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**Economics 499**  
**Seminar in Economics: Economics of Africa**  
**Spring 2015**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Jenny Minier

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Course website: <http://sites.google.com/site/UKeco499/>  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2.00–3.00 P.M.

**Overview and Motivation:** This is a seminar class on the economics of sub-Saharan Africa. We'll cover topics including history (slave trades, colonialism, civil wars), politics and democratization, health, migration, foreign aid, corruption, natural resources, and education, and more, in the context of Africa and the economic development of African countries.

**GCCR:** The assignments in this class satisfy the University GCCR (Graduation Composition and Communication Requirement). The paper and presentations will be discussed in more detail at the appropriate time during the semester.

**Readings:** There is not a textbook for the class. We'll rely on a variety of sources for reading material, including journal articles, news articles, and other sources. Readings will be posted on the website.

**Exams:** There will be two exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. They are scheduled for **February 26** and **April 16**. The exams are weighted equally, and the second exam is not cumulative. Makeup exams will not be given — you must contact me as soon as possible if you must miss an exam for an official university function, religious observance, or if you are physically unable to take an exam. There is no final exam in the class.

**Country Paper:** There will be a final paper (15–18 pages) in which you will analyze an economic issue in a particular African country, incorporating some economic analysis. This paper will be worth 25% of your final course grade, and will be due on **Friday, May 1** by 5.00 P.M. We'll talk more about the paper later in the semester; there will be additional deadlines (choosing a topic, turning in an outline, turning in a draft) associated with the paper, and part of your grade on the paper will relate to these intermediate steps. You will receive feedback on each stage of the process.

**Map Quiz:** On **Thursday, January 29**, during the last 20 minutes of class, you'll take a quiz on which you'll label the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This counts as 5% of your final course grade. I'll hand out the map on the first day of class, and more information will be on the course website.

**Presentations:** There will be two sets of presentations. The first will be the week of February 17–19, and will consist of group presentations introducing the rest of the class to a specific country, its economy, and particular issues facing the country. The second set of presentations will be the last two weeks of class (April 21–30), and each group will discuss a particular topic of their choosing related to the economics of Africa (which may be related to your paper). The first presentations will be 20 minutes long each, with about 4 students in each group; group sizes will vary more for the second presentations, but the guideline is again 5 minutes per group member. There is also a peer feedback component before each presentation to the class. For each presentation, you'll each turn in a two-page writeup about what you've learned, the feedback that you received, how your group worked together (who did what, and whether you thought that was fair). Your grade will be a combination of my grade for the group presentation and the writeup. If the consensus of the group is that you did not participate fully, your grade will be reduced accordingly. Each of these presentations is worth a total of 10% of your final course grade.

**Assignments and Participation:** Periodically, there will be assignments relating to the course material. Some of these assignments will have a required participation component. Together, these will contribute 10% of your final course grade.

**Summary of Grading:**

2 Exams	20% each
Paper	25%
2 Group Presentations	10% each
Map Quiz	5%
Assignments	10%

**Key Dates:**

Thursday, January 29	Map quiz
February 17–19	Country presentations
Thursday, February 26	Exam #1
March 16–20	Spring break
Thursday, April 16	Exam #2
April 21–30	Topic presentations (and other material)
Friday, May 1	Papers due by 5 p.m.

**Topics, in Approximate Order:**

Introduction, history, and geography  
Economic background  
Natural resources  
Civil wars  
Ethnic diversity  
Corruption  
Foreign aid  
Microfinance  
Health  
Millennium Villages  
Migration  
International trade and finance