**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF AFRICA**
Political Science 3347
Southern Methodist University
Fall 2014

**Class time and location:** Mondays, 6:30-9:20 p.m., Hyer Hall 102

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**Office:** 201 Carr Collins Hall  
**Office Hours:** WTh 2-3:30 p.m., and by appointment  
**Email:** kcloward@smu.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course is an introduction to contemporary Sub-Saharan African politics, focusing both on larger trends in the region and the substantial diversity of experience across individual countries. It will delve into Africa's experience with a wide range of political regimes, conflict situations, and development trajectories in the post-independence era, and will attempt to counter the pessimism and sensationalism common to Western media accounts of Africa with a balanced look at the continent’s success stories as well as its crises. It will also investigate Africa's pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history for clues to understanding the challenges the region faces today.

The course satisfies the Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures Pillar (Level II) and the Human Diversity Proficiency of the University Curriculum. As such, students who take the course will be able to analyze different theoretical perspectives in the study of political experiences, and will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes and theoretical applications associated with those experiences. With respect to issues related to race, ethnicity, and societies in the developing world, students will also be able to demonstrate an understanding of the political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

**TEXTS**

The following three books are **required**, and are available for purchase at the bookstore:


All other required readings are available electronically through Blackboard. In addition, a number of the required articles we will read over the course of the semester have been reprinted in this edited volume, available at the bookstore:


Finally, this concise history of Africa is a good introductory primer:

**Course Requirements and Grading**

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Summaries</td>
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<td>Country Briefs</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance at lecture and participation in discussion are expected. If you need to miss class for a family emergency, illness, or University-sponsored event, you must notify me in advance via email and provide appropriate documentation. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your participation grade. **Upon your second unexcused absence, you will be either administratively dropped from the course or receive a final grade of F.**

If you must miss a class, please obtain notes from another student. I will not distribute PowerPoint slides or my own personal notes, nor will I provide a private tutorial. If you have spoken to a classmate and still have questions, I am available to fill in the gaps.

Required readings are, in fact, required – you should complete them **prior to** the beginning of the class for which they’re assigned and come to class prepared and ready to discuss them. You are advised to complete the assigned readings for each week in the order in which they are listed in the syllabus, and you are expected to bring all of the week’s readings with you to class.

In addition to general preparation and participation, at the beginning of the semester you will select an African country and become the class’s expert on that country. You will be responsible for independently researching your country’s history, economy, and politics, such that you will be prepared to talk in class about each week’s reading and lecture topic as it relates to your country. You will also make a brief in-class presentation introducing your country early in the semester (you will meet with me during the first two weeks of the semester to sign up for a presentation date).

I expect you to be courteous and respectful to me and to your classmates. This means arriving on time, staying in your seat and awake until the end of the period, and refraining from texting or other distracting activities. I will permit the use of laptops in class, but students who choose to do so must sit in the first row and commit to using them only for the purpose of note taking. If I find that laptops are being used for other purposes, the privilege will be revoked.

Late arrivals and early departures, being present but unprepared to participate, participating without being prepared, and engaging in distracting or disrespectful behavior will all adversely affect your participation grade.

**Assignment Details**

**Map Quiz:** You will be responsible for identifying countries and their capitals. You may find these practice quizzes helpful: [sporcle.com/games/g/africa](http://sporcle.com/games/g/africa); [sporcle.com/games/g/africacapitals](http://sporcle.com/games/g/africacapitals).

**Country Summaries:** During ten weeks of your choosing, you will submit a short summary (maximum one page) describing relevant details about your country that relate to that week’s reading and lecture topic. The specific topics you will need to address in the summaries are listed under each date in the reading schedule below.
Country Briefs: While you will be responsible every class period for understanding the readings as they relate to your country, you will also submit three 5-6-page papers about your country over the course of the semester. The papers will focus, in turn, on some aspect of your country’s experience with post-colonial political institutions, conflict, and development, and will consider the applicability of political science theories and concepts in explaining this case. You will pose a research question about your country, propose an answer to that question, and then provide relevant evidence to support your answer. The country briefs are due on October 6th, November 10th, and December 1st. If you wish, you may revise and resubmit one of the first two papers, in which case your grade on the revised paper will replace your original grade.

In-Class Midterm: The midterm will consist of IDs and an essay question. You will need to draw on information from both lectures and readings in order to successfully answer the exam questions.

Take-Home Final: The final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions, and will be comprehensive. The exam will be made available on December 8th and is due in hard copy and electronic formats by 12 p.m. on December 12th. Exams more than 24 hours late will not be accepted.

Paper Submission and Help

The country briefs and summaries should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, and standard character spacing. Each paper must be submitted in hard-copy format prior to the beginning of class on the day it is due. Failure to meet this deadline for the country briefs will result in a half letter grade deduction for each 24-hour period after the due date and time, beginning at 6:31 p.m. Late country summaries will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to complete all assignments such that sufficient time remains to deal with any technical difficulties you might encounter. I will not be sympathetic to claims of malfunctioning printers.

Each paper must also be submitted to Blackboard as a Word document (not a PDF or text file). In the absence of electronic submission, your paper will not be graded.

The SMU Writing Center can help you with your writing. Call 214-768-3648 for an appointment.

Contacting Me

For quick questions or to schedule an appointment, the best way to contact me is via email at keoward@smu.edu.

My office hours, listed at the beginning of the syllabus, are your time. I am here to help you, but in order for me to do that you must first let me know that you are having a problem. If my regular hours are inconvenient for you, I am happy to schedule another time.

Religious and Disability Accommodation

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or http://smu.edu/ALEC/DASS to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. You should then schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements. It is essential that you address your needs early in the semester, before assignments are due.

Students who need to miss class for religious reasons should provide me with an explanation, in writing, no later than September 10th.
Honor Code

I take plagiarism and other forms of cheating very seriously. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. When in doubt, cite. In addition, you may not recycle work you have submitted in another course.

The SMU Honor Code governs all student work in this course, both in class and outside of the classroom. Honor code violations are punishable not only by a failing grade for the course, but also by referral to the University Honor Council. Ignorance of the Honor Code and its provisions is not an excuse. Any questions about specific applications of the Honor Code should be addressed to me.

Personal Responsibility

I am committed to being accessible to students, and I want you to succeed in the course, but you should not mistake this attitude for lax standards or low expectations. I am absolutely serious about this course. If you do not intend to be equally serious, this may not be the course for you. If you choose to take the course, the onus is on you to do the things necessary to achieve the goals you've set for yourself, or to accept responsibility if you do not. You will get out of the class what you put into it. Students who demonstrate their commitment to the course and to putting in the necessary work will find that I am ready and willing to help and advise them whenever possible. But I will not pick up the slack for students who are just looking to skate by, and I won’t do your work for you. Moreover, I will enforce all of the rules set out for this course – I will not make exceptions simply because you forget what the rules are or think they shouldn't apply to you for whatever reason.

RESOURCES

Paying attention to African current events will help you in this course. Consider the following:

All Africa [http://allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)
Africa Confidential (available online through the SMU Library) [IRIN Africa](http://www.irinnews.org/IRIN-Africa.aspx)

Africa in Focus [http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus](http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus)
Africa is a Country [http://africasacountry.com](http://africasacountry.com)
African Arguments [http://africanarguments.org/category/politics-now/](http://africanarguments.org/category/politics-now/)
Aid Thoughts [http://aidthoughts.org/](http://aidthoughts.org/)
FP Passport [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com)
Haba na Haba [http://habanahaba.wordpress.com/](http://habanahaba.wordpress.com/)
The Monkey Cage (Kim Yi Dionne; Laura Seay) [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/)

BBC Africa Today [http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/africa/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/africa/)
BBC Focus on Africa [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0107lh](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0107lh)

Video: TED Africa [http://www.ted.com/themes/africa_the_next_chapter.html](http://www.ted.com/themes/africa_the_next_chapter.html)
There are also many excellent resources to help you in learning about your country and writing papers:

**Universities:**
- University of Pennsylvania [www.africa.upenn.edu/AS.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/AS.html)

**Think Tanks:**
- Brookings Africa [http://www.brookings.edu/research/topics/sub-saharan-africa](http://www.brookings.edu/research/topics/sub-saharan-africa)
- Center for Global Development [http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/regions/africa](http://www.cgdev.org/section/topics/regions/africa)

**Country Reports:**
- Economist Intelligence Unit Reports [http://country.eiu.com/AllCountries.aspx](http://country.eiu.com/AllCountries.aspx)
- BBC Country Profiles [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm)

**Issue Reports:**

**Datasets/banks:**
- Polity IV [http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html](http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html)

**Academic Journals:**

**WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE**

**I. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY**

**August 25: Introduction and Overview**
- Moss. Chapter 1.
- University of Wisconsin Writer’s Handbook “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources” handout.

**Recommended:**
September 1: Labor Day

September 8: Pre-Colonial and Colonial History

Country Summary Topic: Describe your country’s experience with colonialism.

- Moss. Chapter 2, pp. 21-29.
- Herbst. Chapters 2-4.

Recommended:

Map Quiz

II. Political Institutions

September 15: The Colonial Legacy and Post-Colonial Institutions

Country Summary Topic: Describe your country’s political system between the 1960s and 1980s.

Recommended:

- Herbst. Chapter 1.

**September 22: Personal Rule and Neo-Patrimonialism**

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe your country’s experience with Big Men (see Moss for definition).

- van de Walle. Chapter 3.

**September 29: Democratization and Democratic Consolidation**

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe your country’s experience with elections and explore the extent to which your country can currently be considered a democracy.

- Moss. Chapter 5, pp. 75-87.
- van de Walle. Chapter 6.

**Recommended:**


October 6: Constraints on Political Participation and Ethnic Politics

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe your country’s ethnic composition and the extent to which ethnicity is relevant in its politics.


Recommended:


**Country Brief #1 (Political Institutions) due in class**

October 13: Fall Break

October 20: Corruption and Clientelism

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe the extent to which your country’s political system is clientelistic and corrupt.

III. CONFLICT

October 27: Types of Conflict

Country Summary Topic: Describe a conflict your country has experienced (civil war, coup, border war, religious violence, election violence, etc.).

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 57-63.

Midterm Exam

November 3: Causes of Conflict

Country Summary Topic: Explore possible causes of a conflict your country has experienced.

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 64-68.

Recommended:


November 10: Genocide and Other Consequences of Conflict

Country Summary Topic: Describe the short- and/or long-term consequences (whether positive or negative) of a conflict your country has experienced.

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 63-64.


Recommended:

- PBS Frontline Documentary: “Ghosts of Rwanda.” Available at SMU Library.

**Country Brief #2 (Conflict) due in class**

**November 17: International Intervention**

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 68-73.

Recommended:


**IV. Development**

**November 17 continued: Economic and Human Development**

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe the current economic conditions facing your country and its status in terms of human development.

- Moss. Chapters 6 (pp. 91-95) and 10.

Recommended:

November 24: Causes of Slow Growth and the Bretton Woods Institutions

**Country Summary Topic:** Explore the advantages and/or challenges your country faces in advancing its economic development.

- Moss. Chapters 6 (pp. 94-104), 7 (pp. 105-109), 8 (pp. 128-133), 12, and 13.
- van de Walle. Chapter 1, pp. 20-49.

**Recommended:**

December 1: Structural Adjustment and the International Aid Regime

**Country Summary Topic:** Describe the extent to which your country has participated in structural adjustment programs and received foreign aid.

- Moss. Chapters 7 (pp. 110-119) and 8.
- van de Walle. Chapters 1 (pp. 49-63), 2, and 4.

**Recommended:**

**Country Brief #3 (Development) due in class**

December 8: Critiques of Aid, Advocacy, and Charitable Giving

**Country Summary Topic:** Explore the extent to which your country has suffered any negative consequences as a result of receiving foreign aid (whether public or private aid).

- van de Walle. Chapter 5.

Recommended:
- Moss. Chapters 9 and 11.
- Website: GiveWell. http://www.givewell.org/

December 12, 12 p.m.: Take-Home Final due