IPM1730
Food and Water Security in Africa

Semester One, 2012-2013

Module Handbook
A ‘coming storm’ of population growth, food price volatility and climate change has been predicted for global food and water security. Many of these issues will affect African states and communities particularly hard, in places where food and water insecurity has historically been exacerbated by civil war, state weakness, and under-development. This module seeks to explore the complex causes of such features of insecurity, both through the broader literature on global food and water systems, and through particular case studies and African examples.

The module will explore a number of different dimensions of the politics of food and water security on the continent, setting the topic within a broader focus of the international politics literatures on development, conflict and globalisation. The primary aim of the module will be to show how problems of food and water insecurity in Africa are not simply (or even primarily) technological or natural disasters, but are inherently political and are bound up within the broader context of global political economies, localised violence, and the nature of the African state.

Perennial food and water shortages in East Africa (particularly Somalia, Ethiopia and Northern Kenya) will be used as a starting point for the course, and detailed resources on the historical and contemporary crises (economic, environmental and political) in the region will be provided. The course will then move to consider a number of bodies of relevant theoretical literature and appropriate examples. The first section will focus on the links between resource scarcity and violent conflict, and topics include climate change conflict (Darfur), water wars (the Nile Basin), and famines (Ethiopia and Somalia). The second part of the course turns attention to development politics, and considers rural development and food aid (Zambia), the African state and corruption (Tanzania), and the economics of free trade, fair trade, and carbon trading (Ghana). The final part of the course turns attention to forms of resistance against dominant approaches to food and water security, looking at critiques of water privatisation and big dams (South Africa), and movements for food sovereignty across the continent. The final class will return to the problem of food and water insecurity in East Africa, and consider how our understanding of the dynamics at work here, and the political options available, have changed over the course of the module.
Objectives

On completion of this module, students should be able to:

1) identify some of the most important issues of food and water insecurity in Africa,
2) critically discuss theoretical literatures on change change conflicts, water wars and famines,
3) analyse the role of international development institutions and agencies in responding to food and water insecurity in Africa,
4) analyse the role of the African state in responding to food and water insecurity in Africa,
5) identify, describe and account for failures in providing food and water security in Africa,
6) identify, describe and account for local grassroots responses to food and water issues in Africa,
7) demonstrate grounded empirical knowledge of a range of specific case studies,
8) develop appropriate research methods to study food and water security in Africa.

Teaching Methods

The module consists of 10 two-hour seminars. At the masters level the onus is on students to prepare diligently and thoroughly, and lead seminar discussion. The seminars will involve a range of discussions and activities, and will include student-led oral presentations.

Reading

There is no textbook that covers the entire module, but the books listed below offer a useful and informative introduction to the topics discussed. Additional readings will be made available through blackboard. As far as possible, the journal articles on the reading list are available on the internet.

NOTE: Between the listed sources, the National Library and Hugh Owen collections, the resources on blackboard and internet access to journal articles, there is NO excuse for being unprepared for seminar discussions! Students should also actively seek relevant material beyond the reading list, and the volume of research on all aspects of African politics and development means you will never be short of something to read.

The National Library:
The National Library houses a number of resources not found in the Hugh Owen, including reference works like Africa South of the Sahara, The Africa Review and Africa Research Bulletin. All students can obtain a reader’s ticket, so please make use of this excellent library and wonderful reading room.
General textbooks / overview texts on African politics:


General textbooks / overview texts on food and water security, environment and development


There are many more in the Hugh Owen and the National Library – check them out and let me know if you find any that are particularly useful.
The web:
The internet contains many useful sources of information on contemporary African politics, movements, and news. In order to relieve the pressure on library resources and practice your research skills, you should make the most of the web, which is also much more up-to-date than many books and journal articles. The following websites are good starting points. You will undoubtedly find many more during your research. Use internet resources critically – ask who is writing them and why – and cite any sources fully in your essays.

News and information:
All Africa news [http://allafrica.com/]
Environmental Leader, business news [http://www.environmentalleader.com/]
Environmental News Network [http://www.enn.com/]
Environment news service [http://www.ens-newswire.com/]
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office [www.fco.gov.uk]
New Scientist, environment section [http://www.newscientist.com/section/environment]
One World [www.oneworld.net]
Pambazuka news: [www.pambazuka.org]
Treehugger, green blog [http://www.treehugger.com/]
Third World Network [http://www.twnside.org.sg/]

Organisations and research institutions:
AA-International, Aberystwyth-based rural assessments [http://www.aainternational.co.uk/]
Action Aid, NGO [http://www.actionaid.org.uk/]
Africa Harvest, non-profit biotech foundation [http://africaharvest.org/]
Africa Progress Panel [http://www.africaprogresspanel.org/]
The Africa Union: [www.africa-union.org]
Afrobarometer survey data: [http://www.afrobarometer.org/]
CARE [http://www.care.org/]
Cargill [http://www.cargill.com/]
CGIAR [http://www.cgiar.org/]
Climate Justice Action [http://www.climate-justice-action.org/]
Climate scientists comment on climate science [http://www.realclimate.org/]
CODEX Alimentarius, food standards [http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/index_en.jsp]
The Commission for Africa: [http://www.commissionforafrica.info/]
The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa: [www.codesria.org]
Earthscan, environmental publisher [http://www.earthscan.co.uk/]
Eco-equity, social justice NGO [http://www.ecoequity.org/]
Earth System Governance Project [http://www.earthsystemgovernance.org/]
Environmental Performance Index (Yale University) [http://epi.yale.edu/]
European Environment Agency [http://www.eea.europa.eu/]
Food and Agriculture Organisation [http://www.fao.org/]

Adran Gweidyddiaeth Ryngwladol  The Department of International Politics
Prifysgol Aberystwyth  Aberystwyth University
Friends of the Earth UK [http://www.foe.co.uk/]
Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO GIEWS) [http://www.fao.org/giews/english/index.htm]
GRAIN, non-profit for organization for small-scale farmers [http://www.grain.org/front/]
Greenpeace UK [http://www.greenpeace.org.uk]
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy [http://www.iatp.org/]
Institute of Security Studies: [www.iss.co.za]
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [http://www.ipcc.ch/]
International Institute for Environment and Development [http://www.iied.org/]
International Institute for Sustainable Development [http://www.iisd.org/]
International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [http://www.iucn.org/]
Land Portal, data on land rush/grabs [http://landportal.info/landmatrix]
MST, Brazil's Landless Peasants Movement [http://www.mstbrazil.org/]
NEPAD: [www.nepad.org]
The Nordic Africa Institute: [http://www.nai.uu.se/]
Oxfam [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/]
The Royal African Society: [www.royalafricansociety.org]
Sustainability, environmental think-tank [http://www.sustainability.com/]
Sustainable Security, research platform [http://sustainablesecurity.org/]
UK Environment Agency [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/]
UN Development Program [http://www.undp.org/]
UN Earthwatch initiative [http://earthwatch.unep.net/]
UN Environmental Program [http://www.unep.org/]
USAID [http://www.usaid.gov/]
Via Campesina, international peasant movement [http://viacampesina.org/en/]
World Development Movement: [www.wdm.org.uk]
World Food Programme [http://www.wfp.org/]
World Resources Institute [http://www.wri.org/]
WorldWatch Institute [http://www.worldwatch.org/]
WWF UK [http://www.wwf.org.uk/]
Zimbabwe's land reform site [http://www.zimbabweeland.net/Home.html]
ASSESSMENT AND ESSAY QUESTIONS
The module is assessed on the basis of three assignments: a book review of 2,000 words (25% of the module mark), an essay of 4,000 words (50% of the module mark), and a case study report of 2,000 words (25% of the module mark).

The deadline for the book review is Thursday 18 October 2012. The deadline for the case study report is Thursday 22 November 2012. The deadline for the essay is Monday 14 January 2013.

Please see full guidelines on blackboard on ‘How to hand in your essay’.

The book review (deadline: Thursday 18 October 2012) – 2,000 words

The book review is designed to give you the opportunity to read and reflect upon a key text within the field. It should be a theoretically-informed academic text, and not an edited collection of essays. You can choose a text from the list below, or present your own choice to me for approval by Monday 8 October 2012.

The review must:
- Summarise the core argument and key points of the book
  - What is the research question(s) motivating the book?
- Situate this book within broader literatures on food and water security or African politics
  - How does the book answer the research question(s), i.e. what traditions and literatures does it draw on?
- Give your opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the book
  - How well does the book answer the research question(s), and how important are the questions it asks?
  - What are the implications of the book for the politics of food and water security in Africa?


The case study report (deadline: **Thursday 22 November 2012**) – 2,000 words

The case study report should be titled: ‘*The politics of food and water security in xxxxxx.*’ The focus of the report can be a country, a region, or a city or locality. Be as specific as the material you have found will allow. The aim of the report is to provide a clear, concise, focussed empirical account of the main issues related to food and water security in a specific context. The report should be accessible to an intelligent, non-academic, non-expert reader – for example a Member of Parliament, a diplomat or public servant, a journalist, or CEO etc.

*Note that this assignment requires addressing both food **AND** water security – the assumption is that these issues will be linked in most contexts. If you believe this is not the case in your case then please justify and explain this in the report.*

The report will require collecting and assessing primary data on your case. You should use the internet, news media, ‘grey’ sources and reports (e.g. UN, World Bank, FAO, WFP, UNEP, UNDP, etc) as well as the sources listed in academic articles where relevant. The report should discuss the reliability (or difficulty) of the evidence.
You can structure the report in whichever way makes most sense to you. It must include: an introduction and conclusion; necessary background or contextual detail; discussion of the literature and material on which the report is based; analysis of the politics of food and water security (e.g. causes, consequences, actors, structures, institutions, resources, conflicts, etc); and the issues of most concern in the future. The report does not have to include policy prescriptions or recommendations.

The report should be written in a clear, direct, accessible manner. It should be comprehensible to an intelligent non-academic audience, and to non-experts in both the specific political context and the broader literature on food and water security. This means you need to explain technical terms. You should not make extensive references to academic theories and authors – although if your case has a clear bearing on the arguments of Amartya Sen or David Keen, for example, you can refer to them (as long as you explain their significance clearly). You do, of course, need to reference all sources fully. You may include maps, graphs etc, but reference them properly and if they are worth including they should be discussed and analysed in the text.

The essay (deadline: Monday 14 January 2013) – 4,000 words

Choose one of the titles listed below. Use examples and the theoretical literature to support your argument.

- What are the most important causes of food insecurity OR water insecurity?
- Is conflict a likely outcome of food OR water shortages?
- “The food aid system is broken and in crisis.” Do you agree?
- Critically discuss the role of (a) the African state; (b) the international system; OR (c) grassroots movements in the politics of food OR water in Africa.
- “The solutions to water provision in Africa have caused more damage than the problems themselves.” Critically discuss.
- How have African famines changed over time, and why?
- What impact has climate change had on the politics of food and water in Africa?
- Design your own question. Please confirm with me in writing by Monday 10 December 2012.
Seminar Programme

1. Introduction: Food and water security in East Africa
2. Climate change conflicts: Darfur
3. Water wars: The Nile Basin
4. Famines and food aid: Ethiopia and Somalia
5. Development and food aid: Zambia
6. The African state – villain or victim? Tanzania
7. Free trade, fair trade and carbon trading: Ghana and Liberia
8. Water privatisation and big dams: South Africa
9. Food sovereignty, land reform and grassroots movements
10. Conclusion: Food and water security in East Africa

Each seminar will involve a short introduction to the topic and discussion of the set readings. It is essential that the set readings have been completed by all students.

Most classes will also involve student-led presentations on the case studies. The aim of these presentations is to provide the rest of the class with the necessary background information on the country and case to set-up the following class discussion. Presentations can also highlight key questions, issues and controversies for the class discussion.
Seminar Programme and List of Readings

1. **Introduction: Food and water security in East Africa**

The first class will involve an introduction to the course and the structure. I will explain what I expect in terms of assessments and class participation. We will arrange the schedule for student presentations for the rest of the term.

The rest of the class will be devoted to a discussion of the current and recent crises in East Africa and the Horn. All students are expected to read the following essential sources and conduct some of their own research on the situation in East Africa and the Horn – both now and in 2011. Further documents will be provided on blackboard. This region will be a recurring case during the course, and we will return to study it in more detail in weeks four and ten.

**Essential reading:**


**Further reading and sources:**


2. **Climate change conflicts: Darfur**

This class moves just across the border into Sudan, and looks in more detail at what has been called the world’s first climate change conflict: Darfur. The reasons behind this claim, and the issues it raises, will be discussed in more detail.

The class will begin with student presentations on the conflict in Darfur. The presentations should outline the necessary context and background to the conflict, as well as the climate, food and water dimensions. The presentations can also raise interesting issues, debates, problems and questions for the rest of the class.

This will be followed with a class discussion. Each student will be asked to raise a few issues or questions arising from their reading, and the student presentations. These will provide the structure for the class discussion. **All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.**

**Essential reading:**


**Further reading:**


3. Water wars: The Nile Basin

This session will focus explicitly on the hypothesised link between shared water resources, scarcity, and geo-political conflict. The Nile Basin is often presented as one of the foremost ‘flashpoints’ for a potential water war, and indeed the region has experienced considerable tension between the riparian states. The danger of conflict, the competing interests, the institutions being built and the search for cooperation will all be discussed in this session.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.

Essential reading:


Further reading:


4. **Famines and food aid: Ethiopia and Somalia**

In this class we return to Ethiopia and Somalia for a more in-depth examination of the politics of the region, and the academic literatures on famine and food aid. We begin with a discussion of the various bodies of theoretical literature on famines.

The session will also explore the implications of these theories for the question of responses to famine. How does the emergency food aid system work, and how successful is it? What is the role of mass public campaigns, NGOs, religious groups, bilateral donors, and multilateral institutions?

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. **All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.**

**Essential reading:**


**Further reading:**


5. Development and food aid: Zambia

This class broadens the focus away from famine and humanitarian emergencies to wider issues of hunger and development. Food aid also plays a significant role here – alongside the global development architecture of the Millennium Development Goals, UNDP and World Bank programmes, bilateral assistance, and private charity.

Here we will discuss questions such as what does development mean at its heart, and what are the implications of the development project for the third world state and local people? What is the role of long-term food aid and development assistance? Can such programmes be founded on altruism – and how do foreign policy goals and strategic interests affect development aid?

One specific case which raises a number of these issues quite starkly is the Zambian refusal to accept US food aid in 2002-2003, because it was genetically modified. We will discuss this case in more detail, as well as issues raised by the broader literature.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.

**Essential reading:**


**Further reading:**


Easterly, W.R. (2007) The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s efforts to aid the rest have done so much harm and so little good, Oxford: OUP.


6. The African state – villain or victim? Tanzania

The broader critique of development does not stop at a critical analysis of Western aid practices, however. It also requires a critical analysis of African elites and the African state. Over fifty years since most African states acquired independence, many commentators now choose to focus their critique on the postcolonial African state, poor political leadership, and endemic corruption.

This class will explore the domestic politics of African development in more detail, with a particular focus on state corruption and agricultural development schemes. Tanzania is a notable case study, providing examples of both hubristic state-led rural development under Nyerere in the 1960s and 1970s, and widespread public sector corruption in the 1990s and 2000s.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.

Essential reading:


Further reading:

Iliffe, J. (1979) *A modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge; CUP.
7. Free trade, fair trade, and carbon trading: Ghana and Liberia

This class focuses on the economics of under-development and food/water insecurity. In particular it explores three policy responses that are variously proclaimed as the solutions to the problems to issues of food and water security in Africa: free trade, fair trade, and carbon trading.

For neo-liberals, a global free market will enable land to be redistributed and food produced in the most efficient manner. Investment will be channelled more effectively, yields will rise, vested interests will be sidelined. Critics point to the dangers of price volatility on commodity markets, the power of large agricultural corporations, and the phenomenon of land grabs.

Two reforms have been proposed to the ‘free trade’ model: fair trade and carbon trading. The former relies on voluntary or regulated standards to improve conditions for primary producers. Fair trade sugar, cocoa, bananas and coffee are well known. The UN has also sought to promote guidelines for land purchases in poor countries.

Carbon trading is seen by advocates as both a form of climate change mitigation (as CO2 emitters are asked or required to offset their emissions through ‘green’ projects in the developing world) and for transfers of wealth to the developing world (as forests, biofuels, etc become worth money and can attract investment). Carbon trading and fair trade schemes both have their critics, so this class will explore the issues raised and the debates around these proposed ‘solutions’. Examples are drawn from Ghana, Liberia, and elsewhere in Africa.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.

Essential reading:

Further reading:


Easterly, W.R. (2007) The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s efforts to aid the rest have done so much harm and so little good, Oxford: OUP.


8. **Water privatisation and big dams: South Africa**

The focus on development and its critiques continues by turning to water politics. Again, this class looks at two ‘solutions’ to problems of water supply and access that have been recommended and adopted in recent decades: privatisation of water utilities (usually accompanied by cost-recovery policies) and the construction of large dams to provide electricity and a reliable water supply.

Both these developments can be examined in more detail in South Africa, where cost-recovery policies in the water sector led to considerable protests in the early 2000s, and where dams in Lesotho (supplying the industrial heartland of South Africa) have become focal points of international tension. At the same time, South African anti-apartheid hero Kader Asmal was chairing the World Commission on Dams, whose conclusions were dismissed by India, Turkey and China.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. **All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.**

**Essential reading:**


**Further reading:**


9. Food sovereignty, land reform and grassroots movements

In this class we will look in more detail at some of the grassroots social movements which have emerged to challenge some of the development strategies covered in previous classes. The food sovereignty discourse has emerged to challenge the discourse of food security; the land reform and land rights movements have emerged in response to entrenched landed elites and the new land grabs. Of course, these movements have themselves faced criticisms, as the article by Paul Collier demonstrates.

What these movements and debates therefore demonstrate are the highly contested and highly political nature of conflicts over food and water security in Africa.

As previously, the class will begin with student presentations, before moving to a general discussion of the specifics of this case, as well as the broader issues. All students – not just those giving presentations – are expected to read the essential texts listed below.

Essential reading:


Further reading:


10. Conclusion: Food and water security in East Africa

In this final class we will return to the issues with which we opened the course: food and water security in East Africa. We will consider how our views of the politics of food and water here have changed over the course of the module, and what tools of analysis we have developed.

There are no set readings for the final week, but all students are expected to prepare by returning to the notes and readings from the first week, and identifying areas of agreement and changed views. The final class is also an opportunity to review your notes from the module more generally, and ask about any areas of continued ambiguity or confusion.

We will discuss the requirements of the module essay. There will also be time to reflect on other analytical tools or approaches not covered or discussed in the module, and how these might extend our understanding of food and water security in Africa.