POVERTY & DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
Fall 2013
AFS 3300 (section 131G)

Instructor: Levy C. Odera
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Email: lodera.ufl.edu
Office Hours: Monday & Friday, 8:00 – 9:30 or by appointment
Class Time and Venue: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:40 – 11:30. Little Hall: Room 221.

Course Description:

In the past decade African countries have experienced several remarkable improvements in socio-economic and political conditions, which are now having a positive effect on development. These changes have attracted a wide range of interested actors and also increased the focus on Africa from academic circles, political leaders, business leaders, journalists, and others. According to an analysis done by The Economist magazine “Much has been written about the rise of the BRICs [Brazil, Russia, India, and China] and Asia’s impressive economic performance. But an analysis by The Economist finds that over the ten years to 2010, six of the world’s ten fastest-growing economies were in sub-Saharan Africa. On IMF forecasts Africa will grab seven of the top ten places over the next five years [2011-2015]...Over the next five years Africa is likely to take the lead. In other words, the average African economy will outpace its Asian counterpart” (http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/01/daily_chart). In spite of the promising socio-economic changes, poverty is still rampant in most countries. According to the recent UNDP report (http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR2013_EN_Summary.pdf2013), most of the African countries fall under the Low Human Development tier. Out of the 46 countries that fall in this tier (Rank 142 – 186), 37 (80% of them) are African.

Numerous studies have been done in an attempt to examine and understand these poverty and development dynamics and paradoxes. In spite of extensive studies that have significantly increased the insight on poverty and development in Africa, the causes and effects of these two related issues still continue to be highly contested. Historically, most debates have been centered on the role of the West, as well as African political and cultural factors. Recently the role of China and other emerging economic powers have gained attention. Some of the major questions that drive these debates are: Did the trans-Atlantic slave trade underdevelop Africa? Did colonialism distort contemporary African development? Have free-market policies worked for Africa? Is increasing Chinese investment good for African development? Does foreign aid undermine development in Africa? Is food production in Africa capable of keeping up with population growth? Does increased female participation substantially change African politics? Is Corruption the result of poor African leadership? Are African-led peacekeeping missions more effective than international peacekeeping efforts in Africa?

Scholars from all disciplines continue to tackle new issues in pursuit of better understanding of African issues, which has also called for reanalyzing some existing debates and formulating new insights where necessary. Given the intricate interconnection of several issues, this need to understand existing debates and improve knowledge on Africa covers a wide range of academic fields. This course provides students with an opportunity to learn about insights these studies
offer through an interesting combination of lectures, discussions, and other practical activities. The goals of the course are: to introduce students to the wide range of academic theories on African issues; to increase students’ understanding on the factors that shape poverty and development in Africa; to provide students with a scholarly environment for presenting their own views on factors that shape poverty and development, and to sharpen students’ skills on how to research, formulate, and present arguments on complex poverty and development issues, in both oral and written form. Students ultimately pursue diverse career paths, and the ability to form and present arguments are skills that will serve students well no matter what profession they pursue.

The topic selection aspires neither to be exhaustive nor representative of the number and complexity of development issues; the aim is rather to encourage reflection on a variety of highly topical and controversial questions about development, and Africa.

**Structure of the Course:**

This course is designed in a way that attempts to strike a balance between lectures, practical activities, and exams. To make the course highly educational, interactive and interesting the weekly classes have been divided into two parts. The part, which will last for about half of the semester, will be mostly lectures setting a foundation for the issues to be debated and discussed during the second half of the semester. The lectures will be based on important journal articles and recent reports that will be available in the course’s e-learning website. These lectures will present cutting edge theoretical and empirical research from leading academics in various fields. Such research provides students with vital lenses for understanding and explaining complex socioeconomic outcomes that shape the world. In this first part students will also conduct basic research on assigned countries and present brief oral reports at the end of each week (no power-points or written reports will be required). The reports will be based on investigations of how the issues from the articles and reports apply to the assigned country. The second part, during the second half of the semester, will be mostly activities based on the two books selected for the course: book discussions and country expert presentations. Students will be divided into small groups that will be assigned specific chapters to present summaries that will set the foundation for discussions. In this capacity, they will serve as discussants of these chapters by presenting the main points of the chapters that can stimulate discussions about it. These are widely known, engaging and provocative books on development that go well with the objectives of this course since they are written in an enjoyable way to read, yet still based on technical papers published in professional journals.

**Course Requirements:**

The final evaluation will depend on how well you do on the following components:

1. **Attendance and Participation (15%)**

   Attendance is essential and you are required to be in class on time in order to do well in this course. This is primarily because if you do not attend you do not also get a chance to participate, and as a result you lose those points. Points will also be awarded for each class attended; hence, each class missed negatively affects the final grade. Students are also expected to fully participate in all class activities. Participation grades will be based on active engagement during lectures and country expert report presentation days. During lectures,
participation can entail asking substantive questions based on the assigned readings, input based on the readings, an application of the ideas mentioned in the readings to your assigned country, comparing how the ideas have played in your country versus another country, applying the readings to an ongoing issue, and other related forms. Hence, it is important to read the articles before coming to class. Out of class participation via elearning discussions can also count towards participation points. The elearning site for the class has a place where you can post discussions relevant to the course material. This can include posting important resources that you came across, posting important news related to the issues that have been discussed in class, posting answers to questions about your assigned country that you were unable to answer in class, contributing to an ongoing debate or discussion that we were unable to finish in class, and other forms of discussion. Hence, there are several ways to earn participation points. Attentiveness and respect in class will also be an essential part of participation points. In order to create a favorable environment for learning no use of cell phones will be allowed during class. Also, laptops can only be used to take notes.

2. **Country Expert Reports (10%)**

During the first week of the course, each student will choose one African country which he/she will be serve as an expert. Each student will be expected to become an expert on the selected country throughout the course. The purpose of this activity is to enable students to have a comprehensive understanding of the diverse views taken on political, economic, and social issues in African countries and to mitigate the risk of inappropriate generalizations. It also enables all students to understand these countries in a comprehensive and meaningful way. It is an opportunity for students that are already interested in a particular country and those that are not to understand it better. The goal is to learn extensively and stay up to date on the trends of poverty and development in the assigned countries. Hence, the reports should include the current events of the week from each country. Points will be awarded based on the quality and relevance of the information the expert presents to the class. This will only require some basic level of research on the issues pertaining to the information presented in the lectures. The reports can either be provided orally or using power point. Hence, it is not mandatory to prepare power point presentations. Whether they are presented using either format, some level of preparation is required. The goal is to place the issues within the context of your countries and compare the trends during the days allotted for the presentations. The syllabus indicates when these oral presentations will take place.

3. **Book Chapter Discussant (15%)**

Most of the second half of the semester will be centered on the two books required for the course. From these books, a small group of students (depending on the size of the class) will be assigned chapters to lead discussions on. The groups will be required to read the chapter carefully, discuss among yourselves outside class, and come to class prepared to comment on it and engage the class in discussions. These comments can include, but need not be limited to, a summary of the arguments made by the author, the analyses and the evidence presented to support the arguments, and the conclusions made by the author. Importantly, your time as discussant should also be spent stimulating interest in the subject the author is addressing. Thus, rather than using your allotted time to prepare an extensive presentation, I encourage you to use the bulk of your time to highlight issues that you found interesting and use them to stimulate a dialogue in the class. As this description suggests, preparation in advance is key to
serving successfully in the role of discussant. Power point presentations are optional. All you need is your notes, which may be hand written or typed.

4. **Country Expert Discussion Papers, including Presentation (20%)**

Each country expert will write two 5-page (double-spaced) paper based on each of the two books that we shall read in the class. One paper for each book. Experts will also prepare a brief (5 minute) presentation on the paper. The presentations briefly highlight the main points/arguments of the paper. The presentations can be done orally or using power point. Hence, power point presentations are not mandatory. The papers will respond to a question that will be provided later in the course. It will be a question that asks you to apply the views presented in the books to your country. This is an important activity that will enable you to learn how to transform ideas into practical outcomes. By the time you will be expected to write the paper we will have discussed the broader issues related to poverty and development, and you will have acquired a significant amount of knowledge about your country. You will have also had some exposure to academic papers and reports, hence you will be mostly applying the knowledge you have gained. In general, this will be an opportunity to sharpen your analysis and writing skills. I will be available to provide you further guidance.

5. **In-class Exams (each with 20% weight, for a total of 40%)**

There will be two in-class exams, both non-cumulative. Both exams will be based on multiple choice questions. These exams are meant to show your ability to effectively and succinctly summarize your knowledge of key issues raised in the lectures, debates, and discussions about poverty and development in Africa. Questions may touch on any of the class materials (Journal articles, book chapters, documents posted on the online course reserve, and lecture notes).

The final grade is obtained by calculating the weighted average in these four components (according to the weights indicated), and assigning a grade according to the following table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
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<td>Tot %</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td>77</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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As you may know, UF grading policies for assigning grade points have changed with the introduction of minus grades. Here’s the link to the appropriate undergraduate catalog web page [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html).

**Academic Honesty:** The University places a high premium on academic honesty. Accordingly, severe penalties are imposed for plagiarism and other instances of deception or fraud. The university’s policies regarding intellectual honesty are detailed in the Academic Honesty Guidelines, printed in full in the current Undergraduate Catalog (see [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html)).

**Students with disability:** students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.
Do you like courses with African content and you want to know more? Then learn about the many opportunities UF offers to increase your knowledge of Africa:

- The Center for African Studies offers many courses with an African content. You can pick up a free booklet with details from 427 Grinter, and ask more information.
- Many stimulating opportunities exist, such as Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs (including the prestigious Lumbardi Program). For more info contact the CAS deputy director Todd Leedy (427 Grinter; email tleedy@africa.ufl.edu).
- Do you want to meet your foreign language requirement in a different and exciting way? Learn one of several African languages taught by AALL department. For more information contact Dr. C. Bwenge at cbwenge@africa.ufl.edu.
- Are you taking, or planning to take, other courses in African Studies? If so, you may qualify for a Minor in African Studies. Make sure you declare it: in the past, some students who qualified failed to declare it! Dr. Leedy will be happy to help you make the process even easier: he will send the form for you.

Required Texts:

There are two required textbooks for this course:


Other Required Material:

- Required class material also comprises lectures and power point presentations posted on the course website (at e-learning). Please consult regularly the course website by logging onto https://lss.at.ufl.edu/

- The course website will also be used for posting any variation to the syllabus, instructions for assignments, as well as other links to course-related resources.

Recommended Resources (especially for reports and discussions)

- Please try to keep update with international and African affairs: useful internet sources are [www.bbc.co.uk/africa](http://www.bbc.co.uk/africa) and [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com). You should also read regularly a daily (the *New York Times* is good on Africa but *The Guardian* from the UK is more complete; these and others can be accessed on the internet) and weekly papers, especially *The Economist* (for which there exists a student subscription for 6 months at very competitive rates). You can also use the Human Development Reports to find information on African countries: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/)

Learn the names and geographical aspects of African countries

Learn about Human Development Index (HDI) and find out the HDI ranks and values for African countries


Course Outline and Readings:

Please be aware that the instructor reserves the right to make minor modifications during the semester; whenever this happens you will be notified promptly.

**Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction (August 21, 23)**

**Wednesday, 21: Overview of the course**

Overview of syllabus (including elearning overview)

**Friday, 23: Introduction & General Overview**


“Africa Rising: After decades of slow growth, Africa has a real chance to follow in the footsteps of Asia.” *The Economist* December 3, 2011: 1-3 (Available at elearning).

**Week 2: (August 26 - 30)**

**Monday, 26: Introduction and General Overview (Continued)**


“Africa Rising: After decades of slow growth, Africa has a real chance to follow in the footsteps of Asia.” *The Economist* December 3, 2011: 1-3 (Available at elearning).

**Wednesday, 28: Slave Trade**

Friday, 30: Colonialism & Development


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**Week 3: (September 2 - 6)**

**Monday, 2: Labor Day Holiday**

No Class

**Wednesday, 4: Free Market Policies & Chinese Investment in Africa**


Learn more about the World Bank, the IMF and structural adjustment

- www.worldbank.org;
- www.imf.org;

**Friday, 6:**

Country Expert Reports

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**Week 4: (September 9 - 13)**

**Monday, 9: Resource Curse**


**Wednesday, 11: Deforestation Crisis**


**Friday, 13: In Class Activity:**

Country Expert Reports
Week 5: (September 16 - 20)

Monday, 16: Exam 1

************************************************************************ Exam 1 ************************************************************************

Wednesday, 18: Food Production and Population Growth


Friday, 20: Green Revolution


Week 6: (September 23 - 27)

Monday, 23: Corruption & Development


For data and trends on corruption in Africa go to: http://www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east

Wednesday, 25: Democracy & Political Parties


Friday, 27:

Country Expert Reports

Week 7: (September 30 – October 4)

Monday, 30: Peacekeeping in Africa

**Wednesday, 2: HIV/AIDS Trends**

UNAIDS 2012 Fact Sheet

Learn more about HIV/AIDS in Africa at [www.avert.org/aidsinafrica.htm](http://www.avert.org/aidsinafrica.htm)

**Friday, 4:**

Country Expert Reports

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### Week 8: Overview and Exam 1 (October 7 - 11)

**Monday, 7: Population Growth & Urbanization**


**Wednesday, 9: Debt Relief**


**Friday, 11:**

Country Expert Reports

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### Week 9: (October 14 - 18)

**Monday, 14: Lecture**

The End of Poverty: Chapter 1 & 2:

Discussants: ________________________________

**Wednesday, 16:**

The End of Poverty: Chapter 3 & 4:

Discussants: ________________________________

**Friday, 18:**

The End of Poverty: Chapter 5 & 6:

Discussants: ________________________________
Week 10: (October 21 - 25)

Monday, 21:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 7 & 8:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Wednesday, 23:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 9 & 10:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Friday, 25:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 11 & 12:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Week 11: (October 28 – November 1)

Monday, 28:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 13 & 14:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Wednesday, 30:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 15 & 16:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Friday, 1:
The End of Poverty: Chapter 17 & 18:

Discussants: ____________________________________________

Week 12: (November 4 – November 8)

Monday, 4:

Paper #1 on the End Poverty Due & Presentations
**Wednesday, 6:**

Presentations on Paper #1 Continued

**Friday, 8: UF Homecoming**

No Class

**Week 13: (November 11 - 15)**

**Monday, 11: Veterans Day Holiday**

No Class

**Wednesday, 13:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 1 & 2

Discussants: ________________________________

**Friday, 15:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 3 & 4

Discussants: ________________________________

**Week 14: (November 18 - 22)**

**Monday, 18:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 5 & 6

Discussants: ________________________________

**Wednesday, 20:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 7 & 8

Discussants: ________________________________

**Friday, 22:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 9 & 10

Discussants: ________________________________
**Week 15: (November 25 – 29)**

**Monday, 25:**

White Man’s Burden: Chapters 11

Discussants: _______________________________________________________

**Wednesday, 27: Thanksgiving Holiday**

No Class

**Friday, 29: Thanksgiving Holiday**

No Class

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**Week 16: (December 2 - 6)**

**Monday, 2:**

Paper #2 on White Man’s Burden Due & Presentations

**Wednesday, 4: Classes End**

Presentations on Paper #2 Continued

**Friday, 6: Reading Day**

No Class

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**Week 17: (December 9 - 13): Final Exam Week**

**Monday, 9: Final Exam**

5:30 – 7:30, in Class