

DSS 5311 Strategic Survey of Africa (online)
CRN: 35281
Summer 2021

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Office Hours: Please contact me through the Messages system of the Blackboard classroom or alternatively via my UTEP email address or telephone number listed above.

Course Description: This course is a detailed and systematic examination of the key military strategic issues affecting Africa in a historical and cultural context. A heavy focus will be placed on the role of this region in national security policy and military strategy, especially with aspect to securing access to strategic resources. The course will also consider the causes and implications of weak and failing states in sub-Saharan Africa and the measures that are taken to prevent or reverse state failure.

Course Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- Comprehend the key transnational and regional security issues affecting Africa and the international community.
- Analyze the changing role that nations in Africa play in influencing international security.
- Analyze and articulate the dynamics resulting in the increasing importance of Africa as a strategic priority in U.S. national interests.

Course Requirements:

Requirement	Percentage of Course Grade
Discussion Thread Participation (occurs in weeks with no written assignment)	20%
First Essay (6–8 pages)	20%
Midterm PowerPoint Presentation (10–15 slides)	20%
Final Essay (12–15 pages)	40%

Course Due Dates:

First Essay	Week Two	Sunday night at 9:00 p.m. MST
PowerPoint Presentation	Week Four	Sunday night at 9:00 p.m. MST
Final Essay	Week Seven	Wednesday night at midnight MST

Any late assignments will be penalized five points for each day late. This includes Discussion Thread primary postings, which are due in weeks with no written assignment by Friday night at midnight Mountain Standard Time.

Course Organization:

Lesson One: **Setting the Context for Security in Africa and Weak and Fragile States**

Before analyzing the various security issues in Africa today, one must begin by understanding the general context for security in Africa. Africa is a large continent composed of over fifty countries and nearly one billion people. In addition, Africa has a cultural diversity that is unmatched anywhere in the world. Africa also has a historical legacy of colonialism. More recently, Africa has emerged as a region of strategic importance for the United States. All these factors influence security issues in Africa.

A fundamental security issue in Africa is the prevalence of weak and fragile states. Year after year, the majority of the weakest states in the world are located on the African continent. The twelve most common measures of weak and fragile states are demographic pressures, large numbers of refugees, high levels of group grievances, human flight, uneven development, economic decline, lack of state legitimacy, inadequate public services, human rights abuses, lack of security or security apparatus oversight, high levels of factions, and external intervention. By these measures, many African countries are either weak or fragile.

Lesson Two: **Ethnic Conflict and Civil Wars**

Warfare has had a constant presence in Africa. Much of this fact stems from ethnic conflict between rival groups. Not only is there significant cultural diversity in Africa, but the colonial legacy also left Africa with political boundaries that did not match the cultural affinities actually represented by the people in those states. The result has been largely artificial states that attempt to combine diverse and sometimes antagonistic groups into one population. Such a situation has led to significant ethnic conflict and repeated civil wars.

Lesson Three: **Natural Resources and Environmental Security**

Africa has a plethora of natural resources and a diverse range of environments. Africa has significant oil, gold, silver, copper, diamonds, iron, and uranium, just to name a few. Africa also has multiple environments such as tropical rain forests, woodland savannas, deserts, and coastal forests. Unfortunately, Africa has not been able to maximize the benefits from such abundant resources, leading many analysts conclude that Africa evidences a “natural resource curse.”

Lesson Four: **Terrorism**

Terrorism in Africa is not a new phenomenon. For instance, in 1998 terrorists bombed the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. In addition, al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliates have operated in Africa for much of the past decade. As a result, Africa has become a critical location in U.S. counterterrorism efforts. More recently, new forms of terrorism in Africa have emerged. Al Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria have become the predominant African terrorist threats.

Lesson Five: **Piracy and Maritime Security**

Piracy off the coast of Africa has increased significantly over the past two decades. It has resulted in the overall degradation of maritime security in the region. Since significant commercial shipping routinely transits through major trade routes just off the coast of Africa,

countering piracy and ensuring maritime security there has become an important priority for African nations, the United States, and the international community.

Lesson Six: **Food Security**

No understanding of security issues in Africa is complete without an appreciation of food security in the region. Food security impacts Africa like no other continent in the world. Many of the most food insecure countries in the world are located in Africa. Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Angola all have suffered from chronic food shortages. The irony in many cases is that African agriculture is often quite robust. Other structural factors such as politics, failed government policies, insufficient storage facilities, and inadequate transportation networks all have a detrimental impact on food security in Africa.

Lesson Seven: **Assessment**

This week is set aside for students to complete a 12–15 pages essay assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to measure student mastery of the course objectives.

Course Required Textbooks:

Harbeson, John W. and Donald Rothchild, eds. *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*. New York: Routledge, 2017. Electronic version available.

<https://www.amazon.com/Africa-World-Politics-Constructing-Political/dp/081335028X>

Herbst, Jeffrey. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Electronic version available.

<https://www.amazon.com/States-Power-Africa-Comparative-International/dp/0691164142>

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Course Bibliography and Required Readings:

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Gaiha, Raghav, "Does the Right to Food Matter?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 40 (October 2003): 4269–4276, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4414110>

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Improving Food Security in West and Central Africa," *IFRCRCS* video, July 6, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAnPQZjipam>

Harbeson, John W. and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order* (New York: Routledge, 2017), electronic version available, <https://www.amazon.com/Africa-World-Politics-Constructing-Political/dp/081335028X>

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Williams, Paul D., "State Failure in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Responses," <http://www2.gwu.edu/~elliott/assets/docs/research/williamseuropastatefailure09.pdf>

Young, Crawford, "The Heritage of Colonialism" in John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics: Reforming Political Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2008), electronic version available, <http://www.amazon.com/Africa-World-Politics-Reforming-ebook/dp/B001QA4TH8>

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Course content is delivered via the internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Please ensure that your UTEP email account is working and that you have access to the internet and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

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- Always consider your audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

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