**GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF AFRICA**

Political Science 3347  
Southern Methodist University  
Fall 2015  

Class time and location: MW, 3-4:20 p.m., Dallas Hall 149  

Professor Karisa Cloward, Department of Political Science  
**Office:** 201 Carr Collins Hall  
**Office Hours:** T 2:30-4 p.m., W 4:30-6 p.m., and by appointment  
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**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 earns credit toward majors and minors in political science, international studies, public policy, and human rights. It also 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 group status, treatment, and 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**

- Participation & Attendance: 10%
- Map Quiz: 3%
- Daily Summaries: 10%
- Country Briefs: 42%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Final Exam: 20%

**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 fourth 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 reading in the order in which they are listed in the syllabus, and you are expected to bring all of the day’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 day’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 discourage them. Students who feel they must use a laptop are required to sit in the first row and to make a commitment 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; sporcle.com/games/remskray/map_africa; sporcle.com/games/g/africacapitals

Daily Summaries: On ten dates of your choosing, you will submit a short summary (maximum one page) describing relevant details about your country that relate to that day’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. You must complete at least three summaries by September 30th.

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 5th, November 4th, and December 2nd. 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 (though any late penalties assessed will remain).

Exams: Both the midterm and final exam will consist of IDs and essay questions. You will need to draw on information from both lectures and readings in order to successfully answer the exam questions. The final exam will be comprehensive.

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 3:01 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 very quick questions (questions you think I can answer in about three sentences or less) or to schedule an appointment, the best way to contact me is via email at kcloward@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 you cannot attend my regular office hours, 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://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS](http://www.smu.edu/Provost/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 9th.

**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:

**News:**
- All Africa [http://allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)
Africa in Focus http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus  
Africa is a Country http://africasacountry.com  
African Arguments http://africanarguments.org/category/politics-now/  
Aid Thoughts http://aidthoughts.org/  
Haba na Haba http://habananaba.wordpress.com/  
The Monkey Cage (Laura Seay; Kim Yi Dionne) http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/  
Wronging Rights http://www.wrongingrights.com/  

BBC Africa Today http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrtvw  
BBC Focus on Africa http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gbivb  

Video: TED Africa http://www.ted.com/topics/africa  

There are also many excellent resources to help you in learning about your country and writing papers:  

Universities: Columbia http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/africa.html  
Stanford http://library.stanford.edu/africa-south-sahara  
University of Pennsylvania https://www.africa.upenn.edu/resources  

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

Freedom House Country Reports http://www.freedomhouse.org/regions/sub-saharan-africa  
BBC Country Profiles http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm  
Economist Intelligence Unit Reports http://country.eiu.com/AllCountries.aspx  

Human Rights Watch http://www.hrw.org/africa  

Afrobarometer http://www.afrobarometer.org/  
Polity IV http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html  
Armed Conflict Dataset http://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/  
Correlates of War http://www.correlatesofwar.org/  
OECD.Stat http://stats.oecd.org/  
Measure DHS STATcompiler http://www.statcompiler.com/  

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

I. OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

August 24: Introduction
- Moss. Chapter 1.

August 26: Overview of Sub-Saharan Africa
- University of Wisconsin Writer’s Handbook “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources” handout.

Recommended:

August 31: Pre-Colonial History and European Exploration

Summary Topic: Describe the political system(s) that existed within the current boundaries of your country during the pre-colonial era.

- Moss. Chapter 2, pp. 21-23.
- Farrell, Henry. 2010. “Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student’s Short Illustrated Primer.” http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_sci_essay.html

Recommended:

Map Quiz
September 2: Colonial History and Independence

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


**Recommended:**

September 7: Labor Day

September 9: The Colonial Legacy

**Summary Topic:** Explore any lingering effects of colonialism (whether positive or negative) on your country.


**Recommended:**

II. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

September 14: Post-Colonial Institutions

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

Recommended:

**September 16: Weak States**

**Summary Topic:** Describe the extent to which your country could be considered a “weak” state, and explore possible explanations for its relative weakness or strength.


Recommended:
- Herbst. Chapter 1.

**September 21: Personal Rule and Neo-Patrimonialism**

**Summary Topic:** Explore the extent to which your country’s political system has been characterized by neo-patrimonialism.

- van de Walle. Chapter 3.

**September 23: Big Men**

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

- Moss. Chapter 3, pp. 43-56.

**September 28: Democratization**

**Summary Topic:** Describe your country’s experience with elections.

- Moss. Chapter 5, pp. 75-78.

**Recommended:**

**September 30: Democratic Consolidation**

**Summary Topic:** Explore the extent to which your country can currently be considered a democracy.

- van de Walle. Chapter 6.

**Recommended:**

**October 5: Hybrid Regimes and the Quality of Democracy**

**Summary Topic:** Describe the extent to which your country’s government interferes with the free and full political participation of its citizens.


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

October 7: Ethnic Politics

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


Recommended:

October 12: Fall Break

October 14: Corruption and Clientelism

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


October 19: Midterm Exam

III. CONFLICT

October 21: Prevalence and Types of Conflict

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

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

October 26–28: Causes of Conflict
October 26 Summary Topic: Explore possible motivations for a conflict your country has experienced.

October 28 Summary Topic: Explore the extent to which your country has the structural conditions (opportunity) that make a country more prone to conflicts.

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

Recommended:


November 2: Genocide

Summary Topic: Describe the extent to which your country has experienced an event that could be considered genocide or ethnic cleansing.


Recommended:

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

November 4: Other Characteristics and Consequences of Conflict

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:**

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

**November 9: International Intervention**

**Summary Topic:** Describe an international military intervention and/or peacekeeping operation your country has experienced.

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

**Recommended:**

**IV. DEVELOPMENT**

**November 11: Economic and Human Development**

**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 16–18: Causes of Slow Growth

November 16 Summary Topic: Explore how your country’s natural endowments (e.g., climate, geography, demography, natural resources) might have affected its economic development trajectory.

November 18 Summary Topic: Explore how your country’s political and economic policies might have affected its economic development trajectory.

- Moss. Chapters 6 (pp. 94-104), 7 (pp. 105-09), 12, and 13.
- van de Walle. Chapter 1, pp. 20-49.

Recommended:

November 23: Structural Adjustment and the Bretton Woods Institutions

Summary Topic: Describe the extent to which your country has participated in structural adjustment programs.

- Moss. Chapters 7 (pp. 110-19) and 8 (pp. 128-33).
- van de Walle. Chapters 1 (pp. 49-63), 2, and 4.

November 25: Thanksgiving Break

November 30: The International Aid Regime

Summary Topic: Describe the level and sources of foreign aid your country receives.

- Moss. Chapter 8

December 2: Aid Supporters and Critics
Summary Topic: Explore the extent to which your country has received any benefits or suffered any negative consequences as a result of receiving foreign aid (whether public or private aid).

- van de Walle. Chapter 5.

Recommended:

Country Brief #3 (Development) due in class

December 7: Non-Governmental Organizations, Charities, and Advocacy

Summary Topic: Describe an international advocacy effort targeting your country, and explore the extent to which it can be considered effective.


Recommended:
- Website: GiveWell. http://www.givewell.org/
- Moss. Chapter 11.