**Syllabus for GEOG 422: Changing geographies of Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Course objectives:** To develop an understanding of the geographic contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa, including an overview of the physical, bioclimatic, historical, cultural, political, demographic, health and economic geographies of Sub-Saharan Africa. Students will ‘fill in the map’ of Africa by studying the spatial distribution within each of these geographic domains. In addition to an overview of geography South of the Sahara, the Congo will be taken as a more intensive case study through additional readings, lectures and discussions.

**Learning outcomes:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the relevant geographical information domains of Sub-Saharan Africa. Students will demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating topical issues concerning the human and physical environments of Sub-Saharan Africa. Students will understand the diversity and complexity of Sub-Saharan Africa and its context within global geography.

**Lecturer**: Dr. Matthew C. Hansen, Professor, Department of Geographical Sciences

**Meeting time**: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30pm - 4:45pm, LeFrak Hall 2166

**Office hours**: Tuesday/Thursday 3:00 – 3:30, LeFrak Hall 1135

# Required texts: King Leopold’s Ghost, by Adam Hochschild

**Schedule** (subject to change)

August 28 – Course Introduction

August 31 – Physiography

September 5 – Hydrology of Africa – Yolande Munzimi

September 7 – Vegetation edges and biomes – Steve Prince

September 12 – Physiography / Climate and vegetation

September 14 – Climate and vegetation

September 19 – Land cover from satellite data

September 21 – Human evolution

September 26 – Language, hunter/gatherers and agriculture

September 28 – Cultural and political hearths

October 3 – Cultural and political hearths

October 5 – The colonial period

October 9 – The colonial period

October 10 – Review

October 12 – Mid-term examination

October 17 – Discussion of King Leopold’s ghost – Research paper outline due

October 19 – Congo day

October 24 – Post-colonial period

October 26 – Post-cold war period

October 31 – 21st century Africa

November 2 – Demography

November 7 – Rural and urban geography

November 9 – Social geography

November 14 – Review of Ghana – Bernard Adusei

November 16 – Health and disease

November 21 – Economic development

November 28 – Student presentations and research papers due

November 30 – Student presentations

December 5 – Student presentations

December 7 – Student presentations

Dr. Hansen may be contacted by email at [mhansen@umd.edu](mailto:mhansen@umd.edu) with a GEOG 422 subject heading

**Grading**

Mid-term examination – 25%

Research paper – 25%

Individual presentation – 15%

Final examination – 35%

Class attendance/participation – 10%

Both exams will consist of short answer/essay questions and the final examination will include a map-based section. All materials from required texts, lectures, including guest speakers and student presentations will be included as potential examination material.

Research papers will represent a synthesis of a topic of current interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. A list of possible subjects is presented below, and students may propose their own ideas on what subject to research. Papers will be 10-15 pages of double-spaced text, 12-point Times New Roman font and 1” top and bottom page margins. At least 5 references are required, and their listing is not considered part of the main body of the text. Appropriate references include peer-reviewed journal articles, edited books and news periodicals. All references must exist in print editions. An alternative to this format is a synopsis of a relevant full-length text on Sub-Saharan Africa. An outline of each research paper is due on October 25.

Presentations will be made during the last two weeks of class and consist of an 8-minute presentation of the main ideas and conclusions of the research paper. Two additional minutes will allow for one question from the audience.

Potential Research paper/Presentation topics:

Health cluster – AIDS in South Africa, PEPFAR, Guinea Worm eradication, Malaria prevention and treatment, Famine causes and monitoring

Economic development cluster – Resource curse, Leapfrog technologies, Chinese investment, Agricultural development, Centers of manufacturing, Conflict diamonds, Bottom Billion, Dead Aid

Environment cluster – Ivory, Protected areas and human livelihoods, Great Apes, Desertification

Democratic governance case study cluster – Ghana, Senegal, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Namibia

Current/recent conflicts – Sudan (Darfur and/or South Sudan), Mali, Cote D’Ivoire

Past conflicts - Somalia, Angola, Ethiopia/Eritrea

5% of the participation grade will be a student-presented synopsis of a current event news item concerning Sub-Saharan Africa. Each student will select a news item and send an email prior to the next class notifying Dr. Hansen of the topic. 3-5 minutes at the beginning of that class will be spent discussing the news item.

**Students with disabilities**

Please see the instructor and register with Disability Support Service in Shoemaker Hall.

**Honor Code**

TheUniversityofMaryland,CollegeParkhasanationallyrecognizedCodeofAcademicIntegrity,administeredbytheStudentHonorCouncil.ThisCodesetsstandardsforacademicintegrityatMarylandforallundergraduateandgraduatestudents.Asastudentyouareresponsibleforupholdingthesestandardsforthiscourse.Itisveryimportantforyoutobeawareoftheconsequencesofcheating,fabrication,facilitation,andplagiarism.FormoreinformationontheCodeofAcademicIntegrityortheStudentHonorCouncil,pleasevisit<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>.Pleasekeepthefollowingpledgeinmindwhenyouarewritingpapersorsubmittingexammaterial:“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

**Additional information**

Additionalcourseinformation,assignmentdetails,andsupplementarymaterialwillbeconveyedinclassandpostedontheUMDBlackboardsystem ELMS.