POLITICAL SCIENCE 660: AFRICAN POLITICS

OBJECTIVES

This is a very exciting time to be studying African politics. Many changes are underway in Africa today regarding economic growth, political reform, 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. 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 is particularly concerned with 1) who makes the rules of the political game in Africa; 2) what cultural and social influences shape these rules; and 3) which political institutions are at work, i.e., how they are created, maintained, contested and changed.

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.

The course provides students with both concrete knowledge of African politics as well as tools for thinking about some of the broader analytic issues and themes in political science. Like all courses, it aims to sharpen student critical analytical skills.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Reading: I expect students to have read the assigned material and come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Class attendance: 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:** 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, especially on Tuesdays. Come prepared to talk about what is in the news. See wiki for ways to stay current on news and analysis.

**Reaction Posts:** You are required to submit through the course of the semester at least five reaction posts (minimum 200 words) to class discussions or issues raised on the wiki forum (Express Yourself). These should be thoughtful reflections on course readings and class lectures, discussions and videos, particularly on issues that peak your interest. Students might also want to share with the class recent relevant articles, blogs, or videos that caught their interest by posting them on the course wiki. Posting material from other sources is welcome, but not considered a reaction post.

**Assignments and quiz:** There will be one map quiz and at least three short assignments throughout the course of the semester in lieu of the class to be done wherever you please. These are a form of blended learning involving individual/group projects that last a little longer than the duration of the class, requiring you to draw on your readings to analyze a real world problem or dataset.

**Papers:** 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 Learn@UW Dropbox. Students are welcome to meet with me before turning in their summary. If the topic is later changed, a new abstract must be submitted and approved.

**Exams:** Two exams are required. The exams will involve essays that integrate material.

**NOTE:** All exams, papers, book reviews and the abstract must be submitted in Learn@UW in the Dropbox. Please do NOT email them to me or give me a hard copy unless you experience difficulties uploading to Learn@UW.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

Participation (10%); quiz and 5 reaction posts (required but not assigned grade); assignments (5%); paper (30%); mid-term exam (25%); final exam (30%).

**DEADLINES**

- February 5: Map quiz
- February 13: Abstract due
- March 7: Mid-term exam
- April 22: Term paper
- May 17: Final exam

**OFFICE HOURS**

Please use the wiki to sign up for appointments with Professor Tripp. You will need to have a google account (can use your wisc.edu email address but gmail is easiest).
WIKI

You are strongly urged to explore the course wiki, 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, including fun facts, photos, connections to Africa if any, background and interests. Please bookmark the wiki when you receive the link via email. Or type in the link https://sites.google.com/site/ps660africanpolitcissite/

LAP TOPS AND CELL PHONE USE

Students can bring laptops to class for note taking on the condition that they can be freely called upon to engage the class. Cell phones must be turned off and put away. As interesting as the class is, I am utterly incapable of competing with the lure of FB. Therefore I must stack the deck squarely in my favor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

You should be familiar with the University's standards for academic honesty as described in the pamphlet, Academic Misconduct: Rules and Procedures, published by the Dean of Students’ Office. Your paper and exams cannot be written even partially by someone else: they must be a product of your own efforts. Books, articles and class notes may be consulted in writing papers, but you must cite such sources, referencing or footnoting any facts or ideas that are not your own. Quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks. Students who fail to heed this warning risk failing the course or an even worse fate. Please watch YouTube video on plagiarism that is linked to the wiki on the page “Quoting.”

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

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.

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 packet of xeroxed readings can be purchased from Social Science Copy Center (6120 Sewell). Short additional topical readings from the news with links to the wiki will be assigned throughout the course as they appear in the media.


COURSE OUTLINE

January 22
Introduction to African Politics

January 24
Continent of Contrasts
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 1

Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Chapters 1, 2

January 29
The Political Legacy of the Pre-Colonial Political Systems
Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Chapter 3, 4

January 31
Political Legacy of the Colonial State
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 3

Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Chapter 5

February 5
The Rise of Personalized Rule
*Map quiz*
Young, The Postcolonial State in Africa, Chapter 2, 4

February 7
Expansion of the State
Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Chapters 6, 7

February 12, 14
State Collapse
*Abstract due February 14*
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 5

Wrong, *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Chapters 8-14.

February 19
Conflict in Africa
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 7

February 21
KONY and the Lord’s Resistance Army


February 26, 28
Ethnicity and Conflict
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 8

Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, Chapters 1-6

March 5
War in the Great Lakes Region

Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, Chapters 7-9

March 7
Mid-term

March 12
Discussion of *Surviving the Slaughter*
Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, Chapters 10, 11

March 14
Decline of Conflict and Peacebuilding


March 19
Women and Politics


March 21
Class Assignment

March 24-31  *Spring Break*

April 2, 4
Political Reform
Young, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Chapter 6, 9


**April 9**

**Africa’s Hybrid Regimes**


**April 11**

*Class assignment*

**April 16**

**Human Rights: LGBT Rights as Human Rights**


**April 18**

**Human Rights: Debating Sexual Violence**


MacKenzie, Megan, “War Rape is Not Declining,” 17 October in Duck of Minerva blog.


**April 23**

**Africa’s Economic Opportunities and Challenges**


Booth, David and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, “Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda,” *African*

April 25
Paper due
Class assignment

April 30, May 2
Africa and Foreign Aid


UN Millennium Goals http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

Watch videos Andrew Mwenda, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Easterly and Bono.

May 7
Africa and the World


May 9
Obama’s Africa Policy


May 17
Final Exam