

## **Contemporary African Politics: G53.0584 Fall 2010 Syllabus**

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Office hours: XXX

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:15 pm  
Class location: XXX  
Graders: XXX

### **Course Description:**

This course offers an introduction to contemporary African politics. Our goal is to introduce students to the most pressing problems African countries have faced since independence. Questions motivating the course include: (1) Why state institutions weaker in African than in other developing regions? (2) What explains Africa's slow economic growth? (3) What can be done to improve political accountability on the continent? (4) Why have some African countries been plagued by high levels of political violence while others have not? (5) Can or should the West attempt to "save" Africa?

The course is structured in three parts. In the first, we will review Africa's recent political history, concentrating on the impacts of colonialism, and the types of states created in the wake of African independence movements. Then we turn to the challenges post-colonial governments face as they attempt to manage the interests of ethnically diverse societies, and reform their economies and political institutions. We end the course with an in-depth look at patterns of violent conflict across Africa, and the daunting tasks that many African countries face as they attempt to recover from conflict.

As we address the core themes of the course, we will draw on a wide range of academic disciplines, including political science, history, economics and anthropology. We will study particular events in particular African countries, but we will also examine broad patterns across countries and use social science concepts and methods to try to explain them.

### **Requirements and Prerequisites:**

This is an undergraduate lecture course geared toward students with at least some background in political science. To enroll in the course, students must have already completed *either* International Politics [V53.0700] or Comparative Politics [V53.0500].

Students will be evaluated on the following:

(1) Participation (10%)

You are expected to attend all lectures, and participate in discussion during the lectures. Emphasis will be placed on quality of participation, including responses to the instructor's questions about the readings.

(2) Map Quiz (5%)

The quiz will be held on **February 15**. Students will be expected to know the name, location, capital city, official language and head-of-state of all African countries. This background information will help you understand the material presented in the lectures, and will help you with the readings.

(3) In-class Midterm Exam (15%)

The midterm exam will include a combination of identification questions, short essay answers and one longer essay. It will include material presented both in the required readings and in the lectures.

(4) Term paper (30%)

The main written requirement for the course is a **short paper of 8-10 pages**, due on **April 28**. Students will choose from a set of topics handed out in class on April 19. Essays will include: (i) a clear argument linked with one of the main themes of the course, and (ii) empirical evidence in support of the argument, drawn from materials from the course and your own research.

(5) In-class Final Exam (40%)

The final exam will be a closed-book exam covering material from the both lectures and the required readings from the entire semester. It will include several essay questions related to core themes of the course.

**Readings:**

Students are expected to read each of the required readings carefully before coming to class. Students should come to class with a sense of the strengths and weaknesses of each reading on its own terms, and in relation to the other readings for the week.

When you read an article, you should consider the following questions: What is the paper's main claim or argument? Is it convincing? What are the strengths and limitations of the evidence offered? Is there additional evidence you would like to see before you accept the paper's claims?

We will be reading large portions of the following books. XXXXX They will be available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore. Copies of each will be available on reserve at Bobst Library.

## **Syllabus:**

### **Sessions 1-2 [January 25, 27]: Introduction to African Politics**

Chazan, Naomi. 1999. "The Diversity of African Politics: Trends and Approaches," in Naomi Chazan (ed.), *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 5-34.

Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 38-65.

Young, Crawford. 2002. "Deciphering Disorder in African Politics: Is Identity the Key?" *World Politics* 54: 4, pp. 532-557.

### **Session 3 [Feb. 1]: Pre-Colonial Politics**

Bates, Robert. 1983. "The Centralization of African Societies," chapter 2 in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ehret, Christopher. 2002. "Africa in the Era of the Slave Trade, 1640-1800," chapter 9 in *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E., 1940. "The Political System," chapter 4 in *The Nuer. A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

### **Session 4 [Feb 3]: The Slave Trade and European Rule in Africa**

Illife, John. 1994. "The Atlantic Slave Trade," chapter 7 in *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunn, Nathan. 2010. "Shackled to the Past: The Causes and Consequences of Africa's Slave Trade," Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson, eds., *Natural Experiments of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 142-184.

Curtin, Phillip. 1994. "The Impact of Europe," *African History: From Earliest Times to Independence*, P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson and J. Vansina, eds., New York Longman.

#### *Recommended:*

Davidson, Basil. 1995. "Conquest and Colonial Rule," chapter 7 in *Africa in History*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Vail, Leroy. 1976. "Mozambique's Chartered Companies: The Rule of the Feeble," *Journal of African History* 17: 3, pp. 389-416.

### **Session 5 [Feb. 8]: Nationalism and Independence**

Bates, Robert. 1983. "The Commercialization of Agriculture and the Rise of Rural Protest," Chapter 4 in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Coleman, James. 1954. "Nationalism in Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review* 48:2, pp. 404-426.

Schmidt, Elizabeth. 2005. "Top Down or Bottom Up? Nationalist Mobilization Reconsidered, with Special Reference to Guinea (French West Africa)," *American Historical Review* 110: 4, pp. 975-1014.

#### *Recommended:*

Kaunda, Kenneth. 1962. "A Year of Decision," chapter 17 in *Zambia Shall be Free*. London: Heinemann.

### **Sessions 6-7 [Feb. 10, 15]: Legacies of Colonial Rule**

**\*Note: Map Quiz will be held in class on Feb. 15.**

Asiwaju, A. I. "Introduction," in *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries*. A.I. Asiwaju, ed., London: C. Hurst.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapter 2.

Rodney, Walter. 1972. "Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa," chapter 6 in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.

Young, Crawford. 1994. *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press, chapters 1 and 8.

#### *Recommended:*

Crowder, Michael. 1964. "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 34: 3, pp. 197-205.

Ekeh, Peter P. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17: 1, pp. 91-112.

### **Sessions 8-9 [Feb. 17, 22]: The State in Contemporary Africa**

Jean Ensminger. 1996. "Collective Action: From Community to State," chapter 6 in *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, chapters 1 and 9.

Jackson, Robert and Carl Rosberg. 1982. "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and Juridical in Statehood." *World Politics* 35: 1, pp. 1-24.

Reno, William. 1997. "War, Markets and the Reconfiguration of West Africa's Weak States," *Comparative Politics* 29:4, pp. 493-510.

*Recommended:*

Little, Peter D. 2003. *Somalia: Economy without State*. Oxford: James Currey, chapters 1, 6.

### **Session 10 [Feb. 24]: Reading Quantitative Social Science Papers**

Gonic, Larry, and Woollcott Smith, "Regression," chapter 11 in *The Cartoon Guide to Statistics*, pp. 187-210

### **Sessions 11-12 [March 1, 3]: Salient Social Identities (Race, Ethnicity and Politics)**

Bates, Robert. 1983. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics," in *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*

Posner, Daniel. 2003. "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia," *Comparative Politics* 35: 2, pp. 127-146.

Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98: 4, pp. 529-545.

de Waal, Alex. 2005. "Who are the Darfurians? Arab and African Identities, Violence and External Engagement," *African Affairs* 104.

Jung, Courtney Elizabeth. 2003. "In Defense of Whiteness: The Politics of Afrikaner Identity," in *Then I was Black: South African Political Identities in Transition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

*Recommended:*

Miguel, Edward. 2004. "Tribe or Nation? Nation-Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania," *World Politics* 56:3, pp. 327-362.

**Session 13: [March 8]: Midterm Review Session**

**Session 14: [March 10]: In-class midterm**

**March 14-19: Spring Break**

**Sessions 15 [March 22]: Social Identities (Religion and Politics)**

Cruise O'Brien, Donal. 2003. "Supping with the Devil: The Mouride Brotherhood and the Senegalese State," in *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Confronting the State in Africa*. New York: Palgrave.

Maxwell, David. 2000. "Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn: Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 70: 2, pp. 249-277.

Miguel, Edward. 2005. "Poverty and Witch Killing," *Review of Economic Studies* 72:4, pp. 1153-1172.

*Recommended:*

Brenner, Louis. 1993. "Constructing Muslim Identities in Mali," in *Muslim Identities and Social Change in Africa*, L. Brenner, ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

**Session 16 [March 24]: Social Identities (Class and Gender)**

Boone, Catherine. 1998. "The Making of a Rentier Class: Wealth Accumulation and Political Control in Senegal," in Peter Lewis, ed., *Africa: Dilemmas of Development and Change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Robert Melson. 1971. "Ideology and Inconsistency: The Cross-Pressured Nigerian Worker," *American Political Science Review* 65: 1, pp. 161-171.

Gray, Leslie and Michael Kevane. 1999. "Diminished Access, Diverted Exclusion: Women and Land Tenure in Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Studies Review* 42: 2, pp. 15-39.

*Recommended:*

Sklar, Richard. 1979. "The Nature of Class Domination in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 17:4, pp. 531-552.

Sandbrook, Richard. 1977. "The Political Potential of African Urban Workers," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 11: 3, pp. 411-433.

Goetz, Anne Marie. 2002. "No Shortcuts to Power: Constraints on Women's Political Effectiveness in Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40:4, pp. 549-575.

Tripp, Ali Mari, Dior Konate and Colleen Lowe-Morna. 2006. "Sub-Saharan Africa: On the Fast Track to Women's Representation," in *Women, Quotas and Politics*, D. Dhalerup, ed., New York: Routledge.

### **Session 17-18 [March 29, 31]: Political Regimes and Political Change**

Hyden, Goran. 2006. "Big Man Rule," chapter 5 in *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Widener, Jennifer. 1994. "Political Reform in Anglophone and Francophone African Countries," in Jennifer Widener, ed., *Economic Change and Political Liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 49-57.

Bratton, Michael and Nicholas Van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 6.

Manning, Carrie. 2005. "Assessing African Party Systems after the Third Wave," *Party Politics* 11: 6, pp. 707-727.

#### *Recommended:*

Decalo, Samuel. 1997. "Military Coups and Regimes in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11: 1, pp. 105-127.

Widener, Jennifer. 1992. "The Kenyan Party State in Comparative Perspective," chapter 7 in *The Rise of a Party-State in Kenya*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Laakso, Liisa. 2001. "When Election are Just a Formality: Rural-Urban Dynamics in the Dominant Party System of Zimbabwe," in *Multi-Party Elections in Africa*, M. Cowen and L. Laakso, eds., New York: Palgrave.

Villalon, Leonardo, and Abdourahmane Idrissa. 2005. "The Tribulations of a Successful Transition: Institutional Dynamics and Elite Rivalry in Mali," in L. Villalon and P. VonDoepp, eds., *The Fate of Africa's Democratic Experiments*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

### **Session 19 [April 5]: Patronage Politics and the African Voter**

Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 10, pp. 1339-1362.

Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin," *World Politics* 55: 3, pp. 399-422.

Bratton, Michael and Nicholas Van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 2.

*Recommended:*

Baldwin, Kate. 2009. "Big Men and Ballots: How Do Patrons Influence Their Clients' Voting Behavior," working paper, Columbia University.

Conroy-Krutz. 2009. "Political Information and Electoral Behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa," working paper, Columbia University.

### **Session 20-21 [April 10, 12]: Explaining Africa's "Growth Tragedy"**

Robert Bates, 1981. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, chapters 2, 5, 6, 7.

Collier, Paul and Willem Jan Gunning. 1999. "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13: 31, pp. 3-22.

Olivier de Sardan, J.P. 1999. "A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37: 1, pp. 25-52.

William Easterly and Ross Levine. 1997. "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112: 4, pp. 1203-1223.

*Recommended:*

Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2006. "The Economic Lives of the Poor," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21: 1, pp. 141-167.

Scott, James C. 1998. "Compulsory Villagization in Tanzania: Aesthetics and Miniturization," in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Van de Walle, Nicholas. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis 1979-1999*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapters 1 and 3.

### **Session 22 [April 14]: The Politics and Economics of Foreign Aid**

Radelet, Steven. 2006. "A Primer on Foreign Aid," Center for Global Development Working Paper 92.



Easterly, William. "Can the West Save Africa?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 47:2, sections 1 and 2, pp. 373-391.

Sachs, Jeffrey. 2005. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: Penguin Group, chapters 12 and 13.

*Recommended:*

Rodrik, Dani. 2006. "Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion? A Review of the World Bank's Growth in the 1990s," *Journal of Economic Literature* XLIV, pp. 973-987.

Pitcher, M. Anne. 2004. "Conditions, Commitments and the Politics of Restructuring in Africa," *Comparative Politics* 36:4, pp. 379-398.

Ferguson, James and Larry Lohmann. 1994. "The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho," *The Ecologist* 24: 5, pp. 176-181.

### **Session 23 [April 19]: Guidelines for Writing a Political Science Paper**

**\* Note: Paper topics handed out in class**

### **Sessions 24-25[April 21, 26]: Explaining Political Violence in Africa**

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97: 1, pp. 75-90.

Ross, Michael L. 2004. "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58: 1, pp. 35-67.

Langer, Arnim. 2005. "Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Group Mobilisation in Côte d'Ivoire," *Oxford Development Studies* 33: 1, pp. 25-45.

Straus, Scott. 2006. "Rwanda and Darfur: A Comparative Analysis," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 1: 1, pp. 41-56.

*Recommended:*

Klopp, Jacqueline M. and Elke Zuern. 2007. "The Politics of Violence in Democratization," *Comparative Politics* 39: 2, pp. 127-146.

### **Session 26 [April 28]: Case Studies of Civil War in Africa**

**\* Note: Papers due in class on April 28.**

For this class, I have picked two recent African civil wars that we will discuss in depth. Students are expected to have done the reading before class. Before class, I will assign students to become 'experts' on *either* the Sudanese or the Angolan civil war. During class, we will divide into small groups and each group will be assigned to present on specific questions related to either conflict.

### *Angola*

Stockwell, John. 1978. *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story*. New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 1-77.

Hodges, Tony. 2004. *Angola: Anatomy of an Oil State*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 1-47 and 141-207.

### *Sudan*

Johnson, Douglas H. 2003. *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. Oxford, UK: James Currey, pp. 22-110.

International Crisis Group, *God, Oil and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan*, ICG Africa Report 39, chapters 1 and 4.

### **Session 27 [May 3]: Post-Conflict Recovery**

Bigombe, Betty, David Collier and Nicholas Sambanis. 2000. "Policies for Building a Post-Conflict Peace," *Journal of African Economies* 9: 3, pp. 323-348.

Blattman, Christopher. 2009. "From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda," *American Political Science Review* 103: 2, pp. 231-247.

Gibson, James L. 2004. "Does Truth Lead to Reconciliation: Testing the Causal Assumptions of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process," *American Political Science Review* 48: 2, pp. 201-217.

### *Recommended:*

Graybill, Lynn S. 2004. "Pardon, Punishment and Amnesia: Three African Post-Conflict Methods," *Third World Quarterly* 25:6, pp. 1117-1130.

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2006. "Disentangling the Determinants of Successful Demobilization and Reintegration," working paper, Columbia University.

Fisman, Raymond and Edward Miguel. 2008. "Economic Gangsters," chapter 7 in *The Road Back from War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 158-185

Fearon, James D. and Laitin, David D., "Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States," *International Security* 28: 4, pp. 5-43.

**Session 28 [May 5]: Conclusion**