

EM SC 100 (First-Year Seminar), Section 006

Georesources, Poverty and Power: A Close Look at Africa

Fall Semester, 2007



10 Deike, Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30 - 3:45pm
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Required Texts

No text book is required. Most material is available on ANGEL.

Course Description

Gold, diamonds, oil, sapphires, and copper are among the many georesources that are exploited on the African continent. Yet, much of the wealth from these resources flows into the pockets of national elites and multinational corporations while the large majority of local populations continue to live in poverty and without access to basic educational and health infrastructure. Minerals that are used in our laptops and cell phones today have fueled environmental destruction, conflict, and even war. This interdisciplinary seminar will take a case-study approach to assess the geographic, social, economic, and political dimensions that surround resource extraction, wealth, and power. In small groups, each focusing on one particular country, students will identify the major local, national, and international stakeholders that are involved in the new scramble for Africa. Students will also develop scenarios to explore potential future visions for resource management. Group projects, presentations, and discussions will form a critical component of this seminar. Throughout the course, the instructor will assist students in enhancing their writing, speaking, and debating skills. At the end of the semester, students will submit one paper that describes their most ambitious vision for socially just and environmentally sustainable georesource extraction for one of the case-study countries.

Objectives

The EMS First-Year Seminar is a required course for all entering EMS first-year students at the University Park campus. The Seminar is a three-credit course designed to encourage students to begin the important process of "thinking for a living." We will use a mix of lectures, readings, class discussions, movies, role games, and presentations to introduce you to some of the most pressing issues surrounding resource extraction and poverty in today's world, with a clear focus on Africa.

The EMS First-Year Seminar aims to:

- Promote critical reading and thinking, and help students develop effective written and oral arguments;
- Encourage individual and group learning and provide students the experience of being part of a cohort of scholars with similar interests and a common focus;
- Expose students to EMS interests and activities through early involvement in the College;
- Provide at least one "friend" on the faculty in EMS to whom they can go for advice outside of the normal academic advising channels (this will be me!);
- Foster some of the practical skills necessary for academic life;
- Challenge students to think about some of the major issues facing the world today, and the role that science and technology play in defining and addressing these issues.

In Section 006, we also intend to:

- Learn about Africa - its resources, people, struggles, and hopes;
- Understand some of the economic, environmental, social, and political dimensions of georesource exploitation;
- Learn about the 'hidden' linkages between our modern lives and poverty and exploitation in several African countries;
- Evaluate future visions for more just and sustainable georesource management;
- Examine what can be done at the local, national, and international level to enhance livelihoods, preserve the environment, and pursue economic growth;
- Understand the role of scientists and academics in addressing and solving real world problems in georesource management, today and in the future.

How are we going to do all this?

Philosophy: All first-year seminars emphasize reading and discussion, with a strong focus on writing and communications skills. Group discussions and group projects are a fundamental aspect of the course. Much of the work we do in class will be done in teams or groups of four. The idea here is to demonstrate that you can learn more effectively and be more innovative and productive if you work as a team. You will share skills, knowledge, and creative ideas so that your teammates will help you develop the skills needed for your individual projects. Don't be shy sharing what you know! Your colleagues will also serve as peer reviewers of your written work and oral presentations and discussion skills. Effective communication (being well informed, articulate, and constructive) is an important component of this class. I expect you to be as active, critical, productive, and passionate as you can!

Practical skills: If you have little experience with putting together powerpoint presentation, developing web pages, or discussing critical issues in front of a camera, don't worry. We will have several resource people from the college who will join us during the semester and share their insights into speech-making processes, writing and editing skills, web pages and ePortfolios, library resources, and race relations. You will have had sufficient time to practice these multiple skills by the time you need them.

Finally, this is YOUR class, and I want to know how it's going. Let me know if you have constructive suggestions on how to improve it!



Assignments and Grading

1) Writing skills:

- Three (3) written assignments, the first two will include feedback from the instructor and/or TA and peer critique to improve your writing skills and prepare for the 3rd and final piece of writing [100 pts each];

2) Speaking skills:

- 10-minute presentation on key players in resource-extraction in Africa; these include African, European, and American business men, political leaders, writers, and celebrities (pairs) [100 pts];
- TV debate between a US celebrity and a Chinese ambassador on resource extraction in Sudan (individual) [100 pts];
- Poster presentation on 4 scenarios for one selected case study country (group of 4) [50 pts];
- Website presentation - your message to peers, friends, and family (individual) [50 pts];

3) Design and visual expression:

- Flyer on cell phones and Congo (individual) [50pts]
- Poster scenarios for one selected case study country (group of 4) [100 pts];
- Website presentation - your message to peers, friends, and family (individual) [100 pts]

4) Class participation and short assignments:

- Discussion groups and role games [50 pts];
- Short assignments (research, data management) [100 pts].

Final grades are based on a weighted average for the term. Grade cutoff points are as follows:

A = 93-100%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D+ = 67-69%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D = 63-66%
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%
			F = <60

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform in class, please see me early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism and cheating are both academic crimes. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on an exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension from the college. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating will be reported to the provost in line with recognized university procedures. Any violations of academic integrity will be dealt with following the University's procedures, which are described in detail at <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>

Schedule for Class Topics, Readings, and Assignments

The assigned readings form the conceptual basis of the class and are mandatory! For each class session, read the assigned readings before coming to class - we'll need them for discussions. Please note that this schedule might be subject to change.

Week	Date	Class Topics	Readings (have them done for Tuesdays)	Assignments for Tuesdays (T) and Thursdays (Th)
1	Aug 28	Course introduction Gems and other precious resources Kanye West-Ft.Jay-Z Diamonds from Sierra Leone	None	None
	Aug 30	Africa's georesources Human development Report 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ferguson, 2007. The bottom line (NYT July 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who's Kanye West? (lyrics!) (Th) Countries in Africa (location, capital, georesources) (Th) What's your birthstone + occurring worldwide? (Th)
2	Sept 4	Tim Robinson (Excel, photoshop, web page design)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collier, 2004. Natural resources and conflict in Africa. Crimes of War. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 4 precious gemstones - occurrences in Africa (T)
	Sept 6	Jill Weber (communication, speech making, powerpoint)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Botswana - 5 steps to success? (Th)
3	Sept 11	History of diamonds in Africa Bling: Consequences and Repercussions (documentary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davies, 2004. Dangerous diamonds. Financial Scandals. Gberie, 2006. Diamonds without maps. ZNET. Global Witness (Combating conflict diamonds and US retail jewelers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who was Cecil Rhodes? (T) Role game "Movers and shakers in the diamond chain" (T)
	Sept 13	Conflict/blood diamonds The Kimberley Process		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who is Charles Taylor? (Th) Discussion: Should we stop wanting/buying diamond engagement rings? (Th)
4	Sept 18	Blood Diamonds (movie, Edward Zwick, 2005; part I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campbell, 2002. Blood diamonds. Amnesty Magazine. UN Security Council, 2005. Resolution 1643 (Côte d'Ivoire), United Nations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal diary (Danny Archer, Solomon Vandy, or Maddy Bowen) (Th)
	Sept 20	Blood Diamonds (movie, part II)		
5	Sept 25	Joe Schall (writing and editing skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conrad, 1899 (2005). Heart of Darkness. Braeckman, 2004. The looting of the Congo. New Internationalist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who was King Leopold II? (Th)
	Sept 27	The looting of the Congo (and other places....)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who was Mobutu Sese Seko? (Th) <u>1st writing assignment due</u> (On Bling) (Th)!
6	Oct 2	Coltan, gorillas, and cell phones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harden, 2001. A black mud from Africa helps power the new economy (NYT) Barouski, 2007: 'Bloods minerals' in the Kivu Provinces of the DRC. Global Policy Forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flyer on cell phones and Congo - what can you do?? (Th) http://recyclemycellphone.org
	Oct 4	Still two cell phones? You don't dig for Cassiterite, do you? Congo's tin soldiers (documentary 2005) Guest: Darrell Fuhriman (E-waste, discarded donations)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewrite 1st writing assignment (Th)
7	Oct 9	All that glitters is not gold: Gold mining facts + community relations (examples from Ghana)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GoldenStar, Annual report 2006 Harkinson, 2003. Confessions of a dangerous mine. GRIST. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who is Sir Sam Jonah? (T)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tschakert & Singha, 2007. Contaminated identities. <i>Geoforum</i>. 	
	Oct 11	Small-scale mining and mercury Guest: Raymond Tutu		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research No Dirty Gold http://www.nodirtygold.org/home.cfm (Th)
8	Oct 16	Oil, environmental racism, and the struggle of the Niger Delta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omeje, 2005. Oil and conflict in the Niger Delta. <i>New Political Economy</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who was Ken Saro-Wiwa? (T)
	Oct 18	Oil - The new scramble for Africa?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Economist, 2004. A new scramble (Nov 25) Frynas & Paulo, 2007. A new scramble for African oil? Historical, political, and business perspectives. <i>African Affairs</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>2nd writing assignment due!</u> (Th) (Role of scientists in promoting resource extraction in Africa) Class discussion: Should the US double or cut their aid to Africa? (Th)
9	Oct 23	Linda Musser (EMS library tour)	None	None
	Oct 25	Poverty and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics from the World Bank and UNDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excel graphs (HDR 06) (Th) http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/statistics/data/
10	Oct 30	Africa's Silk Road (Or: We love China!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hilsum, 2006. We love China. <i>Granta</i> 92. Pan, 2007. China, Africa, and oil. <i>Council on Foreign Relations</i> (Jan 26) Council on Foreign Relations, 2007. Is Chinese investment good for Africa? Cooper, 2007 : Darfur collides with Olympics, and China yields (NYT April 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P - Who is Mia Farrow? (T) http://www.miafarrow.org/
	Nov 1	China, aid, and human rights in Africa (Or: 'Genocide Olympics')		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV debate between Farrow/ Spielberg and the Chinese Ambassador to Sudan (Th) Rewrite 2nd writing assignment (Th)
11	Nov 6	Discussion filmed TV debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MMSD, IISD, 2002. Learning from the future: Alternative scenarios from the North American Mining Industry 	None
	Nov 8	Intro to scenario development Outline scenario axes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select one case study country
12	Nov 13	Scenario development II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group work in class Group work on computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop story lines
	Nov 15	Scenario development III		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline poster
13	Nov 20	Thanksgiving - No class!	None	None
	Nov 22	Thanksgiving - No class!		None
14	Nov 27	Poster presentations (I)	None	None
	Nov 29	Poster presentations (II)		None
15	Dec 4	Tim Robinson (web page design)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>3rd writing assignment due!</u> (T) (Your vision for socially just and environmentally sustainable georesource extraction, one country)
	Dec 6	Individual web site development		
16	Dec 11	Website development (cont.)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline website
	Dec 13	Presentation indiv. web sites		None
17	Dec 18	Launching of web sites	None	None



Welcome to the course!