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.

I want students to be curious, ask questions, and creatively pursue their interests. 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.

Assignments: There will be at least three short assignments throughout the course of the semester. 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.

Quizzes: There will be one map quiz and a few other quizzes to make sure you are keeping up with the readings and attending class.

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 in doc format. 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.

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

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

GRADING CRITERIA

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

DEADLINES

February 3  Map quiz in class
February 13 Abstract due in dropbox at 5 pm
March 12  Mid-term exam in dropbox
April 19  Term paper due 9 pm in dropbox
May 10  Final exam 7:45 – 9:45 am in dropbox

OFFICE HOURS

Please sign up for all appointments during office hours with Professor Tripp through ailitrripp.youcanbook.me. Office hours are Wednesday 9:00-11:00 am, Thursday 1 pm – 3:00 pm. If these times do not work feel free to contact atripp@wisc.edu to arrange another time.

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
LAP TOPS AND CELL PHONE USE

Students may not use laptops in class unless they sit in the front row and look very interested in 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. Students seem to have performed better in class after I implemented this policy.

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 20
Introduction to African Politics


January 22
Continent of Contrasts

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 1
- Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, Chapters 1, 2

January 27
The Political Legacy of the Pre-Colonial Political Systems

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 1 pp. 18-22
- Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, Chapter 3, 4

January 29
Political Legacy of the Colonial State

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 1 pp. 22-65
- Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, Chapter 5

February 3, 5
The Rise of Personalized Rule and State Expansion

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 4, pp. 129-143
- Wrong, In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz, Chapters 6, 7

February 10, 12
State Collapse

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

February 17, 19
Conflict in Africa

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 7, pp. 267-298

February 24
Ethnicity and Conflict

- Englebert and Dunn, Inside African Politics, Chapter 3, pp. 63-114
- Umutesi, Surviving the Slaughter, Chapters 1-3
February 26
Religion and Conflict: Making Sense of Boko Harem

- Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, Chapters 4-6

March 3
Legacies of Conflict: Ebola

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

March 5
Discussion of *Surviving the Slaughter*

- Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, Chapters 10, 11

March 10
Decline of Conflict and Peacebuilding


March 12  Mid-term Exam

March 17
Human Rights: LGBT Rights as Human Rights
*Human Rights Lawyer and LGBT activist from Uganda, Frank Mugisha, will speak in class. Also he will deliver the Mildred Fish Harnack at 4pm in the AT&T Lounge in the Pyle Center on March 17.*


March 19
Political Reform

March 24
Africa’s Hybrid Regimes


March 26
Africa’s Economic Opportunities and Challenges


March 30-April 4  *Spring Break*

April 7
Africa’s Economic Opportunities and Challenges (continued)


April 9, 14
Women and Politics


April 16, 21
Africa and Foreign Aid

- Interview with Lilie Chouliaraki. Can Feel-Good Activism Save the World? Think Africa Press. 20 March 2013. (wiki)
- Watch videos Andrew Mwenda, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Easterly and Bono. (wiki)

April 23, 28
Africa and the World

- Englebert and Dunn, *Inside African Politics*, Chapter 8
April 30, May 5
US and Africa


May 7 Conclusion

May 10 Final Exam 7:45 – 9:45 am