## GE 4110.01 Fall 2011 Syllabus Dr. Patrick May

**Geography of Africa** Email pmay@mail.plymouth.edu

TR 12:30 – 2:00 Office: Rounds 209

MEM 010 Phone: 535-2501

Office Hrs: MWF 9-10; TR 2-3

- or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed provide students with an introduction to the physical and cultural characteristics which have historically been used to organize Africa into geographic sub-regions as well as connect it to widely accepted world regions. The approach of the course will be to challenge these existing regional definitions by disecting their generalizations and exceptions, particularly relating to the balance between indigenous, Muslim, and western influences in creating the current conditions of African society. Individual research projects will explore topical issues within African countries and their relationship to global connections.

This course meets the **Global Awareness (GACO)** component of the **PSU General Education** program and is designed with the following framework in mind:Educated people are aware that human beings are interdependent members of a world community, that there are both similarities and differences in the societies and cultures of the world, and that the manners in which people live their lives need not be exactly alike. Students take a three-credit Global Awareness (G) course (either within the major or not) designed to expose them to the important societal issues facing the world and to encourage them to develop the ability to appreciate and think about issues from different points of view. Global Awareness courses focus on the forces that have shaped peoples, cultures, nations, and regions of the world. They increase students’ understanding of each person’s position, participation, obligations, and responsibilities within the world community.

This course meets the **Writing within the Discipline (WRCO)** component of the **PSU General Education** program and is designed with the following framework in mind:In order to communicate effectively, students need to learn the conventions of their own discipline or profession. They need to learn how to write like an educator, a social worker, a biologist, an historian, or a literary critic, for example. Students take a three-credit Writing (W) course within their major that contains significant writing experiences appropriate to the discipline. These experiences should be based on Writing Across the Curriculum activities, for example, free-writing, outlining, writing multiple drafts, responding to feedback, and creating a finished product. In addition to extending the process of developing writing skills, W courses also emphasize writing to learn in the discipline.

# **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, it is expected that students will have:

- acquired a wide variety of factual knowledge to better understand and appreciate the definitions of regions throughout the world.

- developed basic skills in map interpretation and other tools and techniques used by geographers, as applied to maps of Africa.

- developed an understanding of the basic concepts of geography, including the five essential themes, as they apply to issues in Africa.

- considered the processes behind the construction and justification of sub-regions of Africa, including supporting characteristics.

- been exposed to perspectives of different cultures through written/documentary presentations of Africa from different viewpoints.

- enhanced skills of independent research, combining acquired information as related to the text and classroom discussions.

- developed stronger writing skills through an appreciation of the process of freewriting, draft writing, editing, and revision.

- considered the inter-relationship between human and physical geography of Africa, particularly regarding causes of current issues.

- collaborated with classmates to conduct research and present findings in written, visual, and oral presentations.

- applied the geographic perspective in interpreting the various physical, social, political and economic situations existing in

Africa and the world as a whole.

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

- Aryeetey-Attoh, Samuel, *Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa 3rd ed*., Pearson, 2010.

- Periodic supplemental readings will be put on reserve in Lamson Library, assigned in class, or distributed via email or Moodle.

**COURSE EVALUATION:**

Final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

1) Writing Portfolio

Essays (3 x 20% each) 60%

Outline/First Draft – 5%

Revision Draft/Comments – 5%

2) Exams (2 x 15%) 30%

3) Homework/Participation/Quizzes 10%

Total 100%

Assigned Readings:

Students are required to read and study in advance all assigned readings which coincide with the specific course content or topics listed in the course outline. On occasion, students will be required to provide oral or written summaries of this reading in class. Specific reserve reading lists and handouts will be provided throughout the semester.

Exams:

Students will take TWO (2) exams, a midterm and a final, on the day and time designated. **No make-up exams will be allowed without prior notice of a valid excused absence. ALL MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE SUBJECT TO A 10% PENALTY FOR EVERY CLASS PERIOD WHICH HAS PASSED.**  Each exam may consist of various types of questions, including multiple-choice, short answer identification, and both take-home and in class essays. Exam questions will be based on the terms, concepts, and questions provided in the study guides distributed in class.

The Writing Portfolio:

In fulfilling the writing perspective for the General Education requirement, one of the purposes of this course is to encourage students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in the process of note taking, outlining, editing, and revising. All writing for the course will be compiled in a writing portfolio – a three-ring binder including all writing, informal and formal, completed through this course. The portfolio will be submitted at the conclusion of the class for a final review.

Essays:

Students will be required to complete THREE (3) essays throughout the semester, exhibiting the student’s ability to summarize and analyze primary and secondary sources. Through these essays, students will specialize in a few countries in Africa and show connections to course themes as they apply within.

Essay 1 will be based on magazine article of each student’s choice, relating to a current or historical issue of interest in a country chosen.

Essay 2 will be based on analysis of demographic data for a given country, found on the Population Reference Bureau website(www.prb.org).

Essay 3 will be based on a geographic journal article of each student’s choice, from the geography publications and online databases identified in class.

These essays will be assessed on the ability of the student to apply concepts discussed in reading and class discussion, as well the ability to implement clear structure and style in the constructing the argument. For each of these essays a first draft will be submitted (including research notes and outline, required in prior classes). A copy of this draft will reviewed by me and peer-reviewed, and every student is expected to utilize the Writing Center for a peer review as well and then rewritten before being submitted for a revision grade.

Students will be assigned into groups, to work collaboratively to identify, research, organize, and present a topic of current interest within a region of Africa. These topics can be selected from any aspect of African cultural geography which interests and is agreed upon by the group. Regular written updates of the progress will be required. A final written report will be due, graded as a group. A group oral presentation of the findings of your research will be presented in class. An outline of major points will be distributed to your classmates at this time. Finally, each member of the group will provide a brief process paper, outlining their role in the group activity, with a detailed timeline of research and writing completed. Each member of the group will receive both an individual grade and a group grade for this requirement.

# Freewrites / Informal Writing

Throughout the class, students will be asked to produce unstructured freewriting as an avenue for prompting class discussion, as well as brainstorming, concept webbing, reflections, and opinion essays. As a whole, these writing assignments will not be graded independently, but account for a combined portion of the final grade and should be included in the final writing portfolio.

# Quizzes

Students will take a series of quizzes on terms and locations within Africa. Quizzes will be completed in class on the day and time designated. **No make-up quizzes will be allowed without prior notice of a valid excused absence. ALL MAKE-UP QUIZZES WILL BE SUBJECT TO A 10% PENALTY FOR EVERY CLASS PERIOD WHICH HAS PASSED.**  Quizzes may consist of fill-in the blank, matching, and multiple-choice questions, matching corresponding terms and names to the corresponding location on the map.

Homework/Participation:

Throughout the semester, brief homework or essays will be assigned in class, not all reviewed for a grade. These assignments are due in the following class period and will not be accepted late. The cumulative total of these assignments, along with attendance and participation in class discussions, account for 10% of you final grade, so they should all be taken very seriously.

Regular and prompt class attendance is expected from every student. Attendance will be recorded and will factor into the participation portion of your grade. If you anticipate missing a class due to a scheduling conflict, please notify me in advance so we can discuss any assignments. Students missing any portion of a class are responsible for all notes or assignments given in their absence. As attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class, it is the responsibility of each student to sign the attendance form or notify the instructor if you arrive late. **All work submitted late, whether excused or unexcused, is subject to a deduction in point total (10% per class period late, unless otherwise stated).**

**COURSE POLICIES:**

Regular and prompt class attendance is expected from every student. Attendance will be recorded and will factor into the participation portion of your grade. If you anticipate missing a class due to a scheduling conflict, please notify me in advance so we can discuss any assignments. If you participate in PSU sports or group activities that have scheduled off-campus travel, please notify me at the beginning of the semester of any scheduled absences. Students missing any portion of a class are responsible for all notes or assignments given in their absence. As attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class, it is the responsibility of each student to notify the instructor if you arrive late. In the possibility of health issues, I will be flexible in allowing for excused absences, but it is ESSENTIAL that you notify me via email of any absence as soon as possible.

**ABSENCES: You are allowed 3 excused absences. After those 3, your participation grade is reduced by 50% for each following absence. All work submitted late, whether excused or unexcused, is subject to a deduction in point total (10% per class period late, unless otherwise stated).**

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Plymouth State University is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and facilities. If you think you have a disability requiring accommodations, you should immediately contact the PASS Office in Lamson Library (535-2270) to determine whether you are eligible for such accommodations. Academic accommodations will only be considered for students who have registered with the PASS Office. If you have a Letter of Accommodation for this course from the PASS Office, please provide the instructor with that information privately so that you and the instructor can review those accommodations.

Cell phones are banned from use during class time. Leave it at home or turn it off. Text messaging during class is unprofessional and unacceptable. If there is a campus-wide emergency, we will also be alerted via siren and I will be notified via cell phone.

**Class Cancellation:** In the unlikely event of PSU closing due to weather, it will be posted on the **PSC Stormline (535-3535).** If the college is open but I am unable to come to class, you should receive an email prior to class and I will post it on my voice mail (535-2501).

**GE 1400: TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week: Content: Reading assignment:**

1. 9/1 What is Geography? How do geographers study Africa?

Introduction to the Regional Analysis and Five Themes of the course

*9/7 – Add/Drop Deadline*

2. 9/6, 9/8 Regional Geography approach – how do we define regions in Africa? Chapter 1/2

9/8: **Map Quiz – Intro terms**

3. 9/13, 9/15 Changing Environments: Geomorphology and, Climate Definition and Climate ChangeChapter 3/4 **Essay 1 Assigned**

4. 9/20, 9/22 Historical/Political Chapter 5

Indigenous Africa

5. 9/27, 9/29 Impact of Colonialism on Africa: Land, Power, and Nationalism Chapter 6 **Essay 1 Due**

6. 10/4, 10/6 Diaspora, Neocolonialism and Political instability Chapter 7

7. 10/11, 10/13 Population Change, Demographic Transition, **Essay 2 Assigned** Chapter 8

and Definitions of Development

**10/13 MIDTERM EXAM 1**

8. 10/18, 10/20 Development indicators and social variables Chapter 9/13

9. 10/25, 10/27 Sub-Saharan Africa: The Triple Heritage **Essay 2 Due** Chapter 12

10. 11/1, 11/3 Urban Geography and Transportation Chapter 10

*11/4 – Withdrawal Deadline*

11. 11/8, 11/10 Technology and Transportation Advances **Essay 3 Assigned** Chapter 11

12. 11/15, 11/17 Economic Development and Globalization Chapter 13-14

North Africa: Trade, Protectorates, and Oil

13. 11/22 Post-colonialism and Development Chapter 15

**11/24 THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

14. 11/29, 12/1 Post-colonialism and Development **Essay 3 Due** Chapter 15

15. 12/6, 12/8 Africa’s future prospects Chapter 16

## Tuesday 12/13 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. FINAL EXAM AND COMPREHENSIVE MAP QUIZ