

University of Illinois at Chicago
African Post-Independence Transformations and Challenges
Political Science 349
Fall 2008

Faculty: Ola Adeoye, Ph.D.
Phone: 312-413-2186
E-mail:
Class Location:
Class Meets:

Office: 1149 BSB
Office Hours: By Appointment.
oadeoy1@uic.edu
SH 312
TH - 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Africa has been in focus lately - as the new battleground of the struggle for global economic influence between the U.S. and China and for the worsening crisis in Zimbabwe and Sudan. Before now, however, not much was known about Africa - thanks to inadequate scholarship and media bias that have encouraged public generalizations and misconceptions about the continent. To be sure, Africa is a continent of long human history, rich traditional culture and enormous potentials. But it is generally perceived as a place of political instability, irredeemable corruption, and persistent leadership failure.

Our goal in this course is to understand how Africa has changed since gaining political independence. We will examine closely and objectively the challenges it has grappled with and where it fits in the global economy, using case studies of selected countries. Naturally, we begin with African colonization, its contexts, dynamics and legacies, alongside the intended and unintended consequences. My hope is that at the end of this course you will have gained a capacity to analyze Africa objectively and propose a way to shape its future.

This course is a step up from introductory African Politics, and I assume students taking it have solid grounding in politics and government, acquired through courses like POLS 130 (Comparative Politics), POLS 200 (Methods of Political Science) or American Government. If you have not taken any of these but feel qualified, check with me.

TEACHING METHOD

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

1.) Attendance/Participation. Regular attendance is mandatory and will be taken into consideration when calculating your final grade. Participation will be determined by

your contribution to class discussion and general attitude toward the class. Students will submit a prior (Deadline: 6:00 p.m. Wednesday) 1-2 page emailed (oadeoy1@uic.edu) reaction to the week's reading and come to class prepared to discuss it. It will try to answer questions such as the following: a.) What are the issues covered in the reading? 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.

2.) A short (7-10 - page) paper evaluating the objectivity, fairness and adequacy of media representation of Africa's transformations and challenges and the implications for globalism.

3.) A Midterm Quiz of your ability to synthesize the reading and the contending issues.

4.) Research Project. The ultimate goal of this course is for you to distil all you've learned into a publishable, critical analysis of Africa's position in the emergent global economy. You will write a 17-20 page paper on the empirical (what is/the fact on the ground) versus normative (what ought to be/the ideal) relationship between Africa and the world community, linking influential economic powers, such as the U.S., China and India and international institutions, i.e., UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc. You will focus on any TWO policy areas of interest (poverty alleviation, military cooperation, immigration, economic development, trade, technology, education, energy, women empowerment, deforestation, urbanization, population control, AIDS prevention, etc) and propose a better relationship in those areas. As this is an upper-level course, the idea here is an original research, and I expect you to look beyond materials covered in class and use new, properly attributed information from documentaries, articles, journals, newspapers (no more than 3 internet citations allowed), and other relevant 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. This project requires a graded class presentation of a proposal outlining the topic and research design.

REQUIRED READING

- 1.) Schraeder, Peter. 2004. *African Politics: A Mosaic in Transformation*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomas/Wadsworth
- 2.) Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.
- 3.) Calderisi, Robert. 2006. *The Trouble With Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

- 4.) Mbaku, John, M. and Suresh C. Saxena, Editors. 2004. Africa at the Crossroads: Between Regionalism and Globalism. Westport, Ct: Praeger Publishers.

SUGGESTED READING:

- 1.) Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*
- 2.) Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics*
- 3.) David K. Leonard, *Africa's Stalled Development: International Causes and Cures*
- 4.) E. Gyimah-Boadi, *Democratic Reform in Africa: The Quality of Progress*
- 5.) Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa*
- 6.) Peter Lewis, ed., *Africa: Dilemmas of Development and Change*
- 7.) Wole Soyinka, *The Open Sore of a Continent*

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

HELPFUL RESOURCES

News sources available online:

- <http://allafrica.com>
- <http://www.africanews.org>

Journals available online or through the UIC library:

- *African Affairs*
- *African Studies Quarterly*
- *The Journal of Modern African Studies*
- *African Studies Review*

GRADE COMPOSITION

Attendance/Participation	= 20 percent
Evaluation Paper	= 20 percent
Midterm Quiz	= 20 percent
Proposal Presentation	= 10 percent
Research Paper	= 30 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 = Under 65 percent

INSTRUCTOR'S POLICY

On Attendance:

For the goal of this course to be realized, you need to be here and on time. Class begins 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.

Week One – Thursday

8/28 Introduction and Course Overview. Relevance of course. Why take this course? Expectations from course. Myths and Realities/State of the African continent. Impromptu discussion on Africa.

Documentary on the history and nature of Africa

Week Two

9/4 Competing Theoretical Perspectives. Read: Schraeder, 13 – 14.

Week Three

9/11 The Nature of Pre-colonial Africa: Read: Schraeder, 1-3; Meredith, Introduction & 1 - 4.

Week Four

9/18 Contexts and Trends in African Pre-independence Politics: Read: Schraeder, 4-5; Meredith, 5 – 7.

Week Five

9/25 Contexts and Trends in African Pre/post-independence Politics (2) Read: Schraeder, 6; Meredith, 8 – 12.

Week Six

10/2 Struggle for Democracy & Nation-Building: Read: Schraeder, 8 - 9; Meredith, 13 - 18

Week Seven

10/9 Struggle for Democracy & Nation-Building (2). Read: Meredith, 19 – 21.

Week Eight

10/16 Struggle for Democracy & Nation-Building (3): Read: Schraeder, Chapter 10; Meredith, 22 – 24

Documentary on democratic trends in Africa

Week Nine

10/23

Midterm Quiz

Week Ten

10/30 Evolving political & socio-economic issues/foreign politics

Read: Meredith, 25 – 29; Calderisi, Part I - II

Film: *The Last King of Scotland*

Week Eleven

11/6 Evolving political & socio-economic issues/foreign politics (2)

Read: Meredith, 30 – 35; Calderisi, Part III - IV

Documentary on African civil wars/ethnic conflicts

- Last week to submit proposal for final research paper

Week Twelve

11/13 Africa & New Globalism

Read: Mbaku/Saxena, 1 – 8; Schraeder, 11

Research Proposal Presentation (1)

Week Thirteen

11/20 Africa & New Globalism (2)

Read: Mbaku/Saxena, 9 – 16; Schraeder, 12

Research Proposal Presentation (2)

Week Fourteen

11/27 - Thanksgiving Holiday

Week Fifteen

12/4 Research Proposal Presentation (3)

Course Closing

Final Research paper is due in my mail box located in the political science department (no e-mail submissions!) at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2008.