

## **HONS-3301-H05 “AFRICA’S ROLE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD”**

Fall Semester - 2015

Wednesday 2:00-4:50 PM – Holden 00255

Instructor: Ambassador Tibor P. Nagy Jr.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11 AM – 1 PM at International Cultural Center, 601 Indiana Ave.

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**OVERVIEW:** This course satisfies the Texas Tech University core curriculum requirement in humanities.

The objective of the humanities in a core curriculum is to expand the student’s knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature and philosophy, students will engage in critical analysis and develop an appreciation of the humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society.

Students graduating from Texas Tech University should be able to: think critically, demonstrate an understanding of the possibility of multiple interpretations, cultural contexts, and values. **Expected Learning Outcomes:** This course is similar to the area orientation given US diplomats prior to their first posting to Sub-Saharan Africa. As such, it is a comprehensive introduction to one of the globe’s most important regions. This knowledge will be especially useful to students considering work in international development, international business, diplomacy, intelligence, international security, or considering further studies in international relations or Africa specific subjects. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to: demonstrate a fundamental understanding of significant contemporary African issues; be able place African issues within the proper global socio-political and historical context; articulate an awareness of Africa’s major cultural and ethnic dynamics; describe significant features of African political and physical geography; demonstrate specialized knowledge of one African country’s specific challenges and propose ways to address them; describe the appropriate role of global business, diplomats, development specialists, and intelligence agencies in political and economic development.

### **Methods for Assessing the Expected Learning Outcomes**

Assessment will be based on: class participation; a mid-term country evaluation paper as described below; the research paper combined with the class presentation; and a comprehensive final exam.

Item	Expected Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
1.	Gain fundamental understanding of Africa's major current issues.	1. Class Discussion 2. Final Exam
2.	Be able to evaluate Africa's societies, states and ethnic groups in terms of multiple cultural contexts and value systems.	1. Class Discussion 2. Final Exam
3.	Demonstrate knowledge of Africa's political and physical geography.	1. Final Exam 2. Class Discussion
4.	Develop specialized knowledge about one African country to use as a model for analyzing Africa's problems and evaluating the success of applied solutions	1. Class Discussion 2. Midterm

**COURSE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES:** Africa is the continent least understood by Americans; it is often presented by the media as a land of war, famine and pestilence. This course will present Africa's contemporary reality – the positive as well as the negative – by examining major current issues after briefly surveying Africa's history, geography, societies and culture. Themes covered will include: political developments; regional conflicts; human rights and women's issues; economic development and poverty (including the role played by international assistance); humanitarian disasters, terrorism; and the environment and public health (including HIV/AIDS). The course will also examine Africa's role in US global policy priorities.

**CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS:** This course satisfies the "multicultural" and "social and behavioral sciences" core curriculum requirements. The approach is strongly focused on social sciences, including current research on social, economic and political conditions in Africa. It also is inherently multicultural since it involves a wide range of non-Western cultures in Africa and also examines the impact of Western colonialism on those cultures.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING:** Most learning will happen through class discussions, so attendance and participation are essential. Grading will be based on the following components:

Participation and service to the course	30%
Country Briefing (Mid-term)	25%
Research Paper and presentation	20%
Final exam	25%

**Participation and Service to the Course:** Since there are only fourteen class sessions, absences will hurt your grade. If you miss three or more classes you will not make an “A” (unless there are really exceptional circumstances!) On the positive side – being there for every class and participating in the discussion will help your grade significantly. We will spend the beginning of each class with you reporting as Desk Officers on your country(ies)’. (See below)

**Country Briefing:** “Desk Officers” are the US State Department’s experts on specific countries and are available to respond to US officials on issues concerning “their” country. Each of you will become a “desk officer” for a specific country you wish to cover. You will stay up to date on events in your country, and for your mid-term exam, you will write a briefing on your country covering major issues, problems, etc. for a real life scenario. I will provide a list of countries to choose from on the first day of class – you will need to make your selection by the end of the second class period.

**Research Paper:** Identify an appropriate subject quickly for the 8-10 page paper, due on November 4. (Yes – really limit to 8-10 pages.) There are two options: (1) select the country you will be covering and expand on a specific issue or sector (e.g. petroleum in Nigeria; education in Ethiopia, etc.); or (2) discuss a thematic issue (e.g. blood diamonds, hunger, terrorism, refugees) either continent wide or specific to a country or region (e.g., the problem of narco states in West Africa). Contact me if there are any questions about topics. Important: I want this to be on a subject of keen interest to you. As part of the grade, you will also make a five (5) minute oral presentation of your paper near the end of the term. (And yes, I do mean five minutes.) After each presentation, the other students will be encouraged to ask questions, so the presenter should be prepared to respond.

#### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

“Understanding Contemporary Africa” – Fifth Edition (2013) edited by April and Donald Gordon

“Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe (any edition)

“Course Packet” of articles: available from “CopyMail” at Student Union

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:** (Subject to Change)

1. August 26: (Try and read before first class and decide which country you will cover)

**Introduction to the course**

**Review expectations and policies**

**Geographic and historical overview**

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 2: "Africa: A Geographic Preface"

Video: "Africa Episode 1 – Savanna Homecoming"

2. September 2: **(Country Selection due)- Africa's cultural context**

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 11: "Religion in Africa"

Achebe: "Things Fall Apart"

Reference: "Jihafica" *The Economist*. 18 July 2015.

<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21657801-biggest-threat-african-peace-and-prosperity-comes-dangerous>

Video: "Africa Episode 5: Love in the Sahel"

3. September 9: **Africa's Political Evolution**

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 4: "African Politics"

Reference: "Corruption Perceptions Index 2014" *Transparency International*, n.d.

[http://files.transparency.org/content/download/1869/12486/file/CPI2014\\_map-and-country-results\\_EN.pdf](http://files.transparency.org/content/download/1869/12486/file/CPI2014_map-and-country-results_EN.pdf)

Video: "Liberia – America's Stepchild" or TBD

4. September 16: **Women's Issues in Africa** – Guest Lecturer: Mrs. Jane Nagy

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 10: "Women and Development"

Reference: "Female genital mutilation" *World Health Organization*. 8 February 2014.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

"Child Marriage Around the World" *International Center for Research on Women*, n.d.

<http://www.icrw.org/files/images/Child-Marriage-Fact-Sheet-Around-the-World.pdf>

“South Sudan’s military ‘gang-raped then burned women alive’ in hunt for rebels”  
*The Telegraph*. 30 June 2015.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/south-sudan/11708364/South-Sudans-military-gang-raped-then-burned-women-alive-in-hunt-for-rebels.html>

Video: “Women with Open Eyes” (Cameroon) and “The Greatest Silence”

5. September 23: **African Economies; (Paper Subjects Due)**

Readings: “Africa’s Incredible Economic Potential, in 10 Charts” *All Emerging Markets*. 30 June 2015.

<http://allemergingmarkets.com/articles/2015/1000611/africas-incredible-economic-potential-in-10-charts/>

“An Inclusive Emerging Economy, With Africa in the Lead” *The New York Times*. 27 November 2014. <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/an-inclusive-emerging-economy-with-africa-in-the-lead/?r>

“Doing Business Factsheet 2015” *International Finance Corporation & The World Bank Corp*, n.d.

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/~media/GIAWB/Doing%20Business/Documents/Fact-Sheets/DB15/DB15SSAFactSheetEnglish.pdf>

Video: “Africa – Open for Business”

6. September 30: **African Conflicts and Militaries**

Readings: “Arms and the African” *The Economist*. 22 November 2014.

<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21633901-continents-armies-are-going-spending-spree-arms-and-african>

“Why Are Africa’s Militaries so Disappointingly Bad” *Foreign Policy*. 6 June 2014.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/06/06/why\\_are\\_africa\\_s\\_militaries\\_so\\_disappointingly\\_bad\\_kenya\\_nigeria\\_boko\\_haram\\_al\\_shabab](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/06/06/why_are_africa_s_militaries_so_disappointingly_bad_kenya_nigeria_boko_haram_al_shabab)

“Critical Issues Facing Africa: Terrorism, War, and Political Violence” *American Security Project*. 17 January 2015. <http://www.americansecurityproject.org/critical-issues-facing-africa-terrorism-war-and-political-violence/>

Video: “Valentina’s Nightmare” PBS – Frontline 1994

7. October 7: **Humanitarian Emergencies, the Environment and Hunger**

Readings: "2015 Regional Overview of Food Insecurity" *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. 5 January 2015.

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4635e.pdf>

"8 Ways Climate Change is Already Affecting Africa" *350 Africa*. 12 December 2014.

<http://350africa.org/2014/12/12/8-ways-climate-change-is-already-affecting-africa/>

"The Next Breadbasket" *National Geographic*. 19 June 2013.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/land-grab/>

"UNHCR Global Report 2015: Africa" *UNHCR*, n.d. 2015.

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d7fd6.html>

Video: "20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show – Ethiopian Famine." BBC 2004

8. October 14: **Country Briefings** (Mid-term)

9. October 21: **Health Issues**

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 7: "Population, Urbanization, and AIDS"

Reference: "How AIDS Changed Everything" *UNAIDS*. 2 July 2015.

[http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/MDG6Report\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/MDG6Report_en.pdf)

SSA's Neglected Tropical Diseases, "Contemporary African Issues" *SightsUnseen at University of Houston*, presentation by Baylor College of Medicine 19 May 2015

"Common Infectious Diseases" *CDC & WHO*. n.d.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0903696.html>

"On AIDS: Three Lessons from Africa" *The New York Times*. 31 July 2014

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/31/on-aids-three-lessons-from-africa/>

Video: RX for Survival

10. October 28: **Africa's International Relations and Organizations**

Readings: "U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa" *White House*. 14 June 2012.

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/africa\\_strategy\\_2.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/africa_strategy_2.pdf)

"As Barack Obama Winds Up, What can he do for Africa?" *Daily Nation*. 22 July 2015.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Barack-Obama-Africa-Policy-US-Government/-/1056/2802506/-/x57dfh/-/index.html>

"Africom" *United States Africa Command*. n.d.

[www.africom.mil/what-we-do/](http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/)

"Why China has Become so Big in Africa" *The Economist*. 18 January 2015.

<http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21639554-china-has-become-big-africa-now-backlash-one-among-many>

"India's Africa Trade Policy" *ITCSD*. 4 March 2015

<http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa/news/india%E2%80%99s-africa-trade-policy-under-the-modi-government-business-as>

"BRICS and the New Development Bank" *CAI*. 29 December 2014

[http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1740:brics-and-the-new-development-bank-an-alternative-model-of-development-for-africa&catid=57:africa-watch-discussion-papers&Itemid=263](http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1740:brics-and-the-new-development-bank-an-alternative-model-of-development-for-africa&catid=57:africa-watch-discussion-papers&Itemid=263)

"AU in a Nutshell" *African Union*. n.d.

[www.au.int/en/about/nutshell](http://www.au.int/en/about/nutshell)

"What is Brazil Really Doing in Africa" *Huffington Post*. 4 January 2015

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-muggah/what-is-brazil-really-doi\\_b\\_6413568.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-muggah/what-is-brazil-really-doi_b_6413568.html)

Video: "Empire – The New Scramble for Africa" (Al Jazeera)

11. November 4: **(Papers due to Instructor) African Development Issues**

Readings: Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, "Contemporary African Issues" *SightsUnseen at University of Houston*, presentation by Baylor College of Medicine, 19 May 2015

“FY 2016 Development and Humanitarian Assistance Budget” *USAID*. N.d.  
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1869/FY2016DevelopmentBudgetFactSheet.pdf>

“FACT SHEET: The Doing Business in Africa Campaign” *The White House*. 5 August 2014  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/05/fact-sheet-doing-business-africa-campaign>

“Annual Development Effectiveness Review 2015” *African Development Bank Group*. n.d. 2015. <http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/topics/quality-assurance-results/development-effectiveness-reviews/development-effectiveness-review-2015/>

“Millennium Development Goals Report” *United Nations Development Goals Report 2015, Overview* 20 July 2015.  
[http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015\\_MDG\\_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20review%20\(July%201\).pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2015_MDG_Report/pdf/MDG%202015%20review%20(July%201).pdf)

Video: “What Are We Doing Here?”

## 12. November 11: **Democracy, Human Rights, Transnational Crime and Terrorism**

Readings: “These are the world’s 25 most fragile states” *Business Insider*. 9 July 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-worlds-25-most-failed-states-2014-7?op=1>

“Country Reports on Terrorism (Pt. 1 and 2)” *U.S. Department of State*. June 2015.  
<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239404.htm>

“Country Reports on Human Rights Practices” *U.S. Department of State. Custom Report* n.d 2014.  
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>

“Can General Linder’s Special Operations Forces Stop the Next Terrorist Threat?” *New York Times*. 13 June 2014.  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/15/magazine/can-general-linders-special-operations-forces-stop-the-next-terrorist-threat.html? r=0>

Video: “The Dark Side of Chocolate” or “Black Gold”

13. November 18: **Paper Presentations**

14. December 2: **Special Regional Issues, Urbanization and Final Review**

Readings: Gordon. Chapter 13: "Trends and Prospects"

Reference: "Big surprises" *Mail & Guardian Africa*. 20 August 2014.

<http://mgafrica.com/article/2014-08-20-surprises-from-the-slums-why-cities-should-look-at-slums-as-the-new-normal/>

"What US intelligence predicted about Africa today 15 years ago, and how terribly wrong they were" *Mail & Guardian Africa*. 19 January 2015.

<http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-01-15-what-they-said-then-and-where-we-are-now>

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:**

**Missed Exams:** If a student misses an exam for a legitimate reason (i.e. well documented), s/he can take a make-up exam without penalty, scheduled at the instructor's convenience. The instructor reserves the right to contact the writer of the note for verification.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to abide by all of the rules for academic integrity, as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog or in the pamphlet "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students and Faculty," which is available around campus. Guidelines for academic integrity are also available on the web. Acts of academic dishonesty, even unintentional ones, can have serious repercussions. Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic misconduct will be strictly enforced. ***Academic misconduct of any sort, whether intentional or not, is not tolerated.*** Take care not to plagiarize from the Internet or other sources!

**Civility:** Please respect the rights of your classmates to learn by behaving in a manner consistent with a college-level **honors** course and by not engaging in behavior that interferes with or could interfere with others' ability to learn. ***Please do not have cell phones, beepers, or other distracting devices turned on in class unless you have permission from me to do so.*** The classroom is a place for free expression related to the topics at hand, but such expression must take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect for individuals and their rights to free expression. Water is OK; **snacks are not** – except during breaks. I start on time, but will not keep you late.

**Reasonable Accommodation:** Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the

instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours.

Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.