

University of Illinois at Chicago
Politics and Government of Africa
Political Science 245
Spring 2006

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Class Location: 369 BSB

Office: 1149 BSB
Office Hours: By appointment
Class Meets: M/W/F: 9:00 to 9:50 a.m.

Introduction & Overview

Africa presents two faces. There is the Africa of lingering poverty, AIDS, intractable ethnic conflicts, irredeemable corruption, leadership failure and other social, economic and political ills. And there is the Africa of ancient history, rich traditional culture, Olympic soccer champions, Nobel Laureates, great economic potentials, and more. However, much of what is known about Africa today in the outside world, including the United States, is based on the former than the latter- thanks to inadequate scholarship and media bias that have encouraged public generalizations and misconceptions about the continent.

With the goal of providing an informed and balanced view of Africa, this course will consider a broad range of empirical and theoretical questions about the continent. Although we will touch on Africa's colonial history and legacies, the focus will be on events from the second half of the 20th century, when nearly all contemporary African countries achieved political independence. We will explore varied sources of information to understand Africa's socio-demographic, economic and political transformations over this period. The hope is that at the end of this course students will have gained a capacity to analyze Africa objectively and broadened their global perspectives.

I assume that students taking this course have some understanding of government, acquired through courses like POLS 130 (Comparative Politics), POLS 190 (Scope of Political Science) or introductory American Government. If you have not taken any of these but feel qualified, check with me.

TEACHING METHOD

This course will be taught as a part-seminar, part-lecture. Each class will begin with an introduction of the topic and presentation of leading information from the readings. This will lead to a lecture/discussion in which the students are expected to participate actively.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three rubrics have been adopted for evaluating performance in this course:

1.) Attendance/Participation. Regular attendance is mandatory. I will track the number of times you missed class and take it into consideration when calculating your final grade. Participation will be determined by your contribution to class discussion and general attitude toward the class. Beginning the second week, students will submit a prior (weekend) e-mail version of a 1-2 page reaction to each week's readings and come

to class with a hard copy to guide their contribution to class discussion. This paper will try to answer questions such as the following: a.) What are the issues involved? b.) What is the significance of those issues to understanding Africa? c.) What are the authors' arguments/conclusions? e.) What do you conclude from the readings? Be prepared always to share your thoughts on the readings.

2.) An essay-only Midterm Examination intended to test the students' grasp of the issues and their ability to synthesize the readings.

3.) Research Project. The ultimate goal of this course is for students to distil all they've assimilated into a critical analysis of Africa. You will write an 18-20 page paper on two countries picked from different regions in the continent. Your paper has two parts. First, you will assess/compare these countries in terms of their political, economic and social transformations in time. Second, you will highlight a substantive issue of interest (i.e., administrative structure, judicial system, democratic reform, urbanization, population control, poverty alleviation, women development, economic development, AIDS prevention programs) in each country and propose a new policy or an amendment to the existing one. The idea here is an original research, and to that extent, although some background (i.e., colonial power, ethnic composition, independence movements, etc) is necessary, loading up your paper with trite, descriptive information that is easily lifted from the internet will be penalized. In other words, I expect you to look beyond materials already covered in class and seek new, properly attributed information from documentaries, journals, newspapers (no more than 3 internet citations allowed) and other written sources. Structurally, the paper will have separate pages for title and references and be written in font-size 12, double-spaced, with one-inch margins top, right, bottom and left. I encourage you to use graphical tools (tables, charts, etc) to illustrate important or interesting aspects of your paper, and to follow acceptable format. Questions regarding accessing written sources for your paper should be directed to the reference section at the UIC library. Be warned: spelling and grammatical errors will set you back in points. Most computers these days have spelling and grammar utilities; find and use them. You may also seek assistance from the university's Writing Center. Before embarking on this project you will submit for approval a proposal outlining what countries you plan to research and how you plan to go about it.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1.) Shraeder, Peter. 2000. *African Politics: A Mosaic in Transformation*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's
- 2.) Campbell, Greg. 2002. *Blood Diamonds*. Boulder: Westview Press
- 3.) Van de Walle, Nicholas et al, eds. 2003. *Beyond Structural Adjustment*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.
- 4.) Barnett, Michael. 2002. *Eyewitness to Genocide*. New York: Cornell University Press.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1.) Diawara, Manthia. 1998. *In Search of Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 2.) Hochschild, Adam. 1999. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- 3.) Soyinka, Wole. 1996. *The Open Sore of a Continent*. New York: Oxford University Press

These books are available at the UIC bookstore and possibly online at Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The Shraeder book (pp. 6 – 8) lists a wealth of print and electronic media resources for researching Africa. These resources may be available at the UIC library or online or through the UIC library. These resources do not include films and documentaries which will be utilized from time to time.

GRADE COMPOSITION

Attendance/Participation	= 30 percent
Midterm Examination	= 30 percent
Research Paper	= 40 percent

GRADING SCALE

Based on weighted scores in the above rubrics, the final grade will be determined as follows:

- A = 93 – 100 percent
- B = 83 – 92 percent
- C = 75 – 82 percent
- D = 65 – 74 percent
- F = Below 65 percent

INSTRUCTOR'S POLICY

On Attendance:

For the goal of this course to be realized, you need to be here and on time. I consider habitual late-coming disrespectful and it tells me you are not serious about the course. Three or more unexcused absences put you at risk for failure in this course no matter your other scores. Frivolous excuses, such as missing the train or car breaking down, will not be entertained. Academic accommodations will be given to students with documented disabilities, per university regulations. Such students should inform me of their condition early in the semester. Medical emergencies must be validated by an MD.

On Assignments:

Assignments are due on deadlines. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized accordingly. No exceptions.

On Academic Dishonesty:

A word of caution: Don't plagiarize or use a surrogate to do your work. Great variance between the skills shown in class and those displayed in take-home assignments will trigger an investigation that may lead to serious consequences for the student.

On Class Decorum:

Cell phones, pagers and related gadgets capable of setting off and distracting the class must be completely turned off before you enter the class. You may bring but not read

newspapers during class. Stimulating and vibrant exchanges as part of class participation are encouraged; however, they must be conducted in a civilized fashion. Conversations that are irrelevant to the course will be shut down. Finally, while a cup of coffee or a bottle of soda may be allowed, chewable items (including gum) are forbidden.

On Course Information:

This syllabus is your primary source of written information for the course; consult it regularly. If you lose the copy given to you in class ask for a replacement or print one online.

COURSE CALENDAR

Note: This calendar does not demarcate specific topics for each class meeting. Topics will be covered cumulatively; that is, we will pick up from where we left off the previous meeting. Friday has been designated for viewing film, documentary, utilizing some other supplemental aid or case studying African countries. With regards to case studies, I will announce early in the week the selected countries to which the readings shall apply.

Week One

- 1/9 Introduction and Course Overview. Relevance of course: Why take this course?
Impromptu discussion: the African state; myths and realities, Afro-optimism v.
Afro-pessimism.
Documentary – “The Nature of a Continent” or “The Story of a Continent”
Assignment: evaluate (for adequacy, balance, objectivity) random U.S. media
reports on Africa.

Week Two

- 1/16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No Class
1/18 The Nature of the African state. Read:
 Van de Walle et al – Chapter 1.
 (Suggested) Diawara – Chapter 1.

Week Three

- 1/23 Africa in Historical Context (1). Read:
 Schraeder – Chapters 4, 5
 (Suggested): Hochschild – Chapters 1 -3; 4 – 9; 10 – 15; 16 & 17

Week Four

- 1/30 Africa in Historical Context (2). Read:
Schraeder – Chapter 6
(Suggested): Diawara – Chapters 2 – 3; 4 – 7
Documentaries – “The Winds of Change: The End of Colonialism in Africa”
- “Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom”

Week Five

- 2/6 Nation-Building: Ethnicity, Class & Civil Society. Read:
Schraeder – Chapters 7, 10
Van de Walle – Chapter 4
Documentary – “Somali: The Neglected Civil War”

Week Six

- 2/13 Political Economies & Institutional Trends (1). Read:
Van de Walle – Chapters 2, 8, 9

Week Seven

- 2/20 Political Economies & Institutional Trends (2): Read:
Van de Walle – Chapters 3, 5, 7

Week Eight

- 2/27 Political Economies & Institutional Trends (3): Read:
Van de Walle – Chapters 6 & 10
3/3 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week Nine

- 3/6 Models of Governance (1): Military Coups & Governments
Shraeder – Chapter 11
Documentary – “Africa: In Defiance of Democracy”
Hand-out/internet-referred reading (focus: nature & dynamics of military juntas in selected African countries)

Week Ten

- 3/13 Models of Governance (2): Democratic experiments

Shraeder – Chapter 12

Hand-out/internet-referred reading (focus: promise of multi-party democracy in selected African countries)

- Last week to submit proposal for final research project

Week Eleven

3/20 Africa & World politics (1)

Shraeder – Chapters 13, 14

Week Twelve

3/27 Africa & World Politics (2)

Barnett – Chapters 1 – 3

Campbell – Chapters 1 - 4

Week Thirteen

4/3 Africa & World politics (3)

Barnett – Chapters 4 – End

Campbell – Chapters 5 – End

Recommended: Hotel Rwanda (film)

Week Fourteen

4/10 Literary & Socio-cultural Themes in African Politics. Read:

Shraeder – Chapter 9

Hand-out/internet referred reading (focus: scholar-activism; journalism in selected African countries)

(Suggested) Soyinka – Entire book

Week Fifteen

4/17 The New Africa (1): Economic Hopes, Political Optimism & Regional Cooperation. Read:

The African Union. 2001. *The New partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD). Abuja, Nigeria. Available at <http://www.uneca.org/nepad/NEPAD.doc>.

Yash Tandon. 2002. "NEPAD and FDIs: Symmetries and Contradictions." Nairobi, Kenya. Available at <http://www.geocities.com/ericsquir/articles/tandon-nepad.htm>

(Suggested): Diawara – Chapter 8 – End

Documentary – "Zimbabwe and South Africa: Still Far from Coexistence"

Week Sixteen

4/24 The New Africa (2): Globalism, Multiculturalism & Other Contemporary Issues.
Read:

Hand-out/internet-referred reading (focus: African immigrants in the U.S.)

Documentary – "Speaking Out: Women, AIDS, and Hope"

Final Research paper is due in my mail box (no e-mail submissions!) at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2006.