Simon Fraser University, School for International Studies

IS 309 J100 Special Topics I: Development Issues in Sub-Saharan Africa (4 credits)

Fall 2017 (September 5 to December 11, 2017)

Harbour Centre, Mondays 5:30-9:20pm

Sessional Instructor: Dr. Geetanjali Gill, geetanjali75@hotmail.com, 778-231-5443

Course Description and Objectives
This course introduces students to critical development issues affecting the region of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). SSA, which is made up of widely heterogeneous countries and sub-regions, continues to face enormous development challenges. Students will learn about the social, economic, and political underpinnings of development in SSA. The course provides a critical analysis of development interventions and processes. It draws upon development theories as well as contemporary social policy.

This course covers a wide breadth of themes: politics and governance, conflict and violence, agriculture and land, natural resource management, economic development and poverty eradication, education, health and HIV/AIDS, gender, development interventions and actors, civil society, and Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals. These topics will be examined in relation to SSA as a whole, as well as to particular sub-regions and countries within SSA. As such, similarities and differences across and within countries will be shown.

Students are required to not only engage with required class readings, but to also draw upon further recommended reading, as well as other relevant materials that they independently bring to class to discuss. Students on this course will learn through active participation in lectures, discussions, and presentations. There will be flexibility and choice in the selection of exam questions and research paper topics.

Required and Recommended Readings
Required and recommended readings for the course will be in the form of books and articles, which will be available at the SFU bookstore or online. Required and recommended readings for weekly lessons may be changed before the start of the course.

Grading and Assignments
Attendance and Participation: 15%
Take home Exam 1 (2000-3000 words): 20%
Take home Exam 2 (2000-3000 words): 20%
Presentation (10 minutes): 10%
Research Paper (choice of topics, 4000-5000 words): 35%
Each assignment should be submitted in two formats:
1) Hard copy at the beginning of class
2) An electronic copy, by the same deadline, to turnitin.com.
Assignments that are not submitted in both formats by the deadline will result in a lower grade.

Week 1 (Sept 5): The Post-colonial State, Governance, and Politics (I)
Week one examines post-independence politics and governance issues in SSA. While the focus will be on the post-independence era, the impacts of colonial legacies will also be examined.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 2 (Sept 11): The Post-colonial State, Governance, and Politics (II)
We continue to examine political and governance issues in SSA, with a special focus on discourses of ‘corruption’ and ‘anticorruption’, and weak and failed states.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
**Week 3 (Sept 18): Conflict and Violence**
We explore security and conflict issues in SSA, and root causes of conflict and violence through case studies. We consider political, ethnic/religious dimensions, international/regional involvement, and post-conflict peace-building strategies.

**Required Reading:**
A. Alao, 2007, *Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: The Tragedy of Endowment*, University of Rochester Press (one chapter TBD).

**Recommended Reading:**

**Assignment:** Take home Exam 1 distributed

**Week 4 (Sept 25): Agriculture, Land, and Sustainable Resource Management (I)**
Land tenure and reform, property rights, and discourses of the ‘resource curse’ in SSA are examined. Food security and cash crop farming in SSA are also discussed.

**Required Reading:**
World Bank, 2015, “Agriculture in Africa: Telling Facts from Myths”,
A. Rabah, T. Gyfason, & A. Sy, 2012, “Beyond the Curse: Policies to harness the power of natural resources”, IMF.

**Recommended Reading:**

**Assignment: Exam 1 DUE**

**Week 5 (Oct 2): Agriculture, Land, and Sustainable Resource Management (II)**
We examine the implications of climate change for development in SSA, as well as sustainable livelihoods and sustainable development initiatives.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Assignment: Exam 1 Returned**

**Week 6 (Oct 9): Economic Development (I)**
The impacts of neo-liberalism and structural adjustment, trade, and globalization in SSA are examined and discussed.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**
A critical analysis of development aid, fair trade, and poverty eradication initiatives, trends, and challenges in the region.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**
W. Easterly, 2006, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest have done so much Ill and So Little Good*, Oxford University Press (one chapter TBD).

**Week 8 (Oct 23): Human Capital and Education**
The role of demographics, education, and training, in the development of SSA is examined.

**Required Reading:**
**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 9 (Oct 30): Health and HIV-AIDS**
We examine health-related issues and concerns in SSA, focusing on the incidence and impacts of HIV/AIDS on development in SSA.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Assignment: Take home Exam 2 distributed**

**Week 10 (Nov 6): Gender and Development**
We examine gender roles, rights, and responsibilities using case studies from SSA. The implications of gender inequality/inequity for development in SSA will be drawn out.

**Required Reading:**


Recommended Reading:

Assignment: Exam 2 DUE

Week 11 (Nov 13): Development Interventions and Actors, Civil Society, and Regional Integration
We examine the role of international, regional, national, and local development actors and agencies, as well as civil society in SSA. In addition, we examine the nature and impacts of increasing Chinese involvement in SSA. Case studies of development interventions in SSA will be examined and discussed. We also examine the role, drivers, and constraints of regional political/economic networks such as: the African Union (AU), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and African Development Bank (AfDB).

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Assignment: Exam 2 returned

Week 12 (Nov 20): Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs and SDGs)
The development of the MDGs and SDGs, and their role and impacts in promoting development in SSA are examined.
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Assignment:
Students begin formulating/finalising topics for research papers (due December 11th).

**Week 13 (Nov 27): Regional and Country Case Studies (I)**
We examine regional and national specificities and implications of the themes discussed in previous weeks. Case studies can be selected from West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and Mauritius.

Required Reading:
Students are required to bring in two selections of reading to discuss in class, related to a region or country of choice in SSA.

Assignment:
Each student will present two selections of reading material to the class for 10 minutes.

**Week 14: December 4 - Regional and Country Case Studies (II)**
We continue to examine regional and national specificities and implications of the themes discussed in previous weeks. Case studies will be selected from West Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and Mauritius.

Required Reading:
Students are required to bring in two selections of reading to discuss in class, related to a region or country of choice in SSA.

Assignment:
Students will continue to present two selections of reading material in class for 10 minutes.
Research Papers DUE on or before Monday, December 11 at 5:00 pm.
**Academic Integrity**
Students should read and understand SFU’s policies regarding academic dishonesty (T10.02 and T10.03), available at: [http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html).

Students should also read and understand SFU’s library lesson on “What is Plagiarism?” ([http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/plagarism](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/writing/plagarism)), and take the interactive tutorial, “Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism” ([http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagarism-tutorial](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagarism-tutorial)).
