

Econ 4970: African Economic Development

General Course Information:

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:15-8:30pm, Physical Science Center 207C

Final Exam: Friday May 14, 10:30am-12:30pm, Physical Science Center 207C

Learning Management System: canvas.ou.edu

Instructor Information:

Name: Dr. Joan Hamory

Email: jhamory@ou.edu

Zoom Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:45-4:45pm, or by appointment

This syllabus is a contract between you and me.
By taking this course you agree to abide by the policies and rules listed within.

Course Description:

This course will examine the current state of economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and the effectiveness of policies that have sought to lower poverty, improve health and education, and increase economic growth. SSA is a vast – and extremely diverse – continent. We will explore selected topics of interest in the African micro- and macroeconomic development literatures, with discussions relating to history, politics, and socio-cultural issues where appropriate. Many topics will include case studies of particular African countries. Preparatory readings will be drawn from news articles, blogs, academic journals, texts, and popular press books. Class meetings will contain a mix of lecture and discussion. Students will be assessed on their understanding of and ability to critically evaluate the issues we study through the lens of economics, as well as their ability to produce a culminating research paper.

Prerequisites:

The OU Department of Economics requires that students have senior standing or permission of the instructor in order to take this course. Intermediate-level study of microeconomics and macroeconomics will be enormously helpful. Furthermore, this course requires a large amount of reading, and a willingness to work and learn is essential to doing well.

Administrative Information:

Email: jhamory@ou.edu

I check my email regularly and will try to respond quickly to questions. During the semester, I try to respond within 24 hours on weekdays, and 48 hours on weekends. If you are urgently awaiting my response to your email, feel free to email me again to put that message back at the top of my inbox.

Email is a great place to get *administrative* questions answered. In general, it is best to take most *subject* related questions to office hours or to lecture as economics via email can be both taxing and unclear. If your questions require very long answers, or you have many of them, I may simply ask you to stop by office hours.

Office hours: Wednesdays 2:45-4:45pm, or by appointment, via Zoom

This is a great time to get your economics questions answered! Feel free to hop on Zoom to discuss issues and questions related to assignments, exams, or lectures. My Zoom link can be found on Canvas.

Readings/Canvas:

There is one required text for this course:

- Moss, T.J. and D. Resnick (2018). *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors* (3rd edition). London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

This text is available through the OU online bookstore, or can be purchased in paper or electronic format at https://www.rienner.com/title/African_Development_Making_Sense_of_the_Issues_and_Actors_3rd_edition, or on Amazon in paper format at https://www.amazon.com/African-Development-Making-Issues-Actors-dp-1626377243/dp/1626377243/ref=dp_ob_title_bk.

We will read most of this text over the course of the semester. Additional required readings will be drawn from news articles, blogs, academic journals, texts, and popular press books; these will be posted on Canvas. Students are expected to have completed all assigned reading prior to class, and to come to class prepared for questions and discussion.

Although not required, for those of you who would like additional background on Africa, I highly recommend the following book. I will include suggested (optional) readings from this text on the reading list for those who want further background.

- Schraeder, P.J., ed. (2020). *Understanding Contemporary Africa* (6th Edition). London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

An earlier edition of this text is on reserve at Bizzell for the semester. If you would like to purchase your own copy, this text is available online, in paper or electronic format, at https://www.rienner.com/title/Understanding_Contemporary_Africa_6th_edition, or in paper format on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/Understanding-Contemporary-Africa-6th-ed/dp/1626378940>.

Requirements and Grading:

Grading:

Grades will be determined by performance on the map quiz, unannounced reading quizzes, two exams, and a culminating final research paper. Weights in your overall course grade will be assigned as follows:

Reading quizzes	15%
Map quiz	10%
Canvas discussion board	15%
Exam 1 (Midterm)	20%
Exam 2 (Final)	20%
Final research paper	20%

There is no fixed curve for this course dictating what share of students will receive what letter grade. It is theoretically possible for everyone to earn an A. It is equally possible for everyone to earn a C. I do not plan to curve final grades, but consideration for this may be adjusted during the semester.

This course can be taken Pass/Not Pass if you are otherwise free to do so. P/NP students are expected to do the same work as other students and will receive scores on all assignments. If the course grade is a C- or better, a P/NP student will receive a Pass. P/NP students must take the final and turn in a final project in order to pass the course.

Requirements:

The following is a detailed description of the course requirements.

1. *Attendance*

Although I will not keep track of attendance explicitly, *you are expected to attend class regularly and actively participate.* This class benefits greatly from your input. I recognize that your attendance may be affected at times by the

current global pandemic (or just regular life), but you will nevertheless be expected to keep up with the material and participate either online or in-person to the extent possible. I will broadcast lectures via Zoom during class time, but due to classroom technology deficiencies, those on Zoom will not be able to participate in class discussions – they will be able to observe and follow lectures, however. I will not record the class meetings, so if you want to hear them you must be present either in person or via Zoom. *Quizzes and exams will be completed in person during class time, unless you have an appropriately documented and university-excused reason why this is not possible* (following current University protocols, which may evolve during the semester). You are responsible for all announcements made and for all material covered in class, whether you are present or not.

2. Assigned Reading

You will be assigned a set of readings for each class meeting. *You are expected to complete these readings prior to class, and to be ready to discuss them.*

3. Reading Quizzes (15%)

There will be 6 *unannounced reading quizzes* during the semester. These quizzes will occur during class time, and will be closed book and closed notes. They will test your knowledge of the reading you were supposed to have completed for that class. You will receive a grade for all six quizzes (2=well done!, 1=I think you most likely did the reading but your answer isn't quite right, 0=did you even look at that reading?). *Your four highest quiz grades will count in your overall grade* (weighted for a total of 15% of your overall grade).

4. Map Quiz (10%)

On Thursday, February 4, we will have an in-class map quiz. I will hand out a blank map of sub-Saharan Africa, and you will be asked to label 10 countries. You will receive a score for this quiz based on how many countries (out of ten) that you successfully identify. *I will provide a second opportunity to (re)take this quiz on Tuesday, February 16, after lecture ends (at 8:30pm).* You do not have to take the quiz this second time, but may choose to do so. The format will be the same. I will retain whichever quiz grade is the highest from these two attempts.

5. Canvas Discussion Board (15%)

Throughout the semester, I will post discussion questions/topics on our Canvas discussion board. I will start posting these questions on the Monday of our second week of classes, and post new questions each week unless it is an exam week (or the last week of the semester), for a total of 12 weeks. *You are expected to participate in discussions for at least 6 of these weeks.* Participation involves responding directly to my question/post, or to the response of one of your classmates. To keep the discussion active and set a limit on it, you will have until the following Sunday night (so 7 days) to participate in that discussion before it is closed. *Your response should be thoughtful, informative, and contain at least 150 words* (which is less than the length of this paragraph you are currently reading). Posts that are devoid of thoughtful and informative content that seeks to respond directly to the question I posed or to the response of one of your classmates, and posts that don't meet this minimum length, will not be given credit. Credit will be given on a completed/did not complete basis.

6. Exams (20%, 20%)

There will be two exams in this class – a midterm and a final, both weighted 20% of your overall grade. Exams are closed book and closed notes, and each will cover half of the course. Exam dates will be announced well in advance, and noted on the Canvas course calendar.

It is your responsibility to take exams at the scheduled times and to make alternative arrangements in advance if you have a documented, verifiable and serious reason to miss an exam. If you miss an exam without making prior arrangements, you will only be allowed a make-up exam if you provide proof and documentation to me within 48 hours of the exam.

The exam format will be a combination of short answer, problem solving, and essay questions. Answers are graded solely upon their *content* and not upon their *intent*. This means that I cannot and will not grade you based on what you “meant to say” but instead on what you actually wrote (even if you “knew the answer but just

couldn't say it correctly"). At the same time this means that answers that are illegible, rambling, or poorly organized will not receive high marks.

7. *Final Research Paper (20%)*

You will complete a research paper on a topic of your choice (related to African economic development). Detailed information on project requirements can be found in the "Final Project Information Sheet" on Canvas.

Additional Help:

If you are struggling through the material, stop by my office hours and let's chat about it! I am here to help!

Expectations:

You can expect me to:

- Be respectful of you and your learning.
- Engage you in lecture, discussion, and other activities that facilitate learning.
- Be available for office hours, and return emails and grading in a timely fashion.

In return, I expect you to:

- Attend class on time, pay attention, and be engaged.
- Be respectful to me and to your classmates.
- Take responsibility for your learning, including completing the readings and assignments on time.
- Seek help from me when necessary.

University Policies:

Attendance Policy (Spring 2021): A temporary university policy has been established to protect the OU community by ensuring that students who are ill or required to isolate feel encouraged to remain at home. Missing a class session or other class activity due to illness or isolation will not result in a penalty for the absence, and the student will not be asked to provide formal documentation from a healthcare provider to excuse the absence. This policy is based on all students and faculty adhering to the principles of integrity, honesty, and concern for others.

Students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle pain, headache, chills, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea or who have been in close contact with others who have symptoms should:

- Remain at home to protect others
- Ensure that any needed screening has been conducted (COVID-19 Screening and Reporting Tool) and any needed treatment obtained
- Contact the instructor prior to absence or inability to participate, if possible, and provide an honest report of the reason for which you cannot attend class or complete a course activity
- Continue to complete coursework to the extent possible, using Canvas, Zoom, and other online tools
- Submit assignments electronically to the extent possible and as directed by the instructor
- Communicate with the instructor to arrange modifications to deadlines or work requirements or reschedule exams or other important course activities, when it is necessary

Students may "attend" class via Zoom while they are on quarantine, as long as they are feeling up to it. I will live Zoom class meetings, but will not record them. If you miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to gather notes from a classmate and otherwise keep up with the material that was covered during class.

Masking Policy (Spring 2021): As outlined by the University of Oklahoma's Chief COVID Officer, until further notice, employees, students, and visitors of the OU community will be mandated to wear masks (1)

when they are inside University facilities and vehicles and (2) when they are outdoors on campus and social distancing of at least six feet is not possible. For the well-being of the entire university community it is important that everyone demonstrate the appropriate health and safety behaviors outlined in the University Mandatory Masking Policy (<https://www.ou.edu/coronavirus/masking-policy>). As this mandate includes all campus classrooms, please make sure you are wearing your mask while in class. If you do not have a mask or forgot yours, see the professor for available masks. If you have an exemption from the Mandatory Masking Policy, please see the professor to make accommodations before class begins. If and where possible, please make your professor aware of your exemption and/or accommodation prior to arriving in class. If a student is unable or unwilling to wear a mask and has not made an accommodation request through the ADRC, they will be instructed to exit the classroom.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to conform to college-level standards of ethics, academic integrity, and academic honesty. For further clarification please see: <http://integrity.ou.edu>. In particular for this course, to be fair to students who put in hard work to succeed, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of 0 on the assignment/exam. In addition, *I will report* incidences of cheating to the Student Judicial Affairs, which may in turn administer additional punishment.

Religious Observance: It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays, without penalty.

Reasonable Accommodation: Students requiring academic accommodation should contact the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center for assistance at (405) 325-3852 or TDD: (405) 325-4173. For more information please see the Accessibility and Disability Resource Center website <http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues: Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html for commonly asked questions.

Title IX Resources: For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24.7, counseling services, mutual no contact orders, scheduling adjustments and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office 405-325-2215 (8-5, M-F) or OU Advocates 405-615-0013 (24.7) to learn more or to report an incident.

Tentative List of Topics Covered During the Semester:

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| • Intro to African Economic Development | • Property Rights |
| • Measuring Economic Development | • Agriculture |
| • Modern Economic Growth Theory | • Urbanization and Migration |
| • Inference in Economic Development | • Health and Nutrition |
| • The Lasting Impact of Initial Conditions | • Education |
| • The Legacy of Colonialism and Slavery | • Demographics and Population Policy |
| • Ethnic Divisions and Politics | • Household Distribution, Gender, & Violence |
| • Corruption | • Foreign Aid |
| • War | |