GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF AFRICA
Political Science 3347
Southern Methodist University
Fall 2017

Class time and location: MW, 4–5:20 p.m., Hyer Hall 102

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Office: 201 Carr Collins Hall
Office Hours: T 2:30–4 p.m., W 2–3:30 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 depth requirement and Human Diversity co-curricular requirement of the University Curriculum. As such, students who take the course will be able to analyze and critically evaluate research outcomes and different theoretical perspectives in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political, and cultural 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, cultural, and social conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual and group status, treatment, and accomplishments.

TEXTS

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


All other required readings will be posted or linked on Canvas. If you are not using a campus computer, you can access the linked readings by searching for them through the SMU Library website or Google Scholar and then entering your SMU ID and password when prompted for authentication of your SMU status. 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>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS Training/Mapmaking</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Briefs</td>
<td>5%</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. If you do miss a class, please obtain lecture notes from another student. If upon doing so you still have questions, I am available to fill in the gaps, but I will not distribute my PowerPoint slides.

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 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.

I expect you to be courteous and respectful to me and 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 strongly discourage the use of laptops in class. 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.

Unexcused absences, 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

Country Presentation: Early in the semester you will make a brief in-class presentation introducing your country. You’ll meet with me during the first two weeks of the semester to sign up for a presentation date.

GIS Training/Mapmaking: You will attend an out-of-class training on geographic information systems. Using the GIS skills you learn during the training, you will search for available datasets on your country and then build a map with this data using ArcGIS software, endeavoring to identify spatial correlations in the data that may in turn help you generate a compelling research question for one of your country briefs. The training session will be held in the GIS Lab at Fondren Library during the week of September 4th. You will then have the opportunity to participate in the SMU Humanitarian Mapathon on October 26th, for extra credit. During the Mapathon, the SMU community will make crowd-sourced maps to help communities and nongovernmental organizations better respond to crises in previously under-mapped areas in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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 6–8-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 2nd, November 1st, and November 29th. If you wish, you may revise and resubmit one of the first two papers by December 4th, 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.

Paper Submission and Help

The country briefs and summaries should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, standard character spacing, and a staple in the upper-left corner. 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 4:01 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 Canvas 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 assist 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 6th.

**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 this or 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/]
An Africanist Perspective [https://kenopalo.com/]
The Monkey Cage (especially posts by Laura Seay and Kim Yi Dionne)
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/]

BBC Africa Today [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrtvw/episodes/downloads]
BBC Focus on Africa [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00gbjyb/episodes/player]
Ufahamu Africa [https://ufahamuafrica.com/tag/podcast/]

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

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

Issue Reports: Amnesty International [https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/]
Human Rights Watch [http://www.hrw.org/africa]

Datasets/Databanks: UNdata [http://data.un.org/]
World Bank Open Data [http://data.worldbank.org/]
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 21: Introduction to Sub-Saharan Africa**
- Moss. Chapter 1.

Recommended:

**August 23: Pre-Colonial History and European Exploration**

Recommended:

**August 28: Colonial History and Independence**

Recommended:

**Map Quiz**
August 30: Research, Writing, and Citing

- Farrell, Henry. 2010. “Good Writing in Political Science: An Undergraduate Student’s Short Illustrated Primer.” [http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_sci_essay.html](http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_sci_essay.html)
- University of Wisconsin Writer's Handbook “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources” handout.

September 4

September 6: Labor Day

September 6: The Colonial Legacy

- Herbst. Chapter 4.

Recommended:


II. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

September 11: Post-Colonial Institutions


Recommended:

- Moss. Chapter 11.

September 13: Weak States

- Herbst. Chapter 1, Chapter 5, and Preface (pp. xv–xxx).
September 18: Big Man Rule
- van de Walle. Chapter 3.

September 20: Big Men

September 25: Democratization
- Moss. Chapter 5, pp. 75–78.

Recommended:

September 27: Democratic Consolidation
- van de Walle. Chapter 6.

Recommended:

October 2: Hybrid Regimes and the Quality of Democracy
Recommended:


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

**October 4: Ethnic Politics**


**October 9: Fall Break**

**October 11: Corruption and Clientelism**


Recommended:


**October 16: Midterm Exam**

**III. CONFLICT**

**October 18: Prevalence and Types of Conflict**

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 57–63.
October 23–25: Causes of Conflict

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 64–68.

Recommended:


October 30: Genocide


Recommended:

- Gourevitch, Phillip. 1998. We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda. New York: Picador.
- PBS Frontline Documentary: “Ghosts of Rwanda.” Available at SMU Library.

November 1: Other Characteristics and Consequences of Conflict

- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 63–64.

Recommended:


Country Brief #2 (Conflict) due in class
November 6: International Intervention
- Moss. Chapter 4, pp. 68–73.

Recommended:

IV. Development

November 8: Economic and Human Development
- Moss. Chapters 6 (pp. 91–95) and 10.

November 13–15: Causes of Slow Growth
- Moss. Chapters 6 (pp. 94–104), 7 (pp. 105–09), 12, and 13.
- van de Walle. Chapter 1, pp. 20–49.
  https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2010-01-05/africa-s-eastern-promise

Recommended:

November 20: Structural Adjustment and the Bretton Woods Institutions
- Moss. Chapters 7 (pp. 110–19) and 8 (pp. 128–33).
- van de Walle. Chapters 1 (pp. 49–63), 2, and 4.
November 22: Thanksgiving Break

November 27: The International Aid Regime
- Moss. Chapter 8

November 29: Aid Supporters and Critics
- van de Walle. Chapter 5.

Recommended:

Country Brief #3 (Development) due in class

December 4: Non-Governmental Organizations, Charities, and Advocacy

Recommended:

December 9, 3–6 p.m.: Final Exam