

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

Subject Code	ENGL1CN19
Subject Title	Introduction to African societies
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	None
Objectives	<p>As a major provider of natural resources and a fast-developing consumer market, the African continent has become a major destination for Chinese investment. Meanwhile, African countries have increasingly turned to China at the economic and political level. In this context, it is becoming critically important to develop well-informed reflections on Africa, its cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as the unique socio-political challenges that it is facing. This subject gives students a comprehensive introduction to the societies of Africa, as well as to its economic life and long-term development potential. Students are first initiated to the historical background of Africa's diverse cultures, languages, and societies. Following a presentation of Africa's colonial period and colonial legacies, students are offered in-depth perspectives on the defining features of Africa's economy and its intrinsic relation to specific internal and external socio-political factors. Importantly, the subject keeps using Asia as a point of reference, and places emphasis on Sino-African relations. The subject will especially be of interest to students of social science, business, education, and language.</p>
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">identify and understand key themes and challenges facing Africa at the social, political and economic levels,discuss issues relating to Africa as a multicultural environment,discuss topics pertaining to African foreign relations in general, and to Sino-African relations in particularunderstand and discuss the notions of nation-building and socio-economic development in relation to the African environmentapply their knowledge of Africa to their own field of study,show leadership by producing informed arguments on Africa as an economic partner and destination for Asian investment.

<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p>The subject is divided into two focus areas, namely, ‘general background to Africa’ and ‘current issues and debates’. Each focus area is reflected in the succession of weekly topics:</p> <p>General background to Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precolonial Africa and its civilizations (until the late 19th century) • Africa and imperial expansion: The continent’s colonial experience • The post-independence period and the challenge of nation-building • Africa’s socio-demographic profile (with focus on urbanization dynamics) • Africa’s cultural landscape (with focus on traditional kinship models, religions, traditional and modern art forms) • Language questions in Africa: Indigenous languages, ex-colonizers’ languages, new languages • Afrocentrism: Defining African-ness in the contemporary world <p>Current issues and debates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict and transformation: Africa’s political culture • Contemporary patterns of social mobility in Africa • Post-independence Africa’s foreign relations and their impact • Africa’s environment: Growth and degradation • The African diaspora: An Asian perspective • Taking stock: Long-term outlooks for Africa 																																																										
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology <i>(Note 3)</i></p>	<p>The subject will be taught through a blend of lectures and interactive seminars where students will engage and discuss course content and apply new skills and theoretical concepts. Students will have the opportunity to learn about, and critically discuss in comparative context with Hong Kong and China, key social, political and economic trends in Africa. Learning is supplemented by active participation in online class discussions.</p>																																																										
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 4)</i></p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="536 1335 1481 1841"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="8">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> <th></th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Group presentation</td> <td>30</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Online discussion/ in-class participation</td> <td>20</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Essay</td> <td>50</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The subject is assessed entirely through coursework. Each assessment item focuses on one or both of the two focus areas of the course content. In addition, each assessment requires students to apply theories and concepts learned in the course to understand, reflect on and analyse social, economic or political phenomena in Africa. This is designed to foster a critical awareness of African societies that students can carry over to their own fields of study. The students</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)								a	b	c	d	e	f			1. Group presentation	30	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			2. Online discussion/ in-class participation	20	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			3. Essay	50	✓	✓	✓	✓					Total	100 %								
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	are free to focus on social, politic, or economic topics for their essays, whose expected length is 1,500 – 2,500 words. Group presentations will focus on a text selected from the sources featured in the reading list. Finally, students are expected to take part in online and in-class discussions revolving around questions arising during the lecture.	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lectures	26 Hrs.
	▪ Seminars	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ Preparation for lectures and seminars	28 Hrs.
	▪ Preparation for assessments	52 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	119 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>Ahluwalia, Pal & Abebe Zegeye. 2017. <i>African identities. Contemporary political and social challenges</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Batchelor, Kathryn & Xiaoling Zhang. 2017. <i>China-Africa relations. Building images through cooperation, media representation and communication</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Blakemore, Kenneth & Brian Cooksey. 2017. <i>A sociology of education in Africa</i>. 2nd edition. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Fyle, C. Magbaily. 1999. <i>Introduction to the history of African civilization. Volume I: Pre-colonial Africa</i>. Lanham: University Press of America.</p> <p>Hyden, Goran. 2013. <i>African politics in comparative perspective. 2nd edition</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Langdon, Steven, Ritter, Archibald R.M. & Yiagadeesen Samy. 2018. <i>African economic development</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Okoth, Assa. 2006. <i>A history of Africa. Volume 2: African nationalism and the de-colonisation process. 1915-1995</i>. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.</p> <p>Shinn, David H. & Joshua Eisenmann. 2012. <i>China and Africa: A century of engagement</i>. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.</p> <p>Thomson, Alex. 2016. <i>An introduction to African politics</i>. Fourth edition. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Vinay Lall, Somik, Henderson, Vernon & Anthony J. Venables. 2017. <i>Africa's cities: Opening doors to the world</i>. Washington: World Bank Group.</p> <p>Wasserman, Herman. 2010. <i>Popular media, democracy, and development in Africa</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Williams, Paul D. 2017. <i>War and conflict in Africa</i>. London: Wiley.</p> <p>Worger, William H., Clark, Nancy L. & Edward A. Alpers. 2010. <i>Africa and the West: A documentary history. Volume 2: From colonialism to independence, 1875 to the present</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p>	

Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.