Political Science 660: African Politics
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM
Computer Science 1257
https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/32321

Instructor: Nicole Bonoff, PhD
North Hall, 3rd Floor, Room 322D
Email: bonoff@wisc.edu
Office hours: Wednesday 2-4 PM

This class is an introductory survey of Sub-Saharan African politics from the pre-colonial period to the modern era. We will examine the common themes, issues, and trends that shape politics and developmental outcomes across the continent. The goals of the course are for students to understand how history and political institutions influence current political and economic behavior. This class will pay particular attention to how abstract concepts are defined and measured, though the class does not expect any prior experience with research design.

The material for this course is organized around the following broad themes: pre-colonial and colonial legacies, democratization, clientelism and patronage, informal politics, ethnic politics, violent conflict, economic development, and contemporary political issues.

Although the course material does not go into extensive depth on any one country, course assignments allow students to explore one country in more depth.

Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives
The goal of this upper division class is to analyze in detail the relationship between institutions and political behavior in sub-Saharan Africa. The class will emphasize critical thinking skills by building on more introductory courses to help students critique and synthesize academic research. The class will also emphasize applied and practical writing in the field of political science.

Course Requirements and Grading
Final grades are determined as follows:

1. Map Quiz – 10%
A map quiz will be administered in class on 1/31. You will be given a blank map of Africa and expected to name the country and capital city for a random subset of the 49 countries of sub-Saharan Africa listed at the end of this syllabus. There are a number of African map quizzes available online to practice.

2. In-Class Pop Quizzes and Participation – 10%
   There will be an undisclosed number of pop quizzes over the semester directly related to the reading assignment for that day. These should be easy questions if you have completed the reading. You will receive some points for just showing up to classes and taking the quiz. Your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped before you final grade is calculated. As your two lowest quizzes are dropped, there are no make-ups on quizzes, even for excused absences.

3. Country Case Study Papers and Presentations – 25%
   In small groups, you will be assigned a specific country to research some of the themes of our class in more depth. Each student will be responsible for writing individually about that theme for 1250-1500 words. Together as a group, students will present their reports to the class later in the semester. Each student will be graded individually. A full assignment description will be circulated in Week 2 when groups are formed. This is the aggregate total for this assignment, with drafts and preliminary research being assessed independently of the final paper and presentation.

4. Midterm Exam – 25%
   A midterm exam will be administered in class on 3/2. It will cover the reading assignments through that date and will include a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answers and one short essay.

5. Final Exam – 30%
   A final exam will be administered 5/11 from 10:05 AM to 12:05 PM. Location TBD. It will cover all the material since the midterm exam and will be the same format. However, there will also be one longer essay that will require students to synthesize knowledge from the first half of the class as well.

Cumulative grades are as follows:

A = 92-100%
A/B= 88-91%
B = 82-87%
B/C = 78-81%
C= 68-77%
D = 62-67%
F = <62%

Assignment submission
All written assignments are due in class at the beginning of class as well as by electronic copy.

**Late Assignments and Exams**
Assignments turned in late or missed exams without an excused absence will be penalized by deducting one grade for each day it is late. **Assignments and make-up exams will no longer be accepted more than five days past the due date.**

**Makeup Exams**
Only in extreme circumstances (e.g. verified illness or death in the family) can exams be “made up” without prior arrangements.

**Early Reading of Assignments**
As a class policy, I encourage drafts of written assignments and will read over a student’s whole assignment before they formally submit it for grading, providing comments. I am also happy to address any specific concerns or questions regarding the written assignment prior to the submission.

**Email Use**
Email is a great way to stay in touch even after school hours. I encourage you to use email to communicate with me. However, when you email me, please make sure that you identify yourself clearly using both your **full name** and the **course number**. Please be aware that I only have your UW email address. All my emails will be sent to your UW account. It is your responsibility to check your email on a regular basis and make sure it is working!

**Class Participation**
Class participation consists of how often you attend class and how much you contribute to discussion. This will be specifically counted on the day when there are pop quizzes. Sleeping, talking, distracting use of laptops and other such behaviors will detract from your participation grade.

**Classroom Technology Policy**
There will be no cell phone use during class. If I see you using your phone, it will be noted, and your participation grade will be reduced. Use of laptop computers in the classroom is allowed only for the purpose of taking lecture notes.

**Academic Misconduct**
Academic misconduct will be punished to the fullest extent possible. Anyone found guilty of academic misconduct should expect to fail the entire course. In addition, cheating or plagiarizing on assignments, papers or projects in this class may result in any other penalties deemed appropriate by the university. Your rights and responsibilities in this area are outlined in UWS 14, the chapter of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative code that regulates academic misconduct [(http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html)](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html). You are responsible for obeying UWS 14. Ignorance of the code is not an excuse.
In the Event of a University-Wide Health Care Emergency

In the event that this course is no longer able to meet face-to-face for a period of time because of a widespread health emergency, students should continue to stay current with our schedule as posted in this syllabus. During this time, you will only be responsible for the material in the readings and not for any additional material that would only have been presented in class. If we have an exam scheduled during this period of time when face-to-face meetings are suspended, the exam will be postponed until after classes resume. Information about the status of assignments and other course work due during this period will be addressed on the course website (if available) and by way of email. It is critical that I have an email address for you that you check frequently. This same notification system will also be used to announce any changes to the currently expected course of action.

Students with a disability

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life.

Reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Please inform me of your wish for accommodations either by email, in person after class, or at my office hours – whichever you are most comfortable with.

UW-Madison Writing Center

For any students having trouble with a writing assignment, or those not having trouble but who wish to improve their writing, I highly recommend the Writing Center. You can receive one-on-one coaching and feedback from qualified instructors at any stage of your assignment, from before you start, right up until just before the deadline (although outcomes will be better the earlier you see them, and you may not be able to get any feedback at the last minute).

For more information, visit their website:
http://www.writing.wisc.edu/Individual/index.html

Readings

There is no textbook for this course. All readings are available as PDFs on the course website, https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/32321. There are typically 2 to 4 readings assigned for each class session. It is encouraged that you complete the readings BEFORE class as we will be
discussing them during the session and there might be a pop quiz that covers that reading assignment.

Lecture Slides
My slides will be posted to the course website about 30 minutes before class. That gives you enough time to print them if you like. I reserve the right to withhold the slides if I feel that class attendance is declining. The slides do not serve as a substitute for attending lecture as supplemental material will be discussed beyond the information on the slides.

Week 1: Research in Africa
1/17: Introduction

1/19: Perspectives on Africa – Guest Lecturer

Week 2: Pre-Colonial Africa
1/24: Politics and Early European Encounters
• Herbst. 2000. Ch. 2 (“Power and Space in Precolonial Africa”).

1/26: Slave Trade

Week 3: Colonial Conquest
1/31: The Scramble and Colonial Politics; MAP QUIZ
• Herbst. 2000. Ch. 3 (“The Europeans and the Africa Problem”).

2/2: The Consequences of Colonialism

Week 4: End of Colonialism

2/7: Nationalism and Independence

2/9: Post-Colonial Challenges

Week 5: Political Systems

2/14: Authoritarianism and Personalistic Rule

2/16: Democratic Transition – Guest Lecturer

**Week 6: Political Behavior**

**2/21: Clientelism and Patronage**

**2/23: Voting and Attitudes; SOURCES FOR PAPER DUE**

**Week 7: Informal Politics**

**2/28: Chieftaincy**

**3/2: MIDTERM**

**Week 8: Ethnic Politics**

**3/7: Origins**

3/9: Implications


Week 9: Other Salient Social Identities

3/14: Religious Identity


3/16: Gender


Week 10: Spring Break, No Class

Week 11: Rwandan Genocide

3/28: NO CLASS

• Watch *Ghosts of Rwanda*, a PBS documentary on Rwandan Genocide, on your own time before 4/2. It is available electronically through the UW Library proxy at:

It is also available for free on YouTube. Full-length versions are approximately 1:55 hours.

3/30: NO CLASS; FULL DRAFT OF PAPER DUE

Week 12: Political Violence I

4/2: Civil War


4/6: Post-Conflict Recovery


Week 13: Political Violence II and Corruption

4/11: Terrorism


4/13: State Capacity and Corruption


**Week 14: Group Presentations**

**4/18: TBD**
- Dowden. 2009. TBD

**4/20: TBD**
- Dowden. 2009. TBD

**Week 15: Economic Development**

**4/25: Causes of Underdevelopment**

**4/27: Domestic Growth Strategies and Industries**

**Week 16: Foreign Aid and Investment**

**5/2: International Donors; FINAL VERSION OF PAPER DUE**

**5/4: Role of China in Africa**

5/11: FINAL EXAM from 10:05 AM to 12:05 PM. Location TBD.

49 Sub-Saharan African Countries

Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde*
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros*
Congo (Republic of)
Congo (Democratic Republic of)
Djibouti
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire)
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar*
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius*
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome & Principe*
Senegal
Seychelles*
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

*Island countries.