

The Political Economy of Doing Business in Africa (EMBA GNW 2022)

Course Faculty: [Catherine Duggan, Director UCT GSB](#)

Course Structure:

Synchronous sessions: **13h00-16h30 SAST (UTC +4) on Zoom each day, June 13-17**

Asynchronous videos, “virtual visits,” and other readings (~8 hours for the course).

Please note that (other than guest lectures) the synchronous sessions will be taught using the case method and will be highly participatory, so attendance and participation are required.

Assessments will consist of class participation (25%), a group presentation (30%), and a final individual essay (45%).

Course Description:

This course will help students to understand complex business environments in Africa and beyond using applied tools and insights that are applicable to economies around the world.

Using a combination of original case studies about real firms, as well as videos, readings, and guest lectures, we will explore the ways that firms navigate risk, manage government, and see new markets and opportunities in areas with limited data. We will also delve deeply into the intersection of the private sector, politics, and macroeconomics by looking at issues such as enabling environments for investment, government fiscal policies, foreign borrowing and debt, globalization and foreign direct investment, the double-edged sword of oil and commodities wealth, the implications of exchange rate volatility, and socially and environmentally sustainable development and value creation.

Cases and discussions will cover a wide range of countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and others.

The course will cover some basic macroeconomic concepts in a highly applied way, including through asynchronous material. It is suitable for all students, whether or not they have taken economics and whether they have extensive experience living and working in Africa or have no existing knowledge of the continent.

Why Africa?

Africa is home to extraordinary innovations and some of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The continent is at the beginning of some of the most important supply chains on the planet, with vast reserves of oil and gas, agricultural products, and critical minerals—including the metals that power the green economy. It is the world’s youngest region, with a median age of less than 20 and a growing market of early adopters.

Yet the continent is also racing to grapple with some of the most pressing challenges of our time, including inequality, governance challenges, the impact of debt and macroeconomic volatility, infrastructural needs and vulnerable global supply chains, as well as the need for sustainable development and ways to manage the implications of climate change and other environmental issues.

In short, Africa will almost certainly hold increasingly significant business and investment opportunities in the coming decades, and some understanding of the continent is likely to become more and more important for global and globally oriented companies. Even for executives who never work in or with Africa, understanding these broad issues in an African context will provide a window into new ways of seeing opportunities and risks—and thinking about the impact that firms and individuals can have—in countries around the world.

