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Electronic Course Authorization System

AFRO 1131 - VIEW COURSE PROPOSAL

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Approvals Received:

Department on 2/4/21 by Agnes Mrutu Malika (mrutu002@umn.edu)	>	College/Dean on 2/5/21 by Nanette Hanks (nhanks@umn.edu)	>	Provost on 2/5/21 by Leslie Schiff (schif002@umn.edu)
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Approvals Pending:

LE > Catalog

[Effective Status:](#)

New: Active**Old:** Inactive

[Effective Term:](#)

New: 1219 - Fall 2021**Old:** 1129 - Fall 2012

Course:

AFRO 1131

Institution:

UMNTC - Twin Cities/Rochester

Campus:

UMNTC - Twin Cities

[Career:](#)

UGRD

[College:](#)**New:** TCLA -**Old:** TCLA - College of Liberal Arts[Department:](#)**New:** 10947 -**Old:** 10947 - Afr American/African Studies

General

[Course Title Short:](#)

Contemporary Issues in Africa

[Course Title Long:](#)

Contemporary Issues in Africa

[Max-Min Credits for Course:](#)

3.0 to 3.0 credit(s)

[Catalog Description:](#)

New: This course aims to provide an overview of contemporary African concerns from an interdisciplinary perspective. Locating present-day realities within an historical continuum, the course covers a wide array of political, social and economic themes, including their interrogation in core fields of study. Emphasis on threats to human rights and challenges to democratic governance; political engagement and civil society activism. The rise of the middle class in sub-Saharan Africa; population growth and urbanization. Dislocation and displacement as observed in rural-urban, intra-African and international migrations; religious, ethnic and civil conflicts; climate and environmental change in terms of a sustainable livelihood framework; gender, equity and women's rights as crucial to sustainable development; postcolonial ethics of nature and nurture; technological advances, disparities and compelling factors for future growth.

Old: Africa from its colonial history to present. Emphasizes growth of African democracies. AIDS epidemic, ethnic/civil conflicts, debt crisis. Strategies of African governments and non-governmental organizations to combat crises. Rise of middle class in sub-Saharan Africa. Postcolonial legacies,

	population as political/social issue, rural to urban migration.
Print in Catalog?:	Yes
CCE Catalog Description:	Only include CCE Catalog Description in CCE Catalog. Introduction to the distinctive and complex features of contemporary Africa. Analyzes Africa against the backdrop of its colonial history to the present. Emphasis on the growth of African democracies, the AIDS epidemic, ethnic and civil conflicts, the debt crisis, as well as strategies that African governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are implementing to combat these crises. The rise of the middle class in sub-Saharan Africa, post-colonial legacies, population as a political and social issue, and rural to urban migration.
Grading Basis:	New: A-F Old: OPT
Topics Course:	No
Honors Course:	No
Online Course:	No
Freshman Seminar:	No
Is any portion of this course taught outside of the United States?:	No
Community Engaged Learning (CEL):	None
Instructor Contact Hours:	3.0 hours per week
Course Typically Offered:	Every Fall & Spring
Component 1:	New: DIS Old: LEC
Component 2:	New: <No text provided> Old: <No text provided>
Auto Enroll Course:	No
Graded Component:	New: DIS Old: LEC
Academic Progress Units:	3.0 credit(s) (Not allowed to bypass limits.)
Financial Aid Progress Units:	3.0 credit(s) (Not allowed to bypass limits.)
Repetition of Course:	Repetition not allowed.
Course Prerequisites for Catalog:	<No Text Provided>
Course Equivalency:	<No text provided>
Cross-listings:	No cross-listings
Add Consent Requirement:	No required consent
Drop Consent Requirement:	No required consent
Enforced Prerequisites: (course-based or non-course-based):	No prerequisites
Editor Comments:	<No text provided>
Proposal Changes:	<No text provided>
History Information:	New: 8/6/12: inactivating, as requested by the Office of Undergraduate Education. â–CMB 12/22/2020: Per Professor Githire, I am updating Long Title, Course description, LE and Syllabus. AM 12/28/2020: Adding SLO. AM. 2/4/21: Updating Long title, description and SLO per Professor Njeri Githire's email of 2/4/21. AM

Old: 8/6/12: inactivating, as requested by the Office of Undergraduate Education. âßCßD;CMB

Faculty Sponsor Name:

New: Njeri Githire
Old: <No text provided>

Faculty Sponsor E-mail Address:

New: ngithire@umn.edu
Old: <No text provided>

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes

* Students in this course:

- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies

How will you assess the students' learning related to this outcome? Give brief [examples](#) of how class work related to the outcome will be evaluated.

New: The professor will begin by reviewing the philosophical underpinnings of colonialism in Western Enlightenment discourse. This will be done through an exploration of excerpts from the writings of René Descartes, Emmanuel Kant, Friedrich Hegel, and others. We will consider how the arguments proposed in these writings were deployed to justify slavery and colonization. For how else could Christian Europe justify dehumanizing practices but by maintaining that Africans were godless believers in incredulous and irrational beliefs. For the ? superstitious and backward? populace, then, the ?civilizing mission? of European empires would confer the emancipatory potential of Christian literacy. Against this inaccurate, stereotypical and often disparaging depiction of Africa, we shall then read works by African thinkers who depict complex African societies with organized standards. We will consider how the disruption of organizing cultural principles within traditional societies led to disconnections that modern African societies continue to grapple with. We will examine the relationship between invisible structures of neo-colonialism and globalization in the sense of increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows. As a subtle, hegemonic way of perpetuating global inequalities in the present, global flows have occasioned new forms of exclusion and new modes of political participation. We will discuss concerns created by economic, social, and political problems in Africa and explore the ways Africans relate to the problems of their continent and the solutions they propose.

Old:

Please explain briefly how this outcome will be addressed in the course. Give brief [examples](#) of class work related to the outcome.

New: Example: In an endeavor to shape the classroom into an environment where competent, reflective thinking is part and parcel of the learning process, the instructor will design tasks aimed at offering students a variety of reading experiences, as well as helping them better understand the wide array of issues under scrutiny. Articles, films and other resources will be aimed at providing students with background information that help them better understand the multiple challenges that hamper Africa?s pathway to social, cultural and economic and political empowerment. During in-class discussions, the instructor will guide students in their exploration of the ways in which the colonial, exploitative and dehumanizing system of rule was justified through philosophical and political arguments. In our discussion of all the assigned material, I will help students think through key debates around Africa?s place in the 21st century. Throughout the semester, quizzes and writing assignments will involve writing of about a paragraph or two in answer to the quiz questions, which will be based on passages or elements from the works read. At the end of the semester, students will develop a research project addressing a topic of primary concern on the continent as discussed in the different texts. The paper should sustain an original and sound argument, as well as ensure perceptive use of evidence and a range of sources.

Old:

Liberal Education

Requirement this course fulfills:

<no text provided>

Other requirement this course fulfills:

ENV Environment

**-Criteria for
Core Courses:**

Describe how the course meets the specific bullet points for the proposed core requirement. Give concrete and detailed examples for the course syllabus, detailed outline, laboratory material,

student projects, or other instructional materials or method.

Core courses must meet the following requirements:

- **They explicitly help students understand what liberal education is, how the content and the substance of this course enhance a liberal education, and what this means for them as students and as citizens.**
- **They employ teaching and learning strategies that engage students with doing the work of the field, not just reading about it.**
- **They include small group experiences (such as discussion sections or labs) and use writing as appropriate to the discipline to help students learn and reflect on their learning.**
- **They do not (except in rare and clearly justified cases) have prerequisites beyond the University's entrance requirements.**
- **They are offered on a regular schedule.**
- **They are taught by regular faculty or under exceptional circumstances by instructors on continuing appointments. Departments proposing instructors other than regular faculty must provide documentation of how such instructors will be trained and supervised to ensure consistency and continuity in courses.**

New:

Old: Many of the issues under investigation in this course, such as, the myriad problems associated with legacies of colonialism, the struggles to form, reform and develop effective government, ethnic conflict, issues of development and international debt, AIDs and the African diaspora are international in breath and scope. We will specifically discuss the history of the artificial boundaries that continue to frustrate African unity , along with Africa's role in the globalized world vis a vis the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) passed by Congress and signed by president Clinton in 2000.

-Criteria for Theme Courses:

Describe how the course meets the specific bullet points for the proposed theme requirement. Give concrete and detailed examples for the course syllabus, detailed outline, laboratory material, student projects, or

other instructional materials or methods.

Theme courses have the common goal of cultivating in students a number of habits of mind:

- **thinking ethically about important challenges facing our society and world;**
- **reflecting on the shared sense of responsibility required to build and maintain community;**
- **connecting knowledge and practice;**
- **fostering a stronger sense of our roles as historical agents.**

New: AFRO 1131: Contemporary Issues in Africa

The Environment Theme

The establishment and expansion of European empires in Africa in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries changed African life irrevocably. During the relatively short period that colonial domination lasted, thriving societies were subdued and turned into mere production appendages of European commercial interests. Former relationships between peoples, cultures and religions were thrown into disarray. Literally all pre-colonial African civilizations were radically and permanently transformed by this external impact. Even though African nations managed to overcome foreign domination through nationalist struggles that ushered in Africa's independences and marked the incipient moment of decolonization during the second half of the twentieth century, the effects of colonization continue to impact African populations to this day.

This course begins on the premise that the colonial juncture played a critical role in the shaping of modern African societies. Therefore, an engagement with the philosophical basis for colonial-capitalism, including its rootedness in Enlightenment discourse serves as the initial point of entry into the course. Considering the clash between pre-colonial African occult interpretations of phenomena and Western subjective idealism of the Enlightenment discourse, the course begins with a philosophical question, namely, how the imperializing expressions of Enlightenment as a 'civilizing mission' led to the associations of non-European societies with backwardness, underdevelopment, savagery and primitive religiosity. Similarly, the entanglements of the Enlightenment with predominant notions of the ego, the thinking and acting subject in control of an objective world that s/he defines and organizes, will be subjected to critical

examination.

The formulation of this course presupposes a further thesis: that virtually all concerns underlying and driving scholarly endeavor in/on Africa at the dawn of this 3rd decade of the 21st Century find echo under the banner of the central, pressing, paramount and widespread issue on the continent today: the environment. Accordingly, AFRO 1131 engages in critical reflection of colonial history and its adverse effects on both environmental and human health. It further underscores the complex interplay of social history with the natural world, as well as the role of language in shaping and revealing those interactions. The first section of the course will bring African philosophical and religious systems in dialogue with Eurocentric depictions of the African environment as a jungle, a den and a horrible environment, where nature is often in conspiracy to inhibit and militate against the wellbeing of the human.

We will consider the tensions between this Eurocentric perception and assumptions driving various conservation efforts. In numerous conservation films and nature documentaries about Africa, the image of an untouched and pristine nature that is threatened by indigenous environmental practices and in need of protection by those from the West with proper environmental sensibility recurs with monotonous regularity. One of the earliest examples, 1959 German documentary *Serengeti Shall Not Die*, won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 1960. In it, the director's thinly veiled attitude of contempt toward Africans is discernible. ?I would prefer a prime minister to go hungry,? Bernhard Grzimek opined, ?than a lion.? Bemoaning the Masai pastoral practices of boring waterholes for their cattle, thus expanding their access to pasture at the expense of wild animals, Grzimek believed that East Africa could be best developed by curbing population growth, as well as restricting the expansion of agriculture and stock-raising in favor of tourism. Grzimek reserved his admiration only for Africans who lived ?in harmony with nature,? that is, by primitive techniques and in isolation from any aspects of modernity. It is perhaps an irony of no small proportions that Grzimek's son, cinematographer Michael Grzimek, died on location during the filming of the documentary, when the plane he piloted collided with a vulture.

The course will pair *Serengeti shall not die* with another documentary titled *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai* (2008). Founder of

the Green Belt Movement and the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangari Maathai literally put her life on the line, as well as endured torture and intimidation at the hands of Daniel Arap Moi's brutal and autocratic regime, in her environmental conservation endeavors. Having understood the ways modernity in erstwhile provincial contexts transformed human relations with nature and, as a result, the impact of societies on natural environments, Maathai worked tirelessly with rural women to empower their voices for participation in development that impacted their own lives and communities in sustainable and life-giving ways. Taking Root testifies to her unrelenting zeal in the pursuit of democratic accountability and the protection of rights. Using a language that is both accessible and engaging, Maathai exposes the ways the environment is under continual threat and frequent attack as the world pillaged for her resources, in an endeavor to build spectacular and globalizing economies. Drawing on her understanding of the ways change and continuity in African environments has always involved storytelling, orally-transmitted lore and song-based narratives, Maathai lays out a compelling and pointed case that sustainability and risk management simply work within established systems. Through the two documentaries, I will highlight a proposition that has become a truism in environmental studies, i.e., the fact that solutions to environmental problems will only be sustained if they are consistent with the ethics and values of society.

Continuing our focus on East Africa, we will read material that sheds light on a region that is suffering its worst locust invasion in decades, following one of the wettest seasons in 40 years; a situation scientists say is becoming the new normal. Over the last several years, frequent droughts have left millions starving, while widespread flooding has resulted in landslides that have claimed the lives of many, and displaced hundreds of thousands.

In her environment-sensitive campaigns, Wangari Maathai not only emphasized the relationship between tree cover, crop yields and vulnerability to climate shocks, she further underscored their potential for civil unrest and conflict over resources. In late 2007/early 2008, violent conflict engulfed Kenya, once considered a bastion of stability and economic prosperity in a region marred by civil strife and political violence. By February 2008, dire humanitarian consequences included thousands dead and many more

internally displaced, while loss for the economy was estimated at Ksh.100 billion (close to \$1.5 billion). For months on end, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, South Sudan, and Eastern Congo were short of fuel and other essential commodities because their main supply route, originating in the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa, was paralyzed by the unrest.

While tremors of ethnic violence and insecurity have shaken Kenya before and after every general election, the 2008 crisis was so severe that then Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo indicted six Kenyan leaders ? subsequently referred to as ?the Ocampo Six? ? for crimes against humanity. Considered masterminds of the violence, the indicted six would become even more popular with two of them forming a coalition that saw them elected president and vice-president during Kenya?s 2013 presidential elections, then re-elected in 2018.

A former settler colony slightly smaller than the state of Texas, Kenya has a population of 53 million estimated to grow to 85 million by 2050. Only 20% of Kenya?s mostly arid land is tillable, and the portion is severely overcrowded. Tourism and agriculture remain the mainstay of economy. However, human-wildlife conflict has always exacted a heavy toll on pastoral livelihoods and put a drain on community resources.

Undoubtedly, the disputed elections served as a catalyst to deep-seated economic, social and political problems that successive government have failed to address. Underlying the highly volatile national fabric in which the disparity between the rich and the poor remains one of the world's biggest problems is acute water scarcity owing to seasonal fluctuations that have become increasingly unreliable.

This module will focus on issues related to resource ? particularly water ? scarcity owing to climate change and economic shocks, as well as discuss potential action that will lessen the threat of ruin and begin to build a more peaceful, sane, and secure world. The scientific principles pertinent to the issues discussed in this module involve the synergies between livelihoods and biodiversity conservation, including their relation to climate change and conflict-related crises.

We will conclude this section with Wanuri Kihiu 2010 short feature Pumzi, set in Kenya of the future, after water wars have decimated humanity. A twenty-minute futuristic and post-apocalyptic drama, Pumzi (?

breath? in Kiswahili), features a female scientist's efforts to tap into a life-giving source, in a bid to breathe new life and nurture growth into a destroyed and almost obliterated universe. Kahi has credited late Kenyan environmentalist and Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai with inspiring the film's concern with resource depletion and environmental degradation, including their impact on planet sustainability and life itself.

In our focus on Côte d'Ivoire, the readings/viewings will spotlight a country long considered the most successful and developed member of Francophone West Africa, a symbol of political stability, ethnic peace, and an open economy in West Africa. The country was also long held as a sanctuary for war refugees from regions beyond. Côte d'Ivoire's long history as a country of immigration made it an important destination and one of the main countries of residence for nationals of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). Since colonial times and the development of the plantation sector, the economy of the country has largely been reliant on foreign labor force. Workers from neighboring countries with limited natural resources and an overabundance of workforce, such as, primarily, Burkina Faso (previously French Upper Volta Haute-Volta), have greatly contributed to the national economic development of Côte d'Ivoire. After its independence in 1960 and up until the mid-1980s/early 1990s when the country was struck by economic crisis, immigration was promoted by national authorities and thus continued to be high. With the end of the cocoa boom and the intense social struggle and turmoil associated with the ensuing socio-economic disintegration, a new regional shift took place. Côte d'Ivoire became progressively less attractive for West African workers. Simultaneously, increasingly restrictive policies toward foreigners were adopted. Assigned readings will illuminate how the end of the cocoa boom produced renewed political instability. Though the cocoa boom brought business and developments to the country, forest resources began to get depleted, the productivity of plantations started to decrease and the price of cacao on the international market fell, which ignited an economic crisis. We will consider potential climate-smart solutions to mitigate cocoa's environmental impact in Côte d'Ivoire. The case of Côte d'Ivoire will also be useful in understanding the class between cash crop economies in Africa and food sovereignty.

The next section will focus on clandestine migrations from the Sahel

to Europe. For example, the film *Hope* showcases the plight of a young woman who quickly descends into a hallucinatory life of prostitution, drugs and alcohol abuse while en route to Spain. *Climate Refugees* (2010) explores the global human impact of climate change and its serious destabilizing effect on international politics. These readings/viewings provide the template to discuss the relationship between mass immigration and resource shortages owing to such issues as bio-diversity loss and wealth inequality. Specifically, rainforest depletion and species loss have been closely connected to questions of illegal immigration. They draw attention to the inextricably connected issues of displacement, forced migration, environmental degradation and climatic changes, and so forth. Central to this module's focus are the challenges that increased mobility in contemporary globalized world poses for environmentalism's central preoccupation with ethics of place and localized identities.

The last section of the course will focus on what has come to be referred to as 'the curse of oil.' African environmental activists have long linked their cause to wider concerns with the expansion of democratic spaces and civic liberties. They have also long acknowledged the interface of ecological and political reform. A case in point: the violence that has attended to the exploitation of crude oil in Nigeria seized global conscience with the murder in 1995 of nine environmentalists. Their crusade against the ecosystem degradation of the Niger Delta (with its ramifications on food safety, public health, environment preservation, and so forth), ruffled the then military junta of General Sani Abacha. Most famous of fated nine, Ken Saro Wiwa was an accomplished writer whose works continue to enjoy popularity in Africa and elsewhere.

Our last module will focus on *Lagoon*, a petro-fiction novel set in Nigeria. In his activist campaigns, the late Saro Wiwa emphatically stated that the residues of petroleum production, left to slicken and poison the earth, constituted a form of genocide against the masses who lived off the earth and its resources. In the decades since Saro Wiwa's murder, armed rebel groups have pursued increasingly violent forms of resistance against the petroleum industry by kidnapping oil works and sabotaging oil installations.

Ironically and tragically, despite having an Atlantic coastline of over 500 miles, Nigeria is Africa's largest

importer of foreign fish. With a population of 197 million inhabitants, predicted to double by 2050, the country often teeters on the brink of famine. Previously a paradise for the traditionally fishing-based region, lagoons in the heart of the Lagos metropolis are being depleted by various development projects, the largest of which is an oil refinery with the potential for an extensive marine and groundwater contamination.

Projected to process 650,000 barrels of oil a day when completed, for instance, the Dangote refinery on the Lekki lagoon, will reclaim over six thousand acres of swampland and most certainly turn the erstwhile fish-abundant waters into an oil slick.

Currently, most of Nigeria's oil satisfies overseas demands for fossil fuel imports, while the country imports refined petroleum products for domestic consumption. The colossal refinery would eliminate Nigeria's dependence on imported petroleum products, and in turn lower reliance on foreign exchange. Such a 'positive' economic impact argument provides one of the examples on the limitations of technologies and the constraints of science on the public policy issues being considered. Indeed, how do we address the significant human and environmental risks the refinery poses to the people of Lagos while acknowledging its contribution to the country's economy? How do we promote alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar power when traditional beliefs about wind as an evil or destructive force reign, and when the sun is personified as a deity, with all the connotations that arise. While harnessing the heat and light energy released by the sun may be a matter of technology and environmental science, getting people to shed beliefs related to solar energy may be more challenging.

I will pair Lagoon with Darwin's Nightmare, a 2004 documentary about the biggest tropical lake on earth, source of the river Nile, that is, Lake Victoria in western Tanzania. Deep in the heart of Africa 'said to be the birthplace of humankind' Lake Victoria is ground zero for the post-colonial exploitation of Africa by the developed world and the forces of globalization. Westerners introduced Nile perch into the lake in the 1960s. In the years since, it ate everything in sight, decimated hundreds of separate species, destroyed thousands of years of evolution, and turned the world's largest tropical lake into a barren sinkhole.

Here again, the export of Nile perch has provided much-needed employment in the region even as

unemployment has plagued the rest of the country. However, the threat to biodiversity, and species-specific extinction through the introduction of an invasive species is now being understood by the local community.

Alongside our discussion of the underlying scientific principles behind the environmental issues being examined as highlighted above in bold, students will learn how to identify and evaluate credible information concerning the environment. The Anthropocene: The Human Epoch (2018) is a film that offers a wealth of scientific evidence for dire climate change predictions. The documentary also shows how business, local governments, and citizens can take positive action to reduce future dangers. With in-depth discussions of what may lie ahead, including increases in storm surges, hurricanes, water pollution, forest fires, and epidemics, the documentary promotes the urgently needed use of alternative energy sources, such as biodiesel, clean-burning coal, and wind and solar power.

Old:

LE Recertification-Reflection Statement (for LE courses being re-certified only):

<No text provided>

Statement of Certification:

This course is certified for a Core (blank) as of
This course is certified for a Theme (blank) as of

Writing Intensive

Propose this course as Writing Intensive curriculum: No

Question 1 (see CWB Requirement 1):

What types of writing (e.g., reading essay, formal lab reports, journaling) are likely to be assigned? Include the page total for each writing assignment. Indicate which assignment(s) students will be required to revise and resubmit after feedback by the instructor or the graduate TA.

<No text provided>

Question 2 (see CWB Requirement 2):

What types of writing (e.g., research papers, problem sets, presentations, technical documents, lab reports, essays, journaling etc.) will be assigned? Explain how these assignments meet the requirement that writing be a significant part of the course work, including details about multi-authored assignments, if any. Include the required length for each writing assignment and demonstrate how the 2,500 minimum word count (or its equivalent) for finished writing will be met.

<No text provided>

Question 3 (see CWB Requirement 3):

How will students' final course grade depend on their writing performance? What percentage of the course grade will depend on the quality and level of the student's writing compared to the percentage of the grade that depends on the course content? Note that this information must also be on the syllabus.

<No text provided>

Question 4 (see CWB Requirement 4):

Write up a sample assignment handout here for a paper that students will revise and resubmit after receiving feedback on the initial draft.

<No text provided>

Question 5 (see CWB Requirement 5):

What types of instruction will students receive on the writing aspect of the assignments?

<No text provided>

Question 6 (see CWB Requirement 6):

How will the assistants be trained and supervised?

<No text provided>

Statement of Certification:

This course is certified for a Theme (blank) as of

Course Syllabus**Course Syllabus:**

New: AFRO 1131
Contemporary Issues in Africa
Fall 2021

Instructor : Njeri Githire
Office : 848, Social Sciences Building
Office Phone : 612-624-9847 (main office) / 612-625-1687 (direct)
Office Fax : 612-624-9383
Office Hours : by appointment
Mailbox : 810, Social Sciences Building
Email : Canvas
Class : M/W 01:00pm-02:15pm in ____ Blegen Hall

Course Description: Welcome to AFRO 1131! This course aims to provide an overview of contemporary African concerns from an interdisciplinary perspective. Locating present-day realities within an historical continuum, the course covers a wide array of political, social and economic themes, including their interrogation in core fields of study. Emphasis on threats to human rights and challenges to democratic governance; political engagement and civil society activism. The rise of the middle class in sub-Saharan Africa; population growth and urbanization. Dislocation and displacement as observed in rural-urban, intra-African and international migrations; religious, ethnic and civil conflicts; climate and environmental change in terms of a sustainable livelihood framework; gender, equity and women's rights as crucial to sustainable development; postcolonial ethics of nature and nurture; technological advances, disparities and compelling factors for future growth.

Course Objectives:

- ? Examine the principal priorities and challenges confronting Africa as the third decade of the 21st century begins its course;
 - ? Identify key events and causes that have shaped modern African social, political, environmental, cultural, and economic landscape.
 - ? Reflect on the role of African philosophies and religious practices in promoting the production of knowledge of/from Africa unencumbered by the need to perpetually confront, contest, invert or subvert the invention of Africa as the ultimate ?elsewhere?;
 - ? Understand the interface of ecological processes and the multifarious crises that afflict Africa today;
 - ? Acknowledge the correlation between environmentalism and human rights, with particular emphasis on democratic culture and political reform;
 - ? Engage with the challenges that increased mobility in contemporary globalized world poses for environmentalism's central preoccupation with ethics of place and localized identities;
 - ? Appreciate the complexity of the relationship between technology and democratic participation, as well as between technology and environmental impacts;
 - ? Interrogate the intersections of contemporary environmental activism and the (in)visibility of race, class, and economic status;
 - ? Consider the role of storytelling, orally-transmitted lore and song-based narratives in understanding social, cultural, political and environmental changes in Africa;
- Required Textbooks

African Philosophy: The Essential Readings (1991), Ed. Tsenay Serequeberhan;
African Religions: A Very Short Introduction (2014), Jacob K. Olupona;
Seven Myths of Africa in World History (2017), David Northrup;
Things Fall Apart (1958), Chinua Achebe;
Lagoon (2014), Nnedi Okorafor;

Films on Reserve

Serengeti shall not die, 1959 (85 min.);
 The Africans: A Triple Heritage, 1986 (60 mns)
 Darwin's Nightmare, 2004 (min.);
 Weather Report, 2007 (52 min.);
 Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai, 2008 (80 min.);
 Milking the Rhino, 2009 (83 min.);
 Pumzi, 2009 (21 min.);
 Climate Refugees, 2010 (86 min.);
 Burning in the Sun, 2011 (83 min.);
 Big Men, 2013 (101 min.);
 Something Necessary, 2013 (82 min.);
 Hope, 2014 (91 min.);
 Lifeboat, 2014 (34 min.);
 Atlantique, 2019 (102 min.);

Course Web

This course is provided with a Canvas course web site onto which class notes, course guidelines, announcements and other helpful information will be posted. Students are required to log on to the course web site on a regular basis and to familiarize themselves with the information and content therein. Students will be held responsible for any information defined in announcements and other formal communications on the course web. Furthermore, all course-related email communication will be conducted via the Canvas course web. Students who experience problems logging onto Canvas should contact UMN Canvas Admin & Support <help@umn.edu>

Questions & Answers Forum

It is normal to have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments. Please post these in the ?Questions & Answers? forum, which you can access by clicking the DISCUSSIONS link in the course navigation links. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers to help each other. For each clear and comprehensive answer you give, you can expect to receive one (1) extra credit point for the course (up to 5 points maximum).

Material on Course Reserve/Course Web/World Wide Web

Various photocopies will be distributed in class throughout the semester. Further, students will be expected to download material available electronically on the library course reserve or on designated web sites for reading on days specified in this syllabus. All reading is required in order to pass the class and students' knowledge of this material will be tested in writing exercises, analytical papers, in-class participation and any other examinations. The web links stated herewith have been tested and proven reliable. Should you fail to access a link, however, please inform the instructor as soon as possible. Students who experience problems downloading/ printing electronic reserve material should log off and log on again to print each different article. If that does not work, they should change their browser (from Mozilla to Internet Explorer or vice-versa). If that still does not work, please contact Wilson Reserves, Tel: 612-624-8609 or the University of Minnesota technology helpline, Tel: 612-301-4357

Important: Required reading/viewing means that all material must be read or viewed with attentive interest. Here are some questions whose answers I would like you to consider as you read/view the assigned material: What would you say fascinated, impressed, struck you ? or piqued your interest the most about the topic discussed? What did you know the least about the society presented in the material? What was most familiar to you? Did the material excel at teaching you something new? Can you provide some examples to substantiate your answer here? It is strongly advised that you come to class with remarks/questions which will serve as a starting point of the discussion and should indicate a reasonable engagement with the course material. Special note will be made of remarks/questions shared to the class and which help pursue meaningful discussion. Again, the assumption is that you have read/viewed the material and tried to engage with it prior to coming to class. No student can hope to achieve an average grade in this class without regular and consistent preparation outside of the classroom, as well as completion of all of the assignments herewith. Please note that students are required to bring the assigned articles/books to class for analysis, discussion and in-class reference. Printing services are available in room 860, Social Sciences building between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm

Cellphones & Computer Use:

I encourage us to be very conservative about channeling the use of computers in classroom to other academic contexts. Cell phones and laptop computers can be disruptive in the classroom, when not utilized as a learning tool. I ask that cell phones be turned off prior to the classroom. As for computers, even when they are not loud, they rarely enhance the studious atmosphere in which the classroom is conducted. A laptop can assist your educational experience when used to take and review notes. Computers can be disruptive and encourage some students to check email, surf the web, and/or work on assignments for other courses during class time. I encourage you to take notes by hand and transcribe them electronically at a later date. No laptop computers in the classroom. No headphones. No cell phones. (No kidding.)

Films:

Please note that the instructor will show films in class on days stipulated on the syllabus. If you

miss class on a day when a film is scheduled, you may arrange to view it at 204 Walter Library, 117, Pleasant Street S E., Tel: 612-624-1584. Students will also be expected to view films on reserve at the Walter Learning Resources Center and/or on designated websites. All viewings are required in order to pass the class and students' knowledge of this material will be tested on writing assignments, in-class participation, etc. Please note that while two or more copies of a film on reserve may be available, the actual access to the film will be based on a first-come, first-served basis. Should you be informed that a film is unavailable, however, check with the desk attendants at Walter to ensure that all copies are indeed in use. Problems with online access and technical issues should be addressed to the U of M 24/7 technology helpline, Tel: 612-301-4357. Please also note that Walter Smart Learning Commons provides a group viewing room, which is a great option if a group wants to watch the film together. The room should be reserved ahead of time by going to this site: <https://www.lib.umn.edu/media/mediaviewingroom>

CLE Requirements:

AFRO 1131 is designed to meet the Council of Liberal Education's requirements of the Environment Theme.

The Environment Theme

Throughout the course of the semester, we will read texts that nudge readers to see the connections between the health of humans and healthful natural environments. These readings strongly support the idea that we attend to what can be known about the natural environment and humans' relation to it. Underscoring the problematic nature of knowledge production that entails 'institutionalized' ways of seeing, our course readings stress the need for societies to interact well with the earth's biophysical processes, making ecocriticism more responsive to historical relationships of power, to colonial history and its effects on social life and natural environments.

Grading Policies

Please note that in an effort to ensure fairness, objectivity, and impartiality ALL written work will be graded anonymously. Students are expected to write the first five digits of their student ID at the top right hand corner of their papers. Next to the ID number students will write the first letter of their last name and enclose it in brackets. Students should also indicate the AFRO 1131 designator below their names.

1. Class Participation (30 %). The course format being discussion based, class participation is an important element of your final grade and students are expected to come to class having prepared the readings assigned on any given day. More than being capable of formulating eloquent arguments and passionate opinions, students are encouraged to draw from the course content so as to be able to relate and to communicate their understanding of the African world in its complexity. Obviously, the course caters to learners with different levels of knowledge and experience in the area of the course content. Whatever your level of comfort vis-à-vis the course material might be, you are expected to share in class the insights you gain from course readings, etc. Furthermore, you are expected to be engaged, present, and prepared for class at all times. Structured classroom discussion, short in-class writing assignments & online discussion forums will form part of this grade. At the end of the semester I generally bump up to the next grade those students who are on the bubble grade-wise and who have regularly attended class and have been active and engaged participants throughout the semester. Please note that attendance will be taken for administrative purposes only and will have no direct impact on grades. Accordingly, no credit will be awarded for attendance. There is, therefore, no requirement that you write to the instructor asking to be excused for absences. Nonetheless, even though students are not graded for attending class, you are requested to refrain from tardiness of five minutes or more, or leaving class before the end of the class period (even during viewing of films). It is distracting, disruptive, annoying, and irritating to other students when students arrive late, after class has begun, or disappear and reappear at random while class is in progress. If you are late, or if you absolutely have to absent yourself during class, kindly do it as quietly and as discretely as possible. If the same person repeatedly exhibits this type of behavior, a one grade notch (e.g., B- to C+) penalty for each day in question will be applied to their final grade. Please turn off your cell phones and computers during class. Students unable, unwilling or uncomfortable with note-taking by hand may record class lectures solely for personal use only in study and preparation relevant to AFRO 1131. These recordings may not be shared with any other person registered or not in AFRO 1131. As sources whose usage is regulated by policies specific to academic conduct and scholastic integrity, these recordings must be destroyed at the end of the academic session for which they are intended. Students are also requested to avoid dozing in class, browsing the Web, engaging in online transactions unrelated to the class, and/or doing any other private work during class lectures. Students who exhibit this behavior will be penalized with a disciplinary 'F' grade. Please leave the last row of seats empty except during in-class writing and group exercises.

2. Homework Assignments & In-Class Writing Exercises (30%): From time to time, short questions and summaries based on the assigned readings/viewings will be assigned in class or as take-home assignments. The assumption being that students engage with the assigned text/film prior to class, these homework assignments and in-class writing exercises will be both announced and unannounced. Because the primary goal of this activity is to determine whether the basic material of the course is being read consistently and seriously, there will be NO make-up for these assignments. Students who present a valid justification for missing class on all the

days on which the assignments are given will not be penalized for missing these exercises. Documented absence due to illness, injury, surgery, death in the family, a family emergency should be reported to the instructor with an appropriate written excuse immediately following your absence. Absences may also be excused for the observance of a religious holiday or for participation in university-sponsored events. There are NO exceptions to this rule. For clarity, the following are not considered excusable absences: sorority or fraternity events, travel, concerts, sporting events, another class, taking or studying for an exam, meetings, oversleeping, or job interviews.

3. Final Report (40%): Students will submit a 7-8 page (typed and single-spaced) essay in which they will discuss their awakening to environmental injustice, including the contribution of this class to environmental sustainability. This is a reflective essay therefore the tone will be informal yet confident and authoritative; engaging, but not colloquial; structured and consistent, yet not casual. The focus of the essay will be two-fold: (i) a reflection of the your awakening to environmental consciousness. Have you been a climate denier? Have you had to sway climate deniers within your immediate environment? Do you feel that the looming of climate apocalypse is over-exaggerated? (ii) A consideration of your commitment challenging business models that are not environmental friendly. In other words, how will the knowledge that you have acquired in this class serve you in your future endeavors. Beyond the 7-8 pages an additional page or two may be included for photos, newspaper clippings of important events (birth announcement, major accomplishment, etc.) or any newsworthy information related to your childhood and growing up.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Class participation ??????????.. 30%
- In-Class Writing Exercises/Homework Assignments ??????????.. 30%
- Final Report ??????????.. 40%

Your final grade will be determined by the percentage of score earned:

A (94-100%)	A- (90-93%)	B+ (87-89%)	B (83-86%)	B- (80-82%)
C+ (77-79%)	C (73-76%)	C- (70-72%)	D+ (67-69%)	D (60-66%)
S (70 % & above)				

Make-up

Students may NOT retake any exam.

Generally the scale is not curved. If you find that you are having trouble with any part of the course, please see the instructor early in the semester. Please seek assistance as soon as possible to resolve the specific issues that may be preventing you from progressing as you would like.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Each student is expected to do his/her own work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to established University policy.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty is defined by Student Judicial Affairs as ?submission of false records of academic achievement; cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement.? Scholastic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when students turn in work that is not their own. Plagiarism occurs when written work 1) fails to cite quotations and borrowed ideas from outside sources, including the World Wide Web and other student work, 2) fails to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks, and 3) fails to put summaries and paraphrases in the writer?s own words. The definition of plagiarism was derived from Diana Hacker?s A Writer?s Reference, Fourth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin?s, 1999.

Credits and Workload Expectations

For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. For example, a student taking 15 credits should require approximately 45 hours of work each week. The reading and writing assignments in this class entail exceptionally detailed and sophisticated analysis of texts belonging to a literary tradition that may be new and unfamiliar to many. Consistent and regular study outside of the classroom is a ?must? in this class, an unavoidable requirement for success.

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. Disability Services determine appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. See the instructor for information about contacting Disability Services or call DS Student Services at 612-626-1333.

Complaints Regarding Teaching/Grading

Students with complaints about teaching or grading should first try to resolve the problem with the instructor involved. Please note that no such discussion can be held at the beginning or end of class because of time constraints. Kindly, therefore, arrange to see the instructor during a mutually convenient time. The instructor may also set up mid-semester evaluations during which time students will be invited to evaluate the course and make any suggestions for improving teaching and learning. If no satisfactory resolution is reached through these venues, students may then discuss the matter with the Department Chair, 812 Social Sciences Tower, 612-624-8012, who will attempt to mediate. Failing an informal resolution, the staff in the AA&AS departmental office will facilitate the filing of a formal complaint. Official U of M information on grading can be found at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html>

Miscellaneous

The instructor's office hours (by appointment) provide the forum during which students' concerns will be discussed. Because another class is scheduled to meet in Blegen # 435 after AFRO 1131, only extremely pressing or critical issues of simple answer may be addressed after class (time permitting). Questions concerning issues not addressed in the syllabus may also be directed to the instructor via email. In an effort to privilege face-to-face contexts of interaction, email answers will be limited to short, straightforward and simple yes-no type of questions unless the student is immobile or unable to move for documented reasons. The instructor will make a point of responding to students queries and concerns via Canvas email within 2-3 business days unless extraordinary circumstances dictate otherwise. The instructor will, however, not respond to questions fully addressed on the syllabus and in the handouts given regarding writing papers, in-class presentations etc, etc via email. For clarification on written material, concerns, and queries regarding material handed out and discussed at length in class, students will need to see the instructor as stipulated above. Students who miss class and wish to undertake a make-up of the lectures missed will need to schedule an appointment with the instructor as make-up lectures cannot be given via email. While the instructor will endeavor to post relevant announcements and class notes on Canvas, students are responsible for any up-to-date information missed while absent. Note too that while some reading assignments and written work may easily be made up after an absence, class interaction and its overall value is impossible to recreate in a make-up setting. Moreover, unless otherwise indicated, all written assignments must be submitted in portable document format (pdf) on specified electronic Email attachments will NOT be accepted without express permission from the instructor. Late work will be penalized one grade notch (e.g., B- to C+) for each day it is late. The weekend counts as one day. If you wish to avoid this penalty when you submit late work, please provide documented evidence of illness, etc. It is up to the instructor's discretion whether to accept late work without documented excuse. Grades and grade-related concerns after the end of the semester will only be addressed via an official email account (umn.edu). Please note that I generally refuse to respond to emails that bear no salutations and closing signatures (properly addressed to a specific person and signed off by a particular person) because that is the characteristic of mass emails and junk mails which warrant no further action.

Reading/Viewing Schedule

SEPTEMBER

Wed 08: Distribution & explanation of the syllabus followed by an introduction to the course; a brief survey of Sub-Saharan African history;

Mon 13: Sub-Saharan African history continued; eReserve Reading: 'How to Write about Africa' by Binyavanga Wainaina; 'On a Croc's Back, America-Bound' by Okey Ndibe; 'Weary Professors Give Up; Concede that African is a Country?'; 'Problematic Terms?';

Wed 15: (Re)presenting a Continent eReserve Reading: Seven Myths of Africa in World History by David Northrup (vii-21); Film viewing online: The Africans: A Triple Heritage;

Mon 20: Defining African Philosophy; eReserve Reading: 'African Philosophy as the Practice of Resistance' by Tsenay Serequeberhan; 'Knowledge of Africa, Knowledge by Africans: Two Perspectives on African Studies' by Paulin J. Hountondji;

Wed 22: African Cosmology & Religious Worldviews; eReserve Readings: African Religions: A Very Short Introduction by Jacob K. Olupona (pgs. xix-19/ 89-122); Seven Myths of Africa in World History by David Northrup (pgs. 22-38 / 103-127); Film viewing online: Serengeti shall not die;

Mon 27: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Kenya: eReserve Readings: Excerpts from Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011 by David Branch;

Wed 29: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Kenya; Film viewing in Class: Taking Root;

OCTOBER

Mon 04: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Kenya; Group discussion: Taking Root;

Wed 06: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Kenya; Film viewing online: Something Necessary;

Mon 11: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Côte d'Ivoire; eReserve Readings: Excerpts from Making War in Côte d'Ivoire by Mike McGovern;

Wed 13: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Côte d'Ivoire; eReserve Readings: ? Following the Money: The Cocoa-coffee Filière? by Mike McGovern;

Mon 18: Religious, Ethnic and civil Conflicts: Focus on Côte d'Ivoire; Film viewing online: Bittersweet: The Bitter Cost of Chocolate;

Wed 20: Human Rights, Food Sovereignty & Environmental Sustainability: Focus on Niger; Film viewing online: Arlit, Deuxième Paris = Arlit, The Second Paris

Mon 25: Human Rights, Food Sovereignty & Environmental Sustainability: Focus on Niger; eReserve Readings: ?Food Wars? by Walden Bello & Mara Baviera;

Wed 27: Human Rights, Food Sovereignty & Environmental Sustainability: eReserve Readings: ?Globalization and Environmental Conflict in Africa? by Cyril I. Obi;

NOVEMBER

Mon 01: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel: eReserve Readings: "The Mediterranean Sieve, Spring and Seametry? by Hakim Abderrezak;

Wed 03: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel Film viewing in class: Lifeboat;

Mon 08: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel: eReserve Readings: Excerpts from Water Graves by Valérie Loichot;

Wed 10: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel Film viewing online: Hope;

Mon 15: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel Film viewing in class: Atlantique;

Wed 17: Rural-Urban, Intra-African and International Migrations: Focus on the Sahel: Film viewing in class: Climate Refugees;

Mon 22: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: "Toxic Discourse? by Lawrence Buell;

Wed 24: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: Film viewing in class: Big Men;

Mon 29: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: Excerpts from Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy by Ken Saro-Wiwa;

DECEMBER

Wed 01: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: Lagoon;

Mon 06: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: Lagoon;

Wed 08: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: Lagoon;

Mon 13: The Curse of Oil? Focus on the Niger Delta: eReserve Reading: ?Intimate Objectivity: On Nnedi Okorafor's Oceanic Afrofuturism? by Melody Jue;

Wed 15: Review & Conclusion;

Wed 22: Final Report due on Canvas

Updates, Changes, Modifications and/or Revisions:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule to facilitate student learning. Any changes in the schedule will be communicated to students in advance. This syllabus is

available in alternative formats upon request.

Old:

Strategic Objectives & Consultation

Name of Department Chair Approver:

New: Yuichiro Onishi

Old: <No text provided>

Strategic Objectives - Curricular Objectives:

How does adding this course improve the overall curricular objectives of the unit?

<No text provided>

Strategic Objectives - Core Curriculum:

Does the unit consider this course to be part of its core curriculum?

<No text provided>

Strategic Objectives - Consultation with Other Units:

Before submitting a new course proposal in ECAS, circulate the proposed syllabus to department chairs in relevant units and copy affiliated associate dean(s). Consultation prevents course overlap and informs other departments of new course offerings. If you determine that consultation with units in external college(s) is unnecessary, include a description of the steps taken to reach that conclusion (e.g., catalog key word search, conversation with collegiate curriculum committee, knowledge of current curriculum in related units, etc.). Include documentation of all consultation here, to be referenced during CCC review. If email correspondence is too long to fit in the space provided, paraphrase it here and send the full transcript to the CCC staff person. Please also send a Word or PDF version of the proposed syllabus to the CCC staff person.

<No text provided>

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