



Department of Geography & Geoinformation Science

GGG 333-002/ GGS 333 DL / GGS 533-001

Spring 2021

The Geography of North Africa and the Middle East

Class Meets on Tuesdays: 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm (f2f) – unless otherwise stated

Name	:	Maction Komwa, PhD
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Credit hours	:	3.00
Virtual Office Hours:	M F (1:30 pm – 2:30 pm)	

Teaching Assistant

Name : Nana Ama Obeng Nti
Office : TBA
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Instructor’s Virtual Office hours: All appointments for this semester are currently being conducted virtually either by phone or through Zoom. You can check my availability and make an appointment through Mason Navigate link: <https://gmucampus.eab.com/>. Follow the instructions and choose “Faculty office hours” for the meeting type.

Course Description

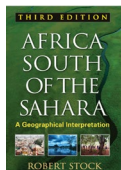
The course provides a comprehensive and systematic introduction to the geography of sub-Saharan with emphasize on Africa’s culture, distribution of natural resources, and regional geography. The course will further explore how “the Africa story” is told by the media, scholars and policymakers and how you will tell the same story upon finishing this course. The course will explore the uneven geography of poverty and the spatial disparity in health systems across the region including some selected specific case studies.

Course Objectives:

Upon course completion, you will be able to:

- describe various geographic features of the Sub-Saharan Africa, including an overview of the physical, cultural, political, demographic, health and economic geographies of the region.
- evaluate how geographical concepts such as ‘place’, ‘scale’ and historical/anthropological theories of human-environment relations’ could be applied to specific issues in the region.
- examine economic, social, and environmental consequences of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- critically examine what you hear about the Sub-Saharan Africa and understand some of the many perspectives that exist on the region so that you can critically evaluate what you hear.
- develop critical thinking skills through cartography/map reading, data analysis, writing and oral presentation

Required Textbook and Instructional Materials



Africa South of the Sahara, Third Edition: A Geographical Interpretation

Robert Stock, 2012

ISBN-13: 978-1606239926

ISBN-10: 1606239929

Instructional Methodology

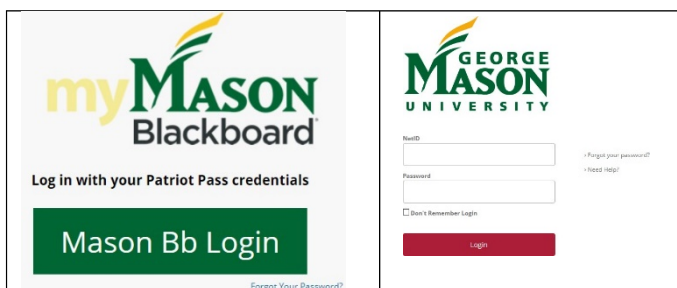
- This is a traditional – hybrid/online course meaning – an instructional delivery method which combines face-to-face/ hybrid and online for those registered as GGS DL students. Our scheduled meeting day and time – Tuesdays (4:30 – 7:10 pm).

Technology Requirements

- As a student participating in this traditional-hybrid course, or considering taking this type of course, it is expected that you have the following:
 - Internet Connection
 - Access to high speed connection such as Cable, DSL, or Satellite is recommended
 - Internet Browser Support include:
 - Internet Explorer latest version | Safari version latest version
 - Google Chrome latest version | Firefox latest version
 - Access to software
 - You will need to have access to the most up to date:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader. <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>;
 - Windows Media Player:
 - <https://windows.microsoft.com/enus/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
 - MS Word, Excel, etc.
- Required equipment necessary for this course thus including hardware and software (e.g. MS word, etc.), speakers, microphones, or webcams, etc. are the responsibility of the student.

Learning Management Systems

- Blackboard is our course management system which provides access to course materials, assignments, and class discussions. You will log in to Blackboard using your George Mason username and password through this link: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>.



- If you have computer problems, please contact ITS Support Center <http://itservices.gmu.edu>; Email: support@gmu.edu; | Phone: 703-993-8870.

Course Communication

- Students are required to regularly check their George Mason email/Blackboard for announcements or updates related to the course.
- All students are expected to use their George Mason email account for all course communication. I will not acknowledge any email that is sent through other platforms.
- You should feel free to send me email if you have any questions regarding something that you do not understand. Although I will not instantly answer your e-mail, I will reply to your e-mail within 24-48 hours and if you don't get my response please feel free to remind me or ask to confirm if I have received your email.
- Please do not wait until the day of the work is due to ask questions.

Daily Health Checks [If you plan to come on campus]

- Complete your daily [Mason COVID Health Check](#) online health survey before coming to campus or leaving your residence hall;
- This tool will produce a green, yellow, or red status that each individual should be prepared to display to confirm their fitness to be on campus. The color codes mean:
 - **Green** – Cleared to enter campus and classrooms. No report of symptoms or known exposure to someone with COVID-19 symptoms.
 - **Yellow** – NOT cleared to enter campus or classrooms due to either exhibiting symptoms, awaiting a COVID test result, or reporting exposure to someone who has. Until you are cleared to enter campus, please quarantine at home and stay away from campus.
 - **Red** – NOT cleared to enter campus, with emergency symptoms requiring immediate medical attention. Seek immediate medical attention and stay away from campus until cleared to return to campus.
- Quarantine at home if your health survey produces a yellow or red condition.
- Be prepared to show your daily green health status upon entering any classroom; and
- Practice all enhanced hygiene practices, including wearing a face covering that covers the nose and mouth, washing hands, maintaining at least six feet of physical distance, and staying away from campus and getting tested if you feel any symptoms consistent with **COVID-19**.

Course Assignments and Grading Breakdown

Students are expected to submit high quality assignments during this course via the Blackboard. All assignments are to be completed according to the dates outlined in the syllabus.

Description
Short Writing Assignments (3) – 15% <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These papers will consist of reaction to topics discussed in class, series of movies, and documentaries, analytical, position or argumentative issues. More details will be provided in class.
Map Assignment (3) – 10% <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will build your map literacy and ability to analyze spatial information through these assignments. Knowing geographical location, place, regions, movement of objects from one location to another, etc. are part of the geography themes that you will learn from these activities.• You will then be able to understand the spatial nature of geography and how each place, or region is examined, analyzed, and compared with other places or regions.• You will be able to demonstrate understanding of major physical features (e.g. lakes, rivers, mountains, etc.), the location of each country, as well as all capital cities in sub-Saharan Africa.
Discussion Forum Posts (6) – 5% <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will be a discussion forum beginning week 2 – through week # 12. I will lead the discussion by posting a topic related to the concepts and weekly reading(s) or assigned documentary/movie.• You should demonstrate engagement with course readings by your own contribution through this participation /discussion forum.• You will satisfy the discussion if you first post your own thoughts about the subject then respond to the viewpoints of other classmates. Your contribution will be rated according to the content, critical thinking and concept application based on the criteria outlined in the grading rubric. All discussion postings (initial and response to classmates) will be graded on a 5-point scale, 5 being excellent (Total of 10 points). To earn possible full points, you will need follow the instructions and grading rubric and submit your post on time.• Through these online discussions, you will have the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of another person’s perspective on the subject matter being discussed for that specific week.

<p>Exams [% will vary see below]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be three non-cumulative, <i>closed book</i>) for undergraduates and 2 Exams for graduate students (NO FINALS for Grads). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Each exam will contain objective (multiple-choice) and short-answer questions, Fill-in the blank questions for GGS 325 students. Grad Students will take short-answer and essay type questions.</i> ○ EXAM I [10%]; EXAM II [15%]; FINAL EXAM 25% - GGS 333 Students (Cumulative) ○ EXAM I [10%] EXAM II [15%]
<p>Selected end of Chapter Quizzes (3) – 5%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of the Chapters will be selected for formative assessment. Quizzes are designed to ensure that students have read and understood the readings, practice and prepare you for exams, and help you revise the key points from the chapter before taking the exam.
<p>Project Presentation for GGS 333 Students Only – 15%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Profile Research Project – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students will demonstrate their understanding and application of key concepts discussed in this course through a semester project. Students will develop a “Portfolio” for a Sub-Saharan Africa country of their choice. This project can be completed as an individual project or group of 2 members. ○ Full details of the project will be discussed in class and posted through the Blackboard.
<p>Project Research Paper for Graduate Students – 25%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate students will demonstrate their writing skills through a research paper. Research paper will address any topic dealing with domestic political issues in Sub-Saharan Africa or any issue that has been discussed in class and the student would like to extensively expand beyond the readings and the textbook. Detailed info will be posted through the Blackboard. The research paper will have 15 pages with 10 peer-reviewed articles; double-spacing in APA format.
<p>Project Presentation for Graduate Students – 15%</p>

Grades will be assigned based on the distribution scheme below

Range	Letter Grade	Grade description	Range	Letter Grade	Grade description
93 - 100	A	Excellent	77 - 79	C+	Satisfactory
90 - 92	A-	Very Good	70 - 76	C	Satisfactory
87 - 89	B+	Good with merit	60 - 69	D	Just OK
83 - 86	B	Good	<60	F	Failure
80 - 82	B-	Above satisfactory			

Late/Make-up Assignments Policy

- Due dates for all assignments are provided in the course schedule as well as the Blackboard. Unless otherwise specified all assignments are due on those dates. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the assignments are submitted by the established due date.
- Assignments turned in **within seven (7) days will result in a 25% deduction** for the assignment. Assignments **later that seven (7) days will result in a 50% deduction** for the assignment.
- Technical excuses ("computer system error", "didn't submit correctly on Blackboard", etc.) will not be accepted as reasons for late work.
- In some subjects/assignments no late assignments will be accepted for credit. Such assignments include discussion forum and end of chapter quiz.
- No make-up Exams or extensions on assignments will be given without a valid reason that is supported by documented evidence.
- Work is NOT accepted via e-mail, unless the instructions specifically say otherwise. Submit your work through the Blackboard accordingly.

A “Life Happens Pass”

You will be given a “Life Happens Pass” for only 1 written assignment. This kind of arrangement is due to the unprecedented period that everyone is going through (COVID-19). Therefore, an automatic 72-hour extension will be given as long as you inform your instructor in writing.

Student Responsibilities:

- Review the course material and follow the course calendar.
- Work at full pace to avoid missing class activities.
- Be active participants in discussion forum throughout the course period.
- Respect the privacy of other classmates and the instructor in this virtual classroom.
- Re-read your responses in the discussion forum carefully before postings them.
- Express differences of opinion in a polite and sensible way.
- Keep an open mind to the constructive criticism from classmates and use it to improve your work.
 - We are in this class to share information and learning from each other.
 - By sharing and discussing each other’s ideas, you will be able to examine your own thoughts and feelings hence, making the course interesting and enjoyable!
- Use good grammar and spelling in all your assignments and discussions and write your messages in formal language.

Course Communication & Privacy

- Students are required to regularly check their MasonLive email account /Blackboard for announcements or updates related to the course.
- Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.
- You should feel free to send me email if you have any questions regarding something that you do not understand. Although I will not instantly answer your e-mail, I will reply to your e-mail within 24-48 hours and if you don’t get my response please feel free to remind me or ask to confirm if I have received your email.
- Please do not wait until the day of the work is due to ask questions.

Academic integrity: *The following statement is adapted from the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.* No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code, which you can read fully at the Office for Academic Integrity (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>). The Honor Code Pledge reads as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

The Mason Honor Code defines cheating, plagiarism, stealing, and lying. It is expected that you understand these definitions. If you have any doubts about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, stealing, or lying in the academic context, please see your professor. Acts of academic dishonesty in this course may be penalized with failure of either the work in question or the entire course.

Disability Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for

detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Diversity and Inclusion

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability, marital status, pregnancy status, or genetic information. George Mason University shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

Student Privacy

George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University’s student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy>.

Recording and/or sharing class materials

Some kinds of participation in online study sites violate the Mason Honor code: these include accessing exam or quiz questions for this class; accessing exam, quiz, or assignment answers for this class; uploading of any of the instructor’s materials or exams; and uploading any of your own answers or finished work. Always consult your syllabus and your professor before using these sites. As a faculty member who will spend a lot of time creating course material for classroom use, unauthorized sharing of any of my course materials outside the class would violate important ethical standards.

Undergraduate Course Repetition

Beginning fall 2018, there is a limit of three graded attempts for this course. A “W” does not count as a graded attempt. Please see AP. 1.3.4 in the University Catalog and consult with your academic advisor if you have any questions.

Student Support Services

George Mason University has several academic support and other resources to facilitate your success. Some of these resources are presented below:

- i. Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.gmu.edu/>
- ii. Learning Services, University Career Services: <http://careers.gmu.edu/>
- iii. The Writing Center <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- iv. University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- v. University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>

Tentative Course Calendar | Weekly Schedule
 GGS 333-002 | | GGS 333DL | GGS 533-001

Week	Lecture Topic	Coursework
Week 1: Jan 26	Course Introduction, Course Organization and Expectations	Self-Introduction (No grade) - Due Sunday, 11:59 pm
Week 2: Feb 2	The Map of Africa and Major Geographical Regions	Read Chapter/Unit 1-3 Discussion 1: - Initial Post due Thursday - Comments due Sunday
Week 3: Feb 9	Physical Environment of Sub-Saharan Africa	Read Unit 7-9 Map Assignment #1: - Due Sunday, 11:59 pm - Practice Quiz 1 – due Friday of Week 3
Week 4: Feb 16	Africa in Historical Perspective and Political Landscapes	Read Chapter/Unit 10-12 Short Writing Assignment #1: TBA - Due Sunday, 11:59 pm Discussion 2: - Initial Post due Thursday - Comments due Sunday
Week 5: Feb 23	Population Dynamics and Migration Exam Review	Read Chapter/Unit 13-15 Map Assignment #2: - Due Sunday, 11:59 pm Practice Quiz 2 – due Friday of Week 5
Week 6: March 2	Rural Economies [Land, Agriculture and Food Security] Exam 1	Read Chapter/Unit 19-21 Exam 1
Week 7: March 9	Rural Economies [Land, Agriculture and Food Security]	Read Chapter/Unit 19-21 Discussion 3: - Initial Post due Thursday - Comments due Sunday Country Profile (GGS 333) /Research Proposal GGS 533 – due Sunday
Week 8: March 16	Urban Economies and Society	Read Chapter/Unit 22-24 Short Writing Assignment #2: - Due Sunday, 11:59 pm
Week 9: March 23	Resource Extraction and Development Exam II - Review	Read Chapter/Unit 25-27 Discussion 4: - Initial Post due Thursday - Comments due Sunday Practice Quiz 3 – due Friday of Week 9
Week 10: March 30	Climate Change Exam II	Additional articles will be posted through the Blackboard Exam II
Week 11: April 6	Social Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa	Read Chapter/Unit 28-30 Map Assignment #3: Discussion 5: - Initial Post due Thursdays - Comments due Sunday Draft – GGS 533 Students only

Week	Lecture/Assignment Topic	Coursework
Week 12: April 13	Future of Sub-Saharan Africa	<p>Short Writing Assignment #3:</p> <p>Conclusion of the textbook Additional articles will be posted</p> <p>Discussion 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial Post due Thursdays - Comments due Sunday <p>Peer-Review due Sunday 11:59 pm</p>
Week 13: April 20	Project Presentation	- [Grad students continue writing your research paper – address feedback from peer-reviewer and your instructor)
Week 14: April 27	Project Presentation Final Exam Review – GGS 333 Students Only	Final Research Paper – Grad Students – due Sunday of Week 14
Finals Week	Final exam You cannot take the final examination earlier than the scheduled date by the Register’s Office. Plan your time accordingly.	Final exam (GGS 333 Students only) - May 6 (4:30 pm – 7:10 pm)
<p><i>Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.</i></p> <p>Highlighted in yellow are the weeks that we will meet in person at campus</p>		