favor or against an issue.
2. Discussions should be focused. The Moseley text provides issues upon which we will base class discussion.
3. Connections between the various subdisciplines of Geography will enhance your ability to evaluate issues.
4. Insight from readings, supplemented by awareness of current events and connections to your personal interests or other classes will enhance your discussion skills.

Extra Credit

Extra credit in the class can be obtained from paying attention to the recorded lectures. There are clues embedded in the lecture narration. Any extra credit must be submitted the week the lecture is considered. You will be awarded 5 extra credit points on the final examination for each clue. The extra credit is applied towards the final exam grade. Please be aware that the maximum amount of extra credit is the total score of the final, not over 100%.

Course Evaluation

Your Teaching Assistants and I would be grateful to receive feedback on this class. I am sincerely committed to improving the class experience for you and always learn something from student feedback. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under 2 GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Grading Scale

The scale is consistent with the University of Florida [Grades and Grading policies](#)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE	GRADE POINTS
A	92-100	4.0
A-	90-91.99	3.67
B+	88-89.99	3.33
B	82-87.99	3.0
B-	80-81.99	2.67
C+	78-79.99	2.33
C	72-77.99	2.0
C-	70-71.99	1.67
D+	68-69.99	1.63
D	62-67.99	1.0
D-	60-61.99	0.67
E	<59.99	0
S (Pass/Fail)	Over 60	0

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

Note the Grading scale is to 2 decimal places. At the end of the semester do NOT ask for extra credit to make your grade higher. There are plenty of opportunities throughout the semester. Grades are used as a tool to measure performance. To perform well in this class the following will help you: (1) 'attend' class regularly (2) take lecture notes and set aside time to read the pertinent parts of the text (3) participate in and SUBMIT all class assignments. If you are not doing well and

have studied, read, and attended class, please e-mail me or come and see me – do not wait until the end of the semester.

Meeting deadlines matters! All assignments are due on the due date or as indicated on the Calendar. Late assignments will be marked down a letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., from an A to a B for being a day late). A day is defined as 24 hours and begins immediately after the deadline. ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN THROUGH THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CANVAS).

DATES	TOPIC
Introduction	Review materials - Welcome and Introduction. (Check last day to drop/add, if necessary). Lecture - Overview of the importance of Geography, Africa.
Week 1 Assignments due 23:55 8/29/25	Review materials - Geography and Regions of Africa <i>Contact class peer for Assignment 1 interview.</i> Taking Sides Issues and Student Groups Assigned <i>Begin Taking Sides Issue organization. Orient yourself to the library materials and APA citation style.</i> DUE: Friday Assignment 1 – 1a syllabus quiz, 1b Introduction Video
Week 2 Assignments due 23:55 9/5/25	Review materials - Globalization and Africa DUE: Friday Assignment 1c – Written introduction and stereotypes of classmate
Week 3 Assignments due 23:55 9/12/25	<u>Physical Environment</u> Review materials - Physical Geography of Africa – Hydrosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, biosphere Issue 1 – Microfinance tools in Africa Issue 2 – Impact of European trade pre-1700 Issue 3 – Africa prosperity prior to European involvement
Week 4 Assignments due 23:55 9/19/25	Review materials - Human and Environmental Issues, desertification, deforestation, Map Quiz 1 Issue 4 – Colonization and Development, Issue 5 – Border Geography in Africa Issue 6 – Africa's economic rise DUE: Friday Map Quiz 1 DUE: Friday Discussion Post 1, Group 1
Week 5 Assignments due 23:55 9/26/25	<u>Sociocultural Africa</u> Review materials - Historical Geography of Africa, Map Quiz 2 Issues 7 – Impact of foreign land acquisitions Issue 8 – Chinese Influence in Africa Issue 9 – African cities as the driver of the economies DUE: Friday Map Quiz 2 DUE: Friday Discussion Post 1, Group 2

Week 6 Assignments due 23:55 10/3/25	Review materials - Political Landscapes of Africa Issue 10 – Parks and wildlife Issue 11 – African adaption to climate change Issue 12 – New Green Revolution and hunger DUE: Friday Discussion Post 1, Group 3 DUE: Friday Assignment 2, Select Africanist and define
Week 7 Assignments due 23:55 10/10/25	Review materials - Social Geography and Conflict. Issue 13 – Food insecurity research bias Issue 14 – African Educations issues Issue 15 – Focus on the girl child DUE: Friday Discussion Post 2, Group 1
Week 8 Assignments due 23:55 10/17/25	Review materials - Population Geography DUE: Friday Assignment 2, Africanist Report DUE: Friday Discussion Post 2, Group 2
Week 9 Assignments due 23:55 10/24/25	Review materials - Gender and Equality Issue 16 – Health resources and HIV/AIDS Issue 17 – Impacts of Religiosity Issue 18 – Multiparty democracy Issue 19 – Foreign military impacts
Week 10 Assignments due 23:55 10/31/25	<u><i>Development and Africa</i></u> Review materials - Urbanization, infrastructure Issue 20 – Women in Politics Issue 21 – Role of cell phones and Internet Issue 22 – Black Panther movie as a reflection of Africa DUE: Friday Discussion Post 2, Group 3
Week 11 Assignments due 23:55 11/7/25	Review materials - Medical Geography, Disease Issues 23 – Land reform in South Africa Issue 24 – Terrorism and Aid Issue 25 – Trophy hunting of big game & Conservation DUE: Friday Discussion Post 3, Group 1
Week 12 Assignments due 23:55 11/14/25	Review materials - Economic Activity in Africa DUE Friday Assignment 4, Evaluation essay, movie/guest lecture DUE: Friday Discussion Post 3, Group 2
Week 13 Assignments due 23:55 11/21/25	Review materials - Entrepreneurship and Economic Activity. Watch the New Scramble for Africa available in Modules (this is important, there will be questions on this on the Final Exam). DUE: Friday Discussion Post 3, Group 3
Week 14	THANKSGIVING
Week 15	Future of Africa. Classes End, Reading Days
FINALS Week	FINALS. Final is timed, given in Canvas. Due by WEDNESDAY

These dates are subject to change and notifications will be made through the Learning Management System

General Education Objectives

This course is both a social and behavioral sciences (S) and international (N) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. Students should anticipate a writing intense course and develop an understanding of the approaches used by geographers to identify and analyze environmental systems and human-environment relationships in Africa. This course will enhance student awareness of how geographic concepts apply to, and have influenced their lives specific to the continent of Africa

S - Social Science N - International Writing requirement – 6,000 words

Social and behavioral sciences courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures, and processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

International courses equip students to identify, describe, and explain the historical, cultural, economic, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world. Students will exercise critical thinking to analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly connected contemporary world.

These general education objectives will be accomplished through:

- Discussion and explanation of Africa's population, natural resources, and regional geography.
- Description and explanation of the significance of Africa's economic and political affairs in a globalizing world.
- Analysis of historical context and case studies in Africa to discern origins of stereotypes and their context to modern Africa
- Evaluation and discussion of recent and ongoing African issues to understand how consequences emerge and propagate through interconnected national and international economic and political systems
- Analysis and critique of the contribution of Africanists, the media, and even entertainment in the portrayal of African Geography

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to achieve the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- **Content:** *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories, and methodologies used within the subject area.* Students will acquire a comprehensive survey of knowledge of Physical Geography (tectonics, landforms, climate, soil, vegetation), Human-Environmental Interactions (desertification, deforestation, impact of conservation), Social Geography (role of women, education, development perspectives, historical influences), Agriculture (traditional verses cash crops, policy questions, climate impacts), Political Geography (colonialism, post-colonial government systems, conflict), Population and Medical Geography (birth and death rates, age cohorts, disease, mobility), Geography of Development (globalization, economic development, financial systems, transportation)

and Urbanization. Achievement of this learning outcome will be assessed through map quizzes, three written assignments and a final exam

- **Communication:** *Students clearly and effectively communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning in written or oral forms appropriate to the subject area.* Students will individually prepare three written assignments and participate in a group presentation preparation. Assignments will be assessed according to the rubric provided on Canvas. Students must communicate their responses to African current issues through 5 discussion postings. Achievement of this learning outcome will be assessed through the written assignments and five discussion postings on peer presentations of African issues
- **Critical Thinking:** *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the subject area.* Students address personal stereotypes about Africa and interact with classmates on stereotype origins and relevance. Students will analyze data and information for an assigned African issue and evaluate both sides of over 20 issues. Students are expected to engage with course content, put the issues into context, and evaluate the sides to determine the impacts in the continent of Africa. Achievement of this learning outcome will be assessed through an introductory written report on stereotypes, five written discussion postings, and three written assignments