Overview

This course is an introduction to Africa and its significance in the contemporary world. We will address issues spanning three areas of concentrations: Development; Peace and Conflict; and Societies and Cultures. After introducing a basic historical and institutional framework this course follows four thematic sections:

1. Identity and culture;
2. Conflict;
3. Development;
4. Technology.

Learning Objectives

By participating in this course, you will improve your ability to:

- Identify the sociopolitical characteristics of the African continent;
- Evaluate continuity and change in Africa.
- Engage with contemporary debates regarding the region;
- Understand the role and impact of Africa in the global(ized) world

While the course focuses on the region as whole, it is important to understand that there is considerable variation across the countries that constitute “Africa.” I will provide examples to illustrate some of these variations.

Course Schedule Highlights

April 3    Week 1. Introduction: Setting the stage: geography and history
April 10   Week 2. Culture and Identity: Arts, Culture
April 17   Week 3. Culture and Identity: Religion
April 24   Week 4. Managing Conflict…or Not: Violence, Peacemaking and Everyday Negotiating
May 1      Development: Livelihood, Migration, and Economic Change
May 8      Week 6. Technology: History and Afrofuturism
Course Details

April 3  Week 1. Introduction: Setting the stage: geography and history


Recommended:


April 10  Week 2. Culture and Identity: Arts, Culture


For fun, explore Dak’Art, La Biennale De Dakar

- https://www.instagram.com/dak_artbiennale/
- https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/BiennaledeDakar/

For further study, see the November 2018 report by Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, “The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics.” http://restitutionreport2018.com/

**April 17  Week 3. Culture and Identity: Religion**


*Recommended:*


April 24 Week 4. Managing Conflict…or Not: Violence, Peacemaking and Everyday Negotiating


Recommended:


Links to several relevant datasets:

- Uppsala Conflict Data Program: https://ucdp.uu.se/?id=1&id=1
(The wikipedia site (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uppsala_Conflict_Data_Program) on this and other datasets might be useful to get a quick fix on the parameters and issues. Check out the 'talk' and 'edit' pages to get a sense of editorial processes and issues inside wikipedia.)
- The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) https://www.acleddata.com/
- The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) data: https://www.prio.org/Data/
- UN Peacekeeping: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate
• Interactive Crisis Data Viewer: http://www.icb.umd.edu/dataviewer/
• Civil War Termination Data: http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/licklider/civilwardata.htm
• Minorities at Risk data: http://www.mar.umd.edu/

More lists of datasets:
• Conflict, War and Terrorism (U of Central Florida): https://guides.ucf.edu/war/wardata
• data.world (62 sets): https://data.world/datasets/conflict
• NYU: Abu Dhabi: https://guides.nyu.edu/polisci/political-conflict-data

May 1  Development: Livelihood, Migration, and Economic Change


Resources:


May 8    Week 6. Technology: History and Afrofuturism


*Of interest:*


Web sites to browse:
- A Tale of Two Valleys: Research Project: http://www.lse.ac.uk/africa/research/twovalleys
- African Agriculture Technology Foundation: https://www.aatf-africa.org/
- Browse MEST (https://meltwater.org/) and other African innovation, incubator sites for current projects.