POLITICAL SCIENCE 329: AFRICAN POLITICS

OBJECTIVES

This is a very exciting time to be studying African politics. Many changes are underway in Africa today, from economic growth to a decline in conflict, the ascendance of women as political leaders, and the larger role Africa is playing on the world stage, given its possession of key natural resources like oil, coltan, and uranium. Since 1990, much of the continent has experienced political reform. This last wave of democratization has now hit a plateau, with profound implications for the daily lives of Africans. This course critically examines the consequences and nature of these transformations. It looks at these dynamics in their historical, social, economic, political, and cultural contexts.

The course looks, for example, at colonial legacies influencing contemporary African politics; problems of state building; political, economic and social dimensions of conflict in Africa; the role of ethnicity, gender and identities more generally; Africa's economic challenges; problems of democratization in Africa; human rights; the politics of foreign aid and of food; and Africa's new and old engagements with the world. One of the main themes in the course focuses on unwritten, non-formal institutions and "hidden transcripts that shape political and economic dynamics, e.g., the informal economy, clientelist relationships, and local governance structures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course content provides students with concrete knowledge of African politics, both historical and contemporary, as well as political science tools for thinking about some of the broader analytic issues and themes in African politics. These tools are also used to analyze current events through brief weekly discussions of news and postings on Canvas. Students will be encouraged to sharpen critical analytical skills through discussion of readings and films, exams, and a term paper, which is framed around a puzzle. I want students to be curious, ask questions, and creatively pursue their interests. Exams and the term paper help students integrate the material and apply what they have learned in the course material to a wide variety of relevant topics.

REQUIREMENTS (45 hours x 4 credits = 180 hours)

Any changes to the course and email notifications will be posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to check these notices on a regular basis.

Reading and videos (110.5 hours): I expect students to have read the assigned material and watched assigned videos and come to class prepared to discuss the readings and videos.

Class attendance (31.25 hours): Class attendance is critical in order to engage the material in an effective way. The exams draw to a large extent on lectures and class discussion and cannot be adequately
completed without participating in and attending class. Please come to class on time out of respect for other class participants, but mostly for your own sake since being late adds stress to your life and causes you to feel you are not in control.

**Participation (See Reading and videos; Preparation for current events discussion and posting of news = 5 hours):** Debates and commentary are especially encouraged. I also strongly encourage class participation in various forms, especially through discussion in class. Participation can improve one’s grade, especially if it is borderline between grades. I will often start the class asking about news regarding Africa. Come prepared to talk about what is in the news.

**Assignments (preparation 6 hours):** There will be at least five short assignments throughout the course of the semester. These require you to draw on your readings to analyze a real-world problem, video, or dataset. One assignment involves a 5-7 minute presentation of your paper to our small class in *pecha kucha* style (see videos on Canvas for how to do this).

**Quizzes (preparation 4 hours):** There will be one map quiz and two other quizzes to make sure you are keeping up with the readings and absorbing class material.

**Papers (20 hours):** One (8-10 page) term paper is required of undergraduate students and a 20-page research paper is required of graduate students. The papers must use course themes as a starting point. An abstract (paragraph summary) of the paper should be submitted to the Canvas in doc format (not pdf). Students should try to meet with me before turning in their summary. If the topic is later changed, a new abstract must be submitted and approved. Start early with your paper.

**Exams (3.25 hours):** Two open book exams are required. The open-book exams will involve essays that integrate material.

**NOTE:** All exams, papers, and the abstract must be submitted in Canvas in doc format (not pdf). Please do NOT email them to me or give me a hard copy unless you experience difficulties uploading to Canvas.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

Participation (5%); quizzes (5%); assignments (10%); paper (30%); mid-term exam (25%); final exam (25%)

**DEADLINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 1</td>
<td>Map quiz in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Abstract due in Canvas at 5 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Midterm exam in Canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Term paper due 9 pm in Canvas</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Final exam 12:25 pm to 2:25 pm on Canvas</td>
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**OFFICE HOURS**

Please sign up for all appointments during office hours with Professor Tripp through ailitrripp.youcanbook.me. Office hours are Tuesday 2-4 pm and Wednesday 10-12 am in 3327 Sterling. If these times do not work feel free to contact atripp@wisc.edu to arrange another time.
CANVAS

Explore Canvas, which is a key resource for course updates, sources for your paper, videos, maps, links to additional readings, suggested movies, and other useful information. Add information about yourself on the About Us page on the Discussions tab, including fun facts, photos, connections to Africa if any, background and interests. Please bookmark the Canvas course.

LAP TOPS AND CELL PHONE USE

Students may use laptops in class but only for taking notes. Cell phones must be turned off and put away. I cannot compete with these devices, which are a source of distraction.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform the professor if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the McBurney Disability Office on campus. The McBurney Disability Center can be reached at (608) 263-2741 or via email at mcburney@odos.wisc.edu. McBurney statement on accommodations: http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.”
https://diversity.wisc.edu/

READINGS

The required books are available for purchase from the University Book Store and can be borrowed from the Helen C. White Reserve Room. A course packet is available from the L&S Copy Center in the Sewell Building. Articles in the packet can also be found on Canvas. Topical readings from the news with links to the Canvas will be assigned throughout the course as they appear in the media.


COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN POLITICS

January 23
Introduction to the Course

January 25
Continent of Contrasts
- Thomson Chapter 1

January 30
The Political Legacy of the Pre-Colonial Political Systems
- Thomson Chapter 2
- *Video*: *Africa, Episode 4: The King & The City* presented by Basil Davidson

February 1
Political Legacy of the Colonial State
- *Map Quiz #1*
- Bourne Sections 1 and 2
  - *Video*: *Africa, Episode 6: The Magnificent African Cake* presented by Basil Davison
- Recommended videos:
  - October 1
  - *The Battle of Algiers*

THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

February 6, 8
The Rise of Personalized Rule and State Expansion
- Thomson Chapters 3 and 6
- *Assignment #1*: Watch Parts One and Two of *video Mobutu King of Zaire* and post answers to questions on Canvas. Bring the answers to class on February 8.
February 13
Military Rule
  • Bourne Section 3
  • Thomson Chapter 7
  • Recommended video: The Last King of Scotland

February 15
State Collapse
  • Thomson Chapter 10
  • Video: Part 3 of Mobutu King of Zaire
    Come to class prepared to discuss why the state collapsed in Zaire.

February 20
Rise and Decline of Conflict

February 22
Midterm Exam on Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-Colonial State

POLITICS OF IDENTITY

February 27
Politics of Ethnicity
  • Thomson Chapter 4

March 1
Ethnicity and Conflict
  • Assignment #2: Watch video Pray the Devil Back to Hell and post answers to questions on Canvas. Bring the answers to class.
  • Cooper, Helene, Madame President (read over several weeks for March 15 discussion)

March 6
Religion and Conflict: Making Sense of Boko Haram
• Bourne Section 5: Ethnicity and Religion
• Cooper, Helene, *Madame President* (for March 15 discussion)

March 8
Human Rights: LGBT Rights as Human Rights
• Bourne Section 4, 19
• **Videos**: *God Loves Uganda* and come to class prepared to discuss. Recommend *Call me Kuchu*.
• Cooper, Helene, *Madame President* (for March 15 discussion)

March 13, 15
Women and Politics
• Cooper, Helene, *Madame President* (finish book)
• **Assignment #3**: Watch *Iron Ladies of Liberia* and post answers to questions on Canvas. Bring answers to class March 15.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

March 20
Political Reform
• **Quiz #2 on Identity**
• Thomson Chapter 11
• Bourne Section 4: 16-18
• **Video**: *The Supreme Price*
• Cooper, Helene, *Madame President* (read over several weeks for March 15 discussion)

March 22
Elections
• **Video**: *An African Election*

March 27, 29 *Spring Break*

April 3
Political Parties
• Adrienne LeBas, *From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa*, Chapters 1 and 2
ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

April 5, 10
Africa’s Economic Opportunities and Challenges
- *Quiz #3 April 5 on Political Institutions*
- Thomson Chapter 9
- UN Economic Commission on Africa. *2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report*

AFRICA AND THE WORLD

April 12
Africa and Foreign Aid
- *Assignment #4*

April 17, 19
Africa and the World
- Thomson Chapter 8

April 24
US and Africa

April 26
The Challenges of Migration
- Video: *The Land Between*

May 1, 3
Conclusion and Review for Exam
- *Assignment #5: Pecha chucha* presentations
- Bourne Section 5
- Thomson Chapter 12
- Ebenezer Obadare, "Perspective: A Nigerian President’s Disappointing Return," *Current History*
  May 2017

May 7  Final Exam: 12:25 pm-2:25 pm on Canvas