The main aim of this course is to introduce students to the key land and agrarian issues in Africa. The prevalence of large-scale land acquisition in the context of rising food prices since the 2008/09 financial and economic crisis has brought the spotlight on issues of land and land use in Africa. Challenges arising from climate change and sustainable development constitute the overarching context to these issues. As a result, land matters are increasingly having a direct bearing on broader issues including food security, environmental sustainability, economic growth, social and political stability, social justice and rural livelihoods. It is therefore important to explore the various dimensions of the land and agrarian questions in Africa in both their historical and contemporary contexts.

The course particularly focuses on introducing concepts of landholding and ownership in Africa, especially how these conceptions have evolved over time: pre-colonial, colonial and post/neocolonial and current. This context helps us to understand current challenges and opportunities around land and related issues in Africa. In looking at the different periods of the land and agrarian questions, the course seeks to situate current land and agrarian issues in the long history of land Tenure and policy debates in Africa.

In Africa’s land and agrarian questions, the introduction of colonial rule marked an important turning point, not just in the conceptions and practice of landholding and ownership, but also land administration and management. Colonial rule introduced not just a different system of statutory land tenure and administrative structures; it also significantly changed people’s perception and relations to land, with land widely perceived as a commodity that can be sold and bought like any other commodity on the market. Within this context, the course seeks to explore some of the key features around land and agrarian transformation in Africa, including land policy reforms and how these
have continued to affect conception, policy and practice of land administration in Africa today. In more recent years, the land and agrarian issues in Africa have included various dimensions of urban land access and sustainable land use, and these issues can no longer be ignored.

The course will critically examine the different dimensions of land, including patterns of land ownership, means of accessing land, gender dimensions of land and agrarian struggles, structures for land administration, types of land tenure, issues of urbanisation and access to urban land, changing forms of land use, the challenges of large-scale land acquisition in different African communities, and the issues around sustainable land use. The course will draw examples from selected countries in Africa.

Field trip: There will be a field trip to one of the cites (within Cape Town) to learn more about how struggles around access to urban land play out on the ground. The date for the field trip will be confirmed during the course.

Course Requirements
This is a post-graduate course, which takes the seminar format. There are 12 seminars for this course; one seminar each week. Each seminar has a theme, and the readings assigned for the seminar speak to the theme for the week. Students are required to read the assigned material for the seminar before coming to class. Reading, over and above, the assigned material is also encouraged. The readings in this course are meant to introduce students to some of the key issues around land and agrarian change in Africa. Each seminar has two sets of readings: the required readings (which must be read before coming to class) as well as additional readings (which are optional).

Some readings will be added as we proceed in the course. On top of the required and additional readings, students are encouraged to search for more material relevant to the course and share with the rest of the class.

Having said this, students, in their presentations and essays, are expected to demonstrate that they are familiar with the “prescribed” material in the course. Additional readings are not meant to substitute those prescribed for this course.

In some cases, depending on availability, guest speakers will be invited to give a talk on issues relevant to the course.

Course Assessment
Students are assessed based on: class participation, 1 short essay and 1 long essay. Class participation accounts for 15% of the total mark, the short essay, 35%, and the long essay, 50%.

1. Class Participation

The 15% for class participation is awarded depending on the student’s attendance, participation and presentation at the seminars. Attendance at seminars on its own is not enough. Students are expected to actively participate in the seminar by meaningfully contributing to the seminar discussions. To ensure maximum participation, each student will be expected to make at least one seminar presentation, based on the theme and the readings assigned for that week. The number of presentations per student will be determined by the number of students on the course.

2. Seminar Presentation Format

To promote scholarly exchange and critical engagement with course material interaction, the author of the seminar presentation write-up will not present her/his work; the seminar paper will be presented by another student (discussant). A general discussion will then follow.

For this system to work, the author must circulate the seminar write-up at least two days before the seminar, to give others time to read the write-up and prepare for the seminar.
3. **Short essay**: 35 per cent of the course

Students will write a short essay of not more than 3000 words, including references, on the topic of their own choice or on the topic assigned to the class. This essay should be submitted on **April 18**.

4. **Long Essay**: 50 per cent of the course

As with the short essay, students are expected to choose a topic of their own. The long essay, which should be between 5000 and not more than 6000 words, could be based on a “case study” based on the theories and examples discussed in the course. The essay should have a title, an abstract, and should be fully referenced.

Students are free to choose a topic for the short and long essays. Please feel free to discuss your topic with the course convenor. The **long essay is due on May 31**.

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**The Course and reading material**

The course will be presented over a period of 12 weeks in the first semester. **It is important for students to note that this is a seminar-based course.** This means that students are expected to show great initiative and commitment. The course belongs to students and the success will largely be determined by the level of participation on the part of students.

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**Seminar 1: February 21:**

**Introduction: General Overview of the Land and Agrarian Question**

**Required Reading:**

Engels, F. (1898). *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*. Marx/Engle Writers Archives (parts I & II)


**Additional readings:**


See also Moyo, Sam(2008) “African Land Questions, Agrarian Transition and the State” (Seminar 8).


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**Seminar 2: February 28**

**Concept(s) of Land in Africa-- The place of Land in African Societies**
**Required Reading:**


**Addition Reading:**


**Seminar 3: March 7**

**Land in Africa: The Colonial Interface**

**Required Readings:**


Liversage, V. 1945. *Land Tenure in the Colonies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2-41

**Additional Readings:**


**Seminar 4: March 14**

**Landholding and Tenure in Africa**

**Required Readings:**


Additional Readings:


Seminar 5: March 28
The Changing Nature of the Land Question in Africa

Required Readings:


Additional Readings:


**Seminar 6: April 11**

**Land Administration in Africa**

*Required Readings:*


*Additional Reading:*


**Seminar 7: April 18**

**Land Reform in Africa: Selected Experiences**

*Required Readings*


**Additonal Readings:**


**Seminar 8: April 25**

**Land Issues in Post-colonial Africa: The Gender Dimensions**

**Required Readings:**


**Additonal Readings:**


**Seminar 9: May 2**

**The Agrarian Question in Post-colonial Africa**

**Required Reading:**


**Additional Readings**


**Seminar 10. May 9**

**Challenges of Land Tenure in Post-colonial Africa**

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings**


Seminar 11: May 16

The Urban Land Question in Africa

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


Seminar 12: May 23

The Land Grabs and Sustainable Land Use in Africa

**Required Readings:**


**Additonal Reading:**

