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GEOG 277S.01: Geography of Africa

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

Geography of Africa (GEOG 277S)

General Information

Time	Autumn Semester, 2002; TR, 2:10-3:30
Place	Social Sciences Building, Room 262
Instructor	Jeffrey A. Gritzner
Office	Social Sciences Building, Room 205
Office Hours	T, 10:10-12:00; R, 10:10-12:00; F, 3:10-4:00; or by appointment
Telephone	243-5626 (office); 273-0665 (home)
Required Textbooks	Achebe, Chinua. <i>Things Fall Apart</i> . New York City: Doubleday, 1959; Anchor Books, 1994.

Chinua Achebe, born in 1930, experienced many of the social consequences of the colonial period. Hence, *Things Fall Apart* provides insight into the impacts of colonization from a Nigerian Perspective. Mr. Achebe is a graduate of University College, Ibadan; served as director of External Broadcasting in Nigeria until the Biafran War; and has taught at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka, Northwestern University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Connecticut, and, currently, Bard College in New York City.

Grove, A. T. *The Changing Geography of Africa*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

A. T. Grove is an emeritus fellow of Downing College and a senior research associate in the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge. He is a highly respected Africanist with research emphases in physical and agricultural geography. Among his publications is *Rural Africa*, co-authored with Frances Klein.

Ramsay, F. Jeffress. *Global Studies: Africa*. 9th ed. Guilford, Connecticut: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2001.

Jeffress Ramsay serves as the principal of Legae Academy in Gaborone, Botswana; he serves as chairman of the Botswana Media Consultative Council; and recently received Botswana's Presidential Order of Honour. Dr. Ramsay's *Ph.D.* was conferred by Boston University.

Optional Publication *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, Massachusetts).

The *Monitor* enjoys a world-wide reputation for accuracy, fairness, and integrity. Its coverage of environmental and social issues in Africa exceeds that of other daily newspapers in the United States. A variety of student subscriptions are available.

Course Description

Geography of Africa will systematically, and sequentially, examine (i) the physical geography of the continent; (ii) ecological systems; (iii) pests and disease; (iv) African prehistory; (v) ancient and medieval history; (vi) ethnicity; (vii) traditional livelihood systems; (viii) the colonial period and the advent of independence; (ix) African political systems; (x) issues of population, migration, and urbanization; (xi) mineral extraction and petroleum production; (xii) water-resource development; (xiii) industrialization; and (xiv) agriculture.

In discussing the physical geography of Africa, emphasis will be placed upon the evolution of geological structures and relief; rock weathering, residual crusts, and stripped landscapes; coastlines; climate (atmospheric pressure, wind systems and patterns of precipitation); tropical cyclones; evaporation; climatic variability; and discussion of lakes and rivers.

Discussions of ecology will be organized with respect to the continent's principal biomes (tropical forest, tropical savannah, steppe and desert, high montane regions, and Mediterranean North Africa). Particular attention will be devoted to vegetation; soils; plants and soils as indicators; soils and topography; and fauna—with particular emphasis upon mammals, birds, and fish. Jeffrey Gritzner's *The West African Sahel* will serve as the basis of a case study in environmental change. A copy of the former is available in the Reserve Book Room of the Mansfield Library.

Consideration of pests and disease will be a continuation of the discussions concerning ecology. Together, they will provide a clearer sense of the constraints and opportunities that have influenced African social systems from prehistory to the present.

Παγε 3

Specific discussions will examine the impacts of locusts; termites; the mosquito, malaria, and other mosquito-borne diseases; the tse-tse fly and trypanosomiasis; parasitic worms; river blindness; schistosomiasis; and *Rinderpest*.

Discussions concerning prehistory will examine human evolution in Africa and the archæologically defined cultures of early man. Discussions of ancient and medieval history will variously focus upon the kingdoms of the Sudano-Sahelian zone of West Africa, North Africa, and East Africa; Asian and European exploration and influences (including Chinese, Hungarian, Danish, and other neglected influences); the slave trade; the settlement history of South Africa; and nineteenth-century colonial competition.

Issues of ethnicity form the core of *Peoples and Cultures: Africa* offered by the Department of Anthropology and will, therefore, be deëmphasized in *Geography of Africa*. However, some time will be devoted to discussions of racial tension, language and culture, society, and religion. Greater emphasis will be placed upon the examination of livelihood systems. Particular attention will be devoted to hunting and gathering; fishing; pastoralism; and cultivation-including oasis, savannah, and forest systems.

Discussions concerning the Colonial Period, the advent of independence, and contemporary political systems will assess the impacts of socio-economic change upon African livelihood systems and human welfare. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* will contribute to this discussion. A case study in neo-colonialism will be based upon developments in Somalia. Considerations of population, migration, and urbanization will include population distribution and growth; the analysis of regions of dense and sparse settlement; labor migration; and the rôle of the city in African society.

The course will conclude with considerations of modern economic activities:

The section on mineral extraction and petroleum production will focus upon the mining industry of southern Africa and the petroleum industry elsewhere in Africa.

Water-resource development will focus upon river-basin development schemes—comparing, for example, the Zambezi, Juba, Tana, Niger, and Senegal schemes. A case study will be drawn from the Juba Valley of Somalia

Considerations of industrialization will focus upon developments in mineral-rich countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe; industrialization in oil-producing countries such as

Παγς 4

Egypt, Algeria, and Nigeria; and industrialization in countries with economies based upon agriculture, such as Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Discussions of agriculture will stress traditional land tenure; introduced tenure systems; "villagization;" changes in land tenure in pastoral areas; the scale and management of modern farming systems (both with regard to large-scale farmers and small-holder schemes); and the indigenous contributions to modern African agriculture.

Evaluation

Course grades will be based upon the following:

Quizzes. Announced map quizzes will account for ten per cent of the course grade.

Critical Essay. A critical essay of approximately three double-spaced pages, including notes and references, will be due no later than **Tuesday, November 26th**, but may be submitted at any time prior to the 26th. It should be related to topics discussed in class, and should draw upon at least four sources other than the assigned readings. Stylistically, the essay should conform to the conventions contained in Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). The essay will account for roughly ten per cent of the course grade.

Examinations. There will be a mid-term examination and a final examination. The examinations will be equally weighted, each accounting for forty per cent of the course grade. The mid-term will cover chapters 1-6 of *The Changing Geography of Africa*, the West African Sahel case study, films, and class discussion. It is scheduled for **Thursday, October 24th**. The final examination will cover chapters 7-13 of *The Changing Geography of Africa*, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, films, case studies, and class discussion. It is scheduled for **3:20-5:20, Wednesday, December 18th**.

Reading Assignments and Significant Dates

Week One (September 1-7, 2002)

- A. T. Grove, *The Changing Geography of Africa*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), ch. 1: "The Physical Environment."

Week Two (September 8-14)

Παγς 5

- Grove, ch. 2: "Ecology."
- Jeffrey A. Gritzner, *The West African Sahel: Human Agency and Environmental Change*, Geography Research Paper no. 226 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pt. 1: "The Nature of Sahelian Environmental Systems."

Week Three (September 15-21)

- Gritzner, pt. 2: "The Impact of Human Activity upon Sahelian Ecosystems."
- Gritzner, pt. 3: "An Approach to the Rehabilitation of Sahelian Ecosystems." (optional)
- F. Jeffress Ramsay, *Global Studies: Africa*, 8th ed. (Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1999), pp. 155-156 (Mauritania); 164-166 (Senegal); 141-142 (The Gambia); 153-154 (Mali); 133-135 (Burkina); 157-159 (Niger); 21-23 (Chad).

Week Four (September 22-28)

- Grove, ch. 3: "Pests and Diseases."
- Ramsay, 206-213 (Johanna McGeary's "Death Stalks a Continent").

Week Five (September 29-October 5)

- Grove, ch. 6: "Africa before the Colonial Period."

Week Six (October 6-12)

- Grove, ch. 4: "Ethnicity."
- Ramsay, 198-206 (Marina Ottaway, "An End to Africa's Wars: Rethinking International Intervention;" John Stremmler, "Ending Africa's Wars"); 225-230 (Minabere Ibelema, "Nigeria: The Politics of Marginalization;" Jane Lampman, "Faith's Unbreakable Force").

Week Seven (October 13-19)

- Grove, ch. 5: "Traditional Ways of Life."

Week Eight (October 20-26)

Thursday, October 24th: Mid-Term Examination

Παγς 6

- Grove, ch. 7: "The Colonial Era and the Coming of Independence."

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York City: Doubleday, 1959; Anchor Books, 1994).

- Ramsay, Karen DeYoung, "Signs of Hope in Africa").

Week Nine (October 27-November 2)

- Grove, ch. 8: "Population, Migration, and Urbanization."

- Ramsay, 176-180 (Shanti R. Conly, "Sub-Saharan Africa At the Turning Point").

Week Ten (November 3-9)

Tuesday, November 5th: Election Day (no class meeting)

- Grove, ch. 9: "Mineral Extraction and Oil Production."

Week Eleven (November 10-16)

- Grove, ch. 10: "Water Resource Development."

Week Twelve (November 17-23)

- Grove, ch. 11: "Industrialization in Africa."

- Ramsay, 221-224 (Deborah Bräutigam, "Mauritius: Rethinking the Miracle").

Week Thirteen (November 24-30)

Tuesday, November 26th: Deadline for Critical Essays

Thursday, November 28th: Thanksgiving Day (no class meeting)

- Grove, ch. 12: "Modernizing Agriculture"

- Ramsay, 216-221 (Marc Breslow, "Freedom to Farm-and Starve-in Kenya").

Weeks Fourteen and Fifteen (December 1-14)

- Grove, ch. 13: "Crisis in Africa."

- Ramsay, 180-198 (Matt O'Keefe, "Emerging Africa;" "Africa: Prospects for the Future;" Chris Brazier, "Africa

Παγε 7

United: Not Hopeless, Not Helpless;" and "Mike Jensen's "Making the Connection: Africa and the Internet").

Week Sixteen (December 15-21)

Wednesday, December 18th (3:20-5:20): Final Examination