AFRICAN STUDIES/ECONOMICS 228A | SPRING 2013
DR. R.A. BLEWETT | HEPBURN 217 | 229.5429

AFRICAN ECONOMIES

Course Description
This course presents an overview of sub-Saharan African (SSA) economies. We will analyze not only current development and structural adjustment issues, but also examine basic principles, problems, and indigenous institutions within an African context. Contrasts and comparisons with North American counterparts will be made throughout the course. Special emphasis will be placed on exploring how cultural differences impact economic activities and institutions. Students will learn not only of the diversity and complexity of economic relationships in African societies but will increase their understanding of economics in their own society.

Prerequisite
One previous economics course.

Office Hours
My posted office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays 3:15 to 4:00 p.m. I am usually around Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as Friday afternoons. Feel free to stop by for help, advice, or just to talk. If you miss me, please leave your phone number or an email address so I can contact you.

Books (Additional readings will be assigned and posted on Sakai.)

Evaluation
All scores and grades will be posted on Sakai. Students are responsible for announcements posted on Sakai and for email messages sent to their campus email account.
- Class Participation (10%). The success of the course will depend heavily upon the positive contributions of each participant. Students will be expected to be good course citizens by coming to class prepared and willing to contribute to the class discussion. Each day you will get a score of 0, 1, or 2. The average score (with two scores dropped) is then multiplied by 2.5.
- Response Papers/Presentations (10%). There will be frequent response papers to the readings. Students will also lead discussions and make presentations of certain readings.
- Assigned Essays (30%). Papers with variable credit account for 30 percent of the final course grade. These may be relatively short (three-to-five pages) or longer (five-to-ten pages).
- Test Essays (50%). Three tests will be given. Each test will consist of two essay questions selected from study questions previously provided. Each essay will be graded separately. The best four of these six essays determine 50 percent of your final course grade, with the exception that at least one of the graded test essays from Test #3 will be used in the determination of the final course grade. There will be no late tests given. If a student misses a test, for any reason whatsoever, the questions on that test will be among the questions “dropped.” However, a student may arrange to take Test #1 or Test #2 early. Test #3 will be given only at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday of finals week.
Tentative Course Outline

I. Growth, Development and Trade
   A. Course Overview
   B. SSA Background and Review
   C. Growth and Development
   D. Economic Theory Basics
   E. Trade, Finance and Growth
   F. Structural Adjustment and Other Policies

II. Poverty Traps
   A. Is SSA Different?
   B. Conflict Trap
   C. Natural Resource Curse
   D. Geography Trap
   E. Governance Trap
   F. Globalization
   G. Instruments of Change

III. The Aid Debate
   A. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
   B. Differing Assumptions and Analyses.

IV. Information, Contracts and Markets
   A. Markets, Trade, and Distribution
   B. Economics of Contracts
   C. Financial Institutions
   D. The Informal Sector
   E. Contracts and Social Networks
   F. Economic Clusters

V. Agriculture
   A. Traditional Production
   B. Government Intervention in Markets
   C. Agriculture and Development

VI. Population and Natural Resources
   A. Demographics
   B. Population Policy
   C. Environmental Economics Basics
   D. Wildlife and Conservation Issues