SEC 6343 Security Issues in Africa II

Course Description:
While Security Issues in Africa I focuses on issues of conflict and tension, this course is an introduction to the political economy of Sub-Saharan Africa. Students will explore the theory and practice of how economic motives affect political decisions and how most political decisions have economic repercussions, both domestically and in Africa. This course reviews and explores the key themes of Africa’s contemporary political economy and its deep historical bases. In doing so, the course concentrates on Africa’s relationship with the global political economy and raises questions about the nature of state action in African countries.

Course Objectives:
As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:
• Comprehend the key politics, economics, and conflicts affecting Africa and by extension its relationship with the international community.
• Analyze the changing roles that specific factors, groups, and nations in Africa play in political, economic, and conflict trends across the continent.
• Articulate the underlying dynamics resulting in the increasing importance of Africa in terms of its political and economic structures and how they relate to conflict.
• Relate all these political, economic, and conflict factors to security challenges in Africa and vice-versa.

Course Requirements:

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Thread Participation (occurs in weeks with no written assignment)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Essay (6–8 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm PowerPoint Presentation (10–15 slides)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay (12–15 pages)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Course Due Dates:

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Essay</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Sunday at 9:00 p.m. Central Standard Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm PowerPoint Presentation</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Sunday at 9:00 p.m. Central Standard Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay Time</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>Wednesday at midnight Central Standard</td>
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Any late assignments will be penalized five points per day late. This includes Discussion Thread primary postings, which are due in weeks with no written assignment by Friday at midnight Central Standard Time.

Course Organization:

Lesson One: Setting the Context for Politics, Economics, and Conflict in Africa

Before analyzing politics, economics, and conflict in Africa today, one must begin by understanding the general context for all these factors in Africa. Africa is a large continent composed of fifty-four countries and 1.2 billion people. In addition, Africa has a cultural
diversity that is unmatched anywhere in the world. Africa also has a historical legacy of colonialism. More recently, Africa has emerged as a region of strategic importance for the international community, including China and the United States. All these factors help to set the context for politics, economics, and conflict in Africa.

Lesson Two: **Politics in Africa**

Politics in Africa are central to economics on the continent. They also are a pivotal factor in conflict throughout Africa, either mitigating or exacerbating violence depending on the specific circumstances. As a result, understanding the complex nature of politics in Africa is crucial for a nuanced understanding of both economics and conflict on the continent. In this lesson, students will grapple with the nature of electoral politics in Africa, in both historical and contemporary contexts, and explore how the cultural factors of ethnicity, religion, and geography (in the form of natural resources) all relate to politics in Africa.

Lesson Three: **Economics in Africa**

In addition to major political changes in Africa since 1990, economics on the continent have also dramatically changed as a result of globalization. Africa holds abundant natural resources, although its citizens do not always benefit from them due to a myriad of factors, including patronage, corruption, conflict, and a lack of diversification in many African economies. Economics in Africa hold much promise yet still suffer from a number of significant challenges. This lesson will provide an overview of economics in Africa and examine the linkages between economics and conflict in several case studies on the continent.

Lesson Four: **Conflict in Africa**

Conflict has played an unfortunate but prevalent role in Africa. Often, both politics and economics are underlying drivers of conflict on the continent, and all three factors influence each other in profound ways. Case studies of conflict in various countries and by specific groups throughout Africa provide useful insights on how and why. Understanding the vital linkages between politics, economics, and conflict helps inform a nuanced grasp of security issues in Africa.

Lesson Five: **States in Africa**

States in Africa have several defining characteristics that inform politics, economics, and conflict on the continent. First, states in Africa are extremely complex. They tremendously vary in terms of politics, economics, and conflict. Second, states in Africa often wield tremendous power vis-à-vis civil society. Conversely, states often have difficulty leveraging power away from their strongholds, typically the capital. Third, state fragility often contributes to security issues in Africa. Many of the most fragile states in the world consistently are in Africa, including Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa Republic, and South Sudan, among others.

Lesson Six: **Demographics in Africa**
One of the major shifts that impacts politics, economics, and conflict in Africa is demographics. Africa is currently in the midst of one of the most remarkable demographic transitions in world history. Africa’s population is growing at an exponential rate. As a result, Africa’s population is becoming increasingly younger, far more so than any other region of the world. At the same time, Africa is experiencing unprecedented urbanization. All these demographic trends will have momentous impacts on Africa throughout the twenty-first century.

Lesson Seven: **Africa in the International System**

Africa’s role in international affairs is changing in numerous ways. First, Africa is gaining increased agency in terms of individual states that are growing both their political and economic power. Second, Africa is undergoing increased regional integration that is attempting to augment its place in the international system through increased cooperation on the continent. Third, Africa is becoming a region of increased importance to a number of international actors, most notably China and the United States. All these factors—increased agency, heightened regional integration, and growing international involvement—have fundamentally altered Africa’s role in international affairs and the globalized economy and will likely continue to do so moving forward.

Lesson Eight: **Assessment**

This week is set aside for students to complete a 12–15 pages essay assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to measure student mastery of the course objectives.

**Course Required Textbooks:**


Course Bibliography and Required Readings:


Mercy Corps, “‘We Hope and We Fight’: Youth, Communities, and Violence in Mali,” September 2017. Read all. Available at https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/Mercy%20Corps_Mali_Hope%20and%20Fight_Report_Eng_Sept%202017_0.pdf


