

POLS 441/541: African Politics

Call No. 06118

Place: Copeland Hall 633

Time: 4:10-6:00 PM, Mondays and Wednesdays

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 9-11 AM, and by appt.

There are lots of reasons to be interested in African politics. For many students, those reasons have to do with travel, with wanting to be exposed to different cultures, and the desire to understand the wide range of important issues of public policy issues facing African countries (often for future employment in journalism, public service, the non-profit sector, or in government). For political scientists, African politics presents some of the most intractable problems—theoretical and practical—faced by scholars in our discipline. This course is organized around a series of themes (roughly one a week), each of which represents both an important area of debate in the study of African politics and a scholarly literature addressing this issue. We will have the opportunity to look at cutting-edge research by academics, and to see how the study of African politics contributes to our general, global knowledge of politics.

This class assumes you have some (very) basic knowledge of African geography and history, but requires mainly your enthusiasm for learning about contemporary Africa. This is not a course on current events (and some of you may be occasionally frustrated by my academic approach to “real world” problems), but you will gain substantial exposure to the ordinary, daily politics of contemporary Africa. I will endeavor to show you how to go about becoming informed about African current events, and I will encourage you to do so. But most importantly to me, we will try to see how “academic” research speaks to real world problems, and how it can be of use to journalists, policymakers, and ordinary people trying to be good global citizens.

Course Format and Course Policies

This is a small, discussion-based class, and both participation and attendance factor heavily in your final grade. They will also factor heavily in our mutual enjoyment of our time together—show up, and show up ready to talk, and our time together will be much more productive. Your final grade will be determined by a combination of six factors, explained in detail below:

- Attendance and participation (10%)
- Response Papers (ten, turned in over the course of the quarter) (10%)
- Exams: Midterm and Final, (15% each, 30% total)
- Class Facilitation (once for each student) (10%)
- Final Written Project (30%)
- Final Project Presentation (10%)

Attendance and Participation

This is simple. Show up, do the readings, listen attentively to your colleagues, and be ready to share your thoughts and perspectives. Don't come to class? You get one freebie, and

after that each absence reduces your attendance and participation grade by 20% (five absences will get you zero points for the quarter).¹ Participation is trickier to quantify. Everyone will receive full credit as long as they make their best effort to speak up and help us to move the conversation forward. But if you consistently fail to bring anything to the table (comments, questions, or any other kind of obvious participation) during our discussions, I reserve the right to lower your attendance and participation grade accordingly.

Response Papers

Response papers are a way to provide you with some incentive to complete all the readings in a timely fashion. I prefer to see them as a means by which you can organize your thoughts on paper in preparation for an active discussion on the week's reading. In any case, I expect ten (typed, single-spaced, 10/12 point font) single-page papers that address some or all of the readings for a day's class session, submitted for the sessions of your choice.

The goal of a response paper is not to summarize the main points of arguments of an author, but to *respond* to and *evaluate* them. A response paper that receives full credit will provide evidence that the student has considered the author's ideas and information (in the contexts of the author's intended audience and other course materials), and that the student has come to some initial conclusions about whether or not they agree with the author. You may choose any ten class sessions you like to submit your response papers, but they must be submitted in-class on the day you have chosen (no late response papers will be accepted, and no email response papers will be accepted).

Exams

There will be an in-class midterm and a final exam for this course. Both exams will require you to respond at length to two of a possible three essay prompts. The final is cumulative, but only in the sense that it may prove useful to reference readings covered on the midterm in your final essays.

If you need to miss an exam for any *legitimate* reason (official school-related travel and illness or injury being the most common) and inform me **in advance**, I will prepare a make-up exam, in a format of my choice to be administered in a time and place of my choice. If you miss an exam for any other reason without contacting me **in advance of the exam time** (slept in, family vacation, or got lost *en route*, for example), barring extraordinary circumstances, you will receive zero credit. You must take the final exam. The date of the final is fixed in advance, and no early or late exams will be offered, barring truly exceptional (and health-related) circumstances. If you miss an exam for any other reason without contacting me **in advance of the exam time** (slept in, family vacation, or got lost *en route*, for example), barring extraordinary circumstances, you will receive zero credit. You must take the final exam. The date of the final is fixed in advance, and no early or late exams will be offered, barring truly exceptional (and health-related) circumstances.

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately **at the beginning of the semester** (waiting may impair my ability to offer the accommodation you need) to discuss your specific needs **and to provide me with the written notification from Disability Services requesting accommodation**. If you are not yet registered as a student with a documented disability, please contact the Office of

¹ Exceptions made for exceptional circumstances, but you need to contact me ASAP should such a circumstance arrive.

Disability Services at 740-593-2620 in Crewson House.

Class Facilitation

Every student will choose (or be assigned) one class meeting for which they will serve as “facilitator.” Your responsibilities are simple, but very important. You will need to present a ten to fifteen minute introduction to that session’s reading material, providing context for our discussion. You will want to contextualize the readings in terms of the other material we have covered in class, provide areas of concern for discussion, and raise questions for your classmates and/or the professor. An effective class facilitator will lay a solid foundation for the rest of our session.

Final Written Project

Your final paper for this class (12-15 pages, double-spaced, 10/12 point fonts, standard margins) will be on a topic of your choice, chosen in consultation with me. You will need to schedule a meeting with me (preferably, but not necessarily, during my office hours) before the end of September to discuss your ideas and to pin down a final topic. An initial, one-page summary of your proposed research, along with a separate page containing at least 6 prospective academic sources, is due on Monday, October 11 in class. The final draft is due on Wednesday, November 10 in class. More information will follow.

Final Project Presentation

You will present the results of your final written project to the class on November 8, 11, or 15. Presentations should last about ten minutes (and no longer than twelve), and can involve any level of technological presence you wish. After the presentation, your audience will have ten minutes for questions, and you will be evaluated, in part, on your ability to respond to these questions.

A note for Graduate Students

Graduate students (those registered for POLS 541) will have a slightly different set of criteria for evaluation, and a bit more reading to do. I ask that graduate students meet with me before the second class meeting to discuss this additional reading (5 current books on African politics, chosen in consultation with me, on topic(s) of interest). Graduate students will submit response papers, facilitate a class session, and present their final research (for credit only—a failure to complete any of these requirements will result in the loss of a letter grade), but will not formally be graded on participation, and will not take the midterm exam. Instead, your grade will be based 50% on the final exam (which will be slightly different than that taken by the undergraduates), and 50% on the final paper, which must be between 20-30 pages long and must demonstrate substantial originality in thought, interpretation, and data analysis.

Books and other Readings

Required Books

-Robert Bates (2008), *When Things Fall Apart: State Failure in Late Century Africa* (Cambridge University Press)

-David Leonard and Scott Straus (2003), *Africa’s Stalled Development: International Causes &*

Cures (Lynne Rienner Press)

-Martin Meredith (2005), *The Fate of Africa* (PublicAffairs)

Note that when I say there are “required” texts, I mean only that I have assigned you to read them in their entirety, not that you must purchase them. You are encouraged to share copies, form anarcho-syndicalist book-trading collectives, or do anything else necessary to make sure you have the texts to read and study from. The rest of the course readings will be available online through Blackboard.

A note on *The Fate of Africa*, its place in our schedule, and on staying up on African current events

Martin Meredith’s *The Fate of Africa* is the best history of contemporary Africa for the general reader I’ve found in the last ten years. The narrative it presents—of rise and decline, of new hope and new problems—is of enormous value for any undergraduate or graduate student new to the study of African politics. But because our course is not arranged chronologically (but rather by theme), there is no easy way to assign sections from the book to match our week’s topic. Instead, I ask that you make an effort to complete the book as a whole, about five chapters per week, during the first month and a half of our time together. I will make regular references to the stories, events, and topics covered in *The Fate of Africa* to illustrate concepts in lecture and discussion, and you will find that the historical and contemporary examples from the book will prove useful in all of your assignments and exams. In order to help you complete this task, I have reduced the reading load over the first six weeks commensurate with the time it will take to read *The Fate of Africa*.

In addition, I recommend that you all try to keep up with African current events during the quarter. I find that the BBC’s World Service: Africa web portal (including the excellent daily radio program “Focus on Africa”) [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/>], France24’s English page on Africa [<http://www.france24.com/en/africa>], and AllAfrica’s country feeds (aggregating local newspaper coverage from Africa) [<http://www.allafrica.com>] are all excellent starting places. To facilitate your efforts, I have set up an account for a free service that I use, **Posterous**, which you can all log into to post links and brief summaries/analyses/comments for the interesting stories on Africa that you find. While not a formal part of your participation grade, I ask that you all make an effort to post a couple of stories a week (perhaps relevant to your research for your final project). We may discuss the most interesting of these stories in class.

Course Schedule

An Introduction to Current Trends in African Politics Research

Monday, September 13: State Failure, Violence, and Development (I)

-Robert Bates (2008), *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*, pp. 1-93

Wednesday, September 15: State Failure, Violence, and Development (II)

- Robert Bates (2008), *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*, pp. 97-174 (skim the appendix—graduate students should play close attention)

Africa's Weak States

Monday, September 20: The African State in International and Historical Perspective

-Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg (1982), "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, 35:1, pp. 1-24

-Jeffrey Herbst (1989), "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa," *IO*, 43:4, pp. 673-92

Wednesday, September 22: War and State Making in Africa

-William Reno (1997), "War, Markets, and the Reconfiguration of West Africa's Weak States," *Comparative Politics*, 29:4, pp. 493-510

-Michael Niemann (2007), "War Making and State Making in Central Africa," *Africa Today*, 53:3, pp. 21-39

The Personal and the Public in African Politics

Monday, September 27: The Two Publics in Africa

-Peter Ekeh (1975), "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17:1, pp. 91-112

-J.P. Olivier de Sardan (1999), *A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?*, 37:1, pp. 25-54

Wednesday, September 29: The Private and the Public in Action—Two Visions of Clientelism in Nigeria

-Daniel Smith (2001), "Ritual Killing, 419, and Fast Wealth: Inequality and the Popular Imagination in Southeastern Nigeria," *American Ethnologist*, 28:4, pp. 803-26

-Ayokulne O. Omobowale and Akinpelu O. Olutayo (2007), "Chief Lamidi Adedibu and Patronage Politics in Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45:3, pp. 425-446.

The Terms of Political Competition

Monday, October 4: Identity Politics in Africa

-Daniel Posner (2004), "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review*, 101:4, pp. 529-45

-Michael Schatzberg (1981), "Ethnicity and Class at the Local Level: Bars and Bureaucrats in Lisala, Zaire," *Comparative Politics*, 13:4, pp. 461-78

-Jennie Burnet (2008), "Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocidal Rwanda," *African Affairs*, 107, pp. 361-86

Wednesday, October 6: Voting and Ethnicity in Africa

Staffan Lindberg and Minion K.C. Morrison (2008), "Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana," *Political Science Quarterly*, 123:1, pp. 95-122

-Kevin Fridy (2007), "The Elephant Umbrella, and Quarrelling Cocks: Disaggregating Partisanship in Ghana's Fourth Republic," *African Affairs*, 106, pp. 281-305

Analytic Interlude

Monday, October 11: Midterm Exam (in-class)

Why Does Africa Grow Slowly?

Wednesday, October 13: The Structure of Economic Production and Economic Reform

-David Leonard and Scott Straus (2003), *Africa's Stalled Development: International Causes & Cures*, pp. 1-35

-Todd Moss (2007), *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors*, pp. 87-116

Monday, October 18: Slow Economic Growth in Africa, Explained?

-Pierre Englebert (2000), "Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa," *Political Research Quarterly*, 53:1, pp. 7-36

-William Easterly and Ross Levine (1997), "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112:4, pp. 1203-50

Wednesday, October 20: Slow Growth in Practice—Experiencing African Economies in Daily Life

-Aili Mari Tripp (1989), "Women and the Changing Urban Household Economy in Tanzania," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 27, pp. 601-23

-Janet MacGaffey (1983), "How To Survive and Become Rich Amidst Devastation: The Second Economy in Zaire," *African Affairs*, 82, pp. 351-66

Political Violence in Africa (I)

Monday, October 25: An Overview of Political Violence in Africa—Types, Causes, and (maybe) Solutions

-Leonard and Straus (2003), *Africa's Stalled Development*, pp. 57-101

-Abu Bakarr Bah (2010), "Democracy and Civil War: Citizenship and Peacemaking in Cote d'Ivoire, *African Affairs*, forthcoming

Political Change in Africa: The Prospects of Democratization

Wednesday, October 27: Democratization and the State in Africa

-Larry Diamond (2008), "The Rule of Law versus the Big Man," *Journal of Democracy*, 19:2, pp. 138-49

-Michael Bratton and Eric Chang (2006), "State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?" *Comparative Political Studies*, 39:9, pp. 1059-83

Monday, November 1: Case Studies in Democratization—The 21st Century

-William Gumede (2008), "South Africa: Jacob Zuma and the Difficulties of Consolidating South Africa's Democracy," *African Affairs*, 107, pp. 261-71

-Stephanie Matti (2010), "The Democratic Republic of the Congo? Corruption, Patronage, and Competitive Authoritarianism in the DRC," *Africa Today*, 56:4, pp. 42-61

Political Violence in Africa (II)

Wednesday, November 3: Electoral Violence in Africa

-Johan de Smedt (2009), "'No Raila, No Peace!' Big Man Politics and Election Violence at the Kibera Grassroots," *African Affairs*, 108, pp. 581-98

-Arthur Goldsmith (2010), "Mixed Regimes and Political Violence in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 48, pp. 413-33

Wrapping Up: Africa's Political Future

Monday, November 8: Future Trends, Future Issues (and a few presentations)

-Crawford Young (2004), "The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics," *African Affairs*, 103, pp. 23-49

-Paul Collier et al (2008), "Climate Change and Africa," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 24:2, pp. 337-53

November 10 and November 15: Final Presentations

Friday, November 19, at 12:20 PM: Final Exam