

## **AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**

This new course will explore multiple dimensions of Africa's environmental history, drawing upon literature in the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. It is one component of a larger project supported by Penn Global and directed by the instructor on 'Local Histories of Climate Change in the Horn of Africa', though our coverage will include topics and case studies from around the continent (see provisional outline below). The course takes an historical perspective on environmental change in Africa, with an eye to engaging current debates on climate change and on efforts to mitigate its consequences for contemporary urban and rural communities on the continent. Students will read and discuss seminal works on the African environment, contribute to literature reviews on selected topics, and prepare case studies of communities which have been impacted by severe climate events in the past half-century. The format combines lectures and seminar-style discussions, and we will draw upon the expertise of guest lecturers in a variety of disciplines which have contributed to the study of environmental change.

### **Provisional Outline of Weekly Topics**

1. Key issues and debates in African environmental history
2. Methods and tools for studying environmental change
3. Climate history: the longue duree
4. Reconstructing patterns of human adaptation through time
5. Biodiversity: the impact of climate change on flora and fauna
6. Human livelihoods: adapting to drought and natural disasters
7. Indigenous knowledge and environmental management
8. Climate change and resource conflicts: water wars, land wars
9. Urban environments
10. Impact of tourism on the African landscape
11. International agencies and developmental agendas
12. The future of the African environment