

**POSC 358: Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
Syllabus Fall 2018 – DRAFT 2018.07.18**

Professor Tyson Roberts
Course Date/Time: MW 12:00-1:20pm
Course Location: VKC 210
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Professor Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11am-12noon

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to explore the themes, issues, and trends that shape politics in Africa, across some 50 countries and nearly one billion people. I hope the course will inspire in you a lasting interest in African affairs. I also hope it will give you an opportunity to think critically about how context shapes political behavior and about how the sociopolitical world works.

The material we will cover is organized around broad issues such as the foundations of contemporary African politics, the characteristics and consequences of leadership in Africa, the politics of identity, and economic and political change in Africa. The expectation is that, by the end of the course, you will have a better understanding of common trends in this part of the world, which should help you in evaluating political behavior more generally.

This course is not designed as a study of individual countries in Africa; it is a theme-based course. Nevertheless, in exploring the themes and trends that dominate politics in Africa, we will learn quite a bit about a variety of countries on the continent. In addition, each student will become an expert on a particular country in Africa.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is taught in two lectures per week. Attendance is mandatory.

There are multiple requirements for this course. Students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions and activities. To help you get familiar with this vast and complex geographic region, there will be a map quiz. There will be Research Assignments due most weeks. There will be two in-class exams. Finally, each student will write a research paper on a specific issue in African politics in a particular country, present their findings and policy recommendations, and discuss the research of their classmates. The relative weights accorded to each of these requirements are as follows:

- Map Quiz 5 percent
- Participation 10 percent
- Research Assignments 10 percent
- Exams 40 percent
- Research Paper & Presentation 35 percent

Most weeks, research assignments will be submitted online, and students should also bring a copy to class for discussion. The first research assignment is to select a country to research for the rest of the semester and identify significant problems (e.g., civil war, corruption, poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, etc.) in that country.

For the final research paper and presentation, each student will identify an important problem in the country, identify two or more potential causes of that problem, conduct research and analysis to identify which causes have the most empirical support, then make recommendations (directed to local or international actors) to ameliorate the problem. The student should draw from materials studied in class to describe the problem and potential causes and solutions. Relevant data should be presented in tables or figures. Research papers and presentations will be graded based on demonstration of understanding of concepts studied in the class, relevant research, and the ability to apply concepts from class to that research.

A first draft of the research paper is due Monday of the last week of class. Each student will be the discussant of another student's paper. After the researcher's presentation, the discussant will evaluate the paper, pose questions, and make recommendations. The final draft (8-10 pages, not including bibliography and tables/figures) of the paper is due as a Final Exam.

Any plagiarism (including quotes that are not in quotation marks and any ideas or information not the student's own that are lacking a cited source) will result in a fail for the assignment, and potentially a fail for the class.

READINGS

The readings for this course are essential for understanding the themes and controversies discussed in class; to do well and to get as much as possible out of the course, you should do all of them. We will read the entire required textbook so you should buy it as soon as possible. All other readings will be provided via the course website.

Required Textbook: *Inside African Politics*, by Pierre Englebert & Kevin Dunn (E&D)

Recommended:

- *States and Power in Africa*, by Herbst
- *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*, by Martin Meredith
- *Emerging Africa*, by Steven Radelet
- *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, by Crawford Young

Academic Integrity Statement

All assignments are expected to reflect students' careful research and original thinking and writing. Citations must be provided for ideas, content, or other materials that originate with another author or authors. Please check SCampus for the University guidelines on academic integrity. If you have any questions about this, please see me or the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (SJACS).

Accommodations Statement

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

READING AND RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Aug. 20: Introduction

- E&D Chapter 1: Why Study African Politics

The Evolution of African States

Aug. 22: Pre-Colonialism

- E&D Chap 2, pp. 17-22: Precolonial Politics
- Herbst. 2000. "Power and Space in Precolonial Africa," in *States and Power in Africa*, Ch. 2 (pp. 35-57)
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. "Decentralized Despotism," Ch 2 in *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, pp. 37-48
- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Ch. 1-6 (pp. 3-36)

Study questions:

1. What types of political organizations were present in Africa before European colonization? What were their characteristics, and how did they differ from states in Europe?
2. What did Europeans assume about customary authority in pre-colonial Africa, according to Mamdani? In what ways were they correct and incorrect?
3. What type of traditional political structure is described in *Things Fall Apart*?

Research Exercise 1 (Due Friday, Aug. 24): Select Country and identify significant challenges (political, economic, or social) in that country

Aug. 27: Colonialism

- E&D Chap 2, pp. 22-40: The Colonial State
- Herbst. 2000. "The Europeans and the African Problem," in *States and Power in Africa*, Ch. 3 (pp. 58-96)
- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. "Decentralized Despotism," Ch. 2 in *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, pp. 48-61
- Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, Ch. 1-4 (pp. 9-42)

Study questions:

1. Why did colonization happen when and how it did?
2. What was decided at the Berlin Conference, and why?
3. What were some common institutions of colonization? How do they differ?

4. According to Mamdani, what did the British “learn” from their experience ruling India? How did these lessons influence their colonial approach to Africa?
5. What is “decentralized despotism”?
6. How is the excerpt in *No Longer at Ease* an example of a “bifurcated” notion of statehood?

Aug. 29: Postcolonial States I

- E&D Chap 2, pp. 40-62: Postcolonial States
- Herbst. 2000. “The Political Kingdom in Independent Africa,” in *States and Power in Africa*, Ch. 4 (pp. 97-136)
- Achebe, *A Man of the People*, Ch. 1-3 (pp. 1-37)

Study questions:

1. What is a state, and how do states in independent Africa differ from those in regions such as Europe and East Asia?
2. How do the origins of states in (most of) sub-Saharan Africa differ from the origin of states in other regions?
3. How do the first chapters in *A Man of the People* illustrate the relationship between the process of Africa’s independence and the nature of politics?

Research Exercise 2 (Due Friday, August 31): Colonial Experience

Sept. 3: Labor Day – NO CLASS

Sept. 5: Postcolonial States II

- Englebert. 2000. “Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa.” *Political Research Quarterly*, 53(1): pp. 7-22.
- The Economist. 2013. “Sand on their boots.” Jan. 26
- The Economist. 2013. “The danger in the desert.” Jan. 26.

Study questions:

1. What outcome does Englebert seek to explain?
2. What are the alternative explanations for growth Englebert considers?
3. What two types of legitimacy does Englebert use in his study? How are they defined and measured?
4. How does Englebert’s argument help explain recent events in Mali (as described in The Economist articles)?

Research Exercise 3 (due Friday, Sept. 7): Legitimacy and governance

Sept. 10: Mobutu, Roi du Zaire Part 1

Sept. 12: A Half Century of African Independence

- Young. 2012. “A Half Century of African Independence,” in *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, Ch. 1 (pp. 3-31)
- *Map Quiz*

Study questions:

1. What are the six phases of African Independence, according to Crawford?
2. What are the characteristics of each phase?

People, Identity, and Politics

Sept. 17: Identity Politics – Ethnicity

- E&D Chapter 3, pp. 63-92: Ethnicity
- Eifert, Ben, Edward Miguel and Daniel Posner. 2010. "Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(2): 494-510.
- The Economist. 2017. "Kenya's election may turn nasty as the opposition disputes the count." August 10.
- The Economist. 2016. "Burundian time-bomb." April 23.

Study questions:

1. How do the primordialist, constructivist, and instrumentalist views of ethnicity differ?
2. Are politics in Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi better explained by primordialism, constructivism, or instrumentalism?
3. What are the two different spheres of public life, according to Ekeh? How does this tension affect African politics?
4. Under what conditions does ethnic identity become salient?
5. How does ethnic diversity affect economic growth?

Sept. 19: Mobutu, Roi du Zaire Part 2

Sept. 24: Identity Politics – Other Groups

- E&D Chapter 3, pp. 92-128
- Arriola, Leonardo and Martha Johnson. 2014. "Ethnic Politics and Women's Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets." *American Journal of Political Science*, 58 (2): 495-510
- Tripp. 2016. "Where do African women have more power? Surprise — in countries emerging from war." *Washington Post*, Monkey Cage, July 15.

Study questions:

1. Under what conditions is religion (or other identity characteristics) likely to be more salient than ethnicity?
2. Why might class analysis apply differently in Africa than in other regions?
3. What has been the role of women in African politics? Under what conditions do women have more power?

Research Exercise 4 (due Friday, Sept. 21): Identity Groups

The Practice of Power

Sept. 26: Neopatrimonial Rule

- E&D Chapter 4, pp. 129-143: Neopatrimonial Rule
- Bratton and Van de Walle. 1997. "Neopatrimonial Rule" in *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, pp. 61-68.
- Englebert. 2000. "Pre-Colonial Institutions, Post-Colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa." *Political Research Quarterly*, 53(1): pp. 22-30.
- Arriola. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(10): 1339-1359.

- The Economist. 2013. "Bye-bye Big Men." March 2.
- OPTIONAL: Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55: 399–422

Study questions:

1. What is neopatrimonialism? Rent-seeking? Presidentialism? Clientelism?
2. What is "good governance", according to Englebort? How does legitimacy affect the level of good governance?
3. How does neopatrimonialism relate to economic development and multiparty democracy?
4. How does Arriola define political stability?
5. What are some important causes of political stability, according to Arriola?
6. How has clientelist vs. public policy-based governance evolved in some African countries, according to The Economist?

Research Exercise 5 (due Friday, Sept. 28): Neopatrimonialism

Oct. 1: Political Institutions

- E&D Chapter 4, pp. 143-180
- Bratton and Van de Walle. 1997. "Institutional Variations in African Regimes" in *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, pp. 68-82.
- The Economist. 2017. "South Africa's president survives his toughest challenge yet." August 9.
- The Economist. 2017. "South Africa's ruling party rejects the Zuma family." December 18.

Study questions:

1. How do political parties in Africa tend to differ from parties in the West?
2. How have party politics evolved in Africa since independence?
3. What are some common characteristics of African governments?
4. How do various African regimes differ by political competition and participation, according to Bratton and Van de Walle? Which of these are most neopatrimonial?
5. In which of Bratton and Van de Walle's modal regime categories would you place modern-day South Africa?

Oct. 3: Military Coups

- Collier, Paul. 2009. *Wars, Guns, and Votes*. Chapter 6: Coups: The Unguided Missile, and Chapter 7: Meltdown in Cote d'Ivoire.
- McGowan, Patrick. 2003. "African military coups d'état, 1956-2001: frequency, trends and distribution." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(3), 339-370.
- The Economist. 2015. "Why Burkina Faso's coup failed." October 2.
- The Economist. 2017. "Robert Mugabe clings to his title, as crowds holler for him to go." November 20.

Study questions:

1. Under what conditions are military coups likely to occur?
2. What precautions can political leaders take to prevent future coups? Why are these precautions not always successful?
3. What are some effects of military coups?

4. How successful were recent coups in Cote d'Ivoire (1999, 2002), Burkina Faso (2015), and Zimbabwe (2017)? How would you explain their degree of success?

Research Exercise 6 (due Friday, Oct. 5): Political Institutions and Military Coups

Oct. 8: Review

Oct. 10: Midterm Exam 1

An Increasing Range of Regimes

Oct. 15: Evolution of Regimes Over Time

- Bratton and Van de Walle. 1997. "Introduction" in *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, pp. 1-13.
- Ake. 1991. "Rethinking African Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 2(1): 32-44.
- E&D Chapter 5, pp. 181-199
- The Economist. 2016. "The march of democracy slows." August 20.

Study Questions:

1. How do Bratton and Van de Walle define democracy and democratic transition?
2. What are three principles of democracy, according to Ake? How do these relate to the definition used by Bratton and Van de Walle?
3. Why were few countries democratic in the first decades of African independence?
4. When and why did multiparty democracy become more common in sub-Saharan Africa?
5. What has been the perspective of the West regarding democracy in Africa? What role can the West play to promote democracy in Africa?
6. What is the state of democracy in Africa in recent years?

Oct. 17: African Democracy in Practice

- E&D Chapter 5, pp. 199-212
- Van de Walle. 2003. "Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems." *J. of Modern African Studies*, 41(2): 297-321.
- The Economist. 2015. "Challenging the descendants of Julius." Oct. 24.
- The Economist. 2016. "Government by gesture." May 26.

Study Questions:

1. What are some common regime types in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years? How do these differ from the first decades of African independence?
2. Would you describe modern-day Tanzania as a dictatorship, semi-dictatorship, semi-democracy, or democracy, as defined by Tripp (2010).
3. What is the modal party system in post-Cold War Africa, according to Van de Walle?
4. What is the impact of founding democratic elections in Africa?
5. What is the role of presidentialism, clientelism, ethnic politics, and ideology in African states with multiparty politics (according to Van de Walle)?

Research Exercise 7 (due Friday, Oct. 19): Evolution of Political Regimes

The Economic Dimensions of African Politics

Oct. 22, 24: The Weight of History & Nature

- E&D Chapter 6, pp. 213-227
- Nathan Nunn. 2008. "The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.
- Nathan Jensen and Leonard Wantchekon. 2004. "Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 37: 816-841
- The Economist. 2015. "Crude Politics." March 28.
- The Economist. 2017. "The MPLA's grip on Angola is weakening." August 17.

Study Questions:

1. How did the colonial slave trade affect post-colonial economic performance in Africa (according to Nunn)?
2. How did colonialism affect post-colonial performance in Africa, according to Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson? What is E&D's critique of this argument?
3. How do climate and geography affect economic performance in Africa?
4. How does the "resource curse" affect politics and economics in Africa?
5. How do tropical diseases and AIDS affect economic performance in Africa?

Research Exercise 8 (due Friday, Oct. 26): Party systems

Oct. 29: Policies and Development

- E&D Chapter 6, pp. 227-266
- Radelet. 2016. "Africa's Rise – Interrupted?" *Finance & Development* 53(2): 6-11.
- OPTIONAL: Steven Radelet. 2010. *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries are Leading the Way*, Chapter 2, pp. 27-46.

Study Questions:

1. What economic policies did most African governments pursue in the first few decades of independence? How did these economic policies relate with neopatrimonialism?
2. What is structural adjustment? How successful were structural adjustment policies in Africa?
3. What is the governance agenda, and how successful has it been in Africa?
4. What is HIPC and the MCA/MCC, and how have they affected African economic performance?
5. What do Radelet and E&D believe are the causes for Africa's economic performance since 1995? In what ways do they agree/disagree?

Conflict, Security, and International Relations

Oct. 31: Types and Causes of Conflict

- E&D Chapter 7, pp. 267-298
- Collier, Hoeffler, and Sambanis. 2005. "The Collier-Hoeffler Model of Civil War Onset," in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Vol. 1--Africa*, pp. 1-25
- The Economist. 2013. "Tired of war." March 2.
- The Economist. 2015. "Africa's Islamic State." Jan. 24.

- OPTIONAL: Nkidumana and Emizet. 2005. "The Economics of Civil War: The Case of the Democratic Republic of Congo," in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Vol. 1--Africa*, pp. 63-88.

Study Questions:

1. Which types of conflict are most and least common in sub-Saharan Africa?
2. How have patterns of conflict changed over time?
3. Why has conflict died down in much of the continent?
4. What are the greed and grievance explanations of civil war, and which has more explanatory power?
5. How does Collier et al. empirically test the effect of greed vs. grievance?
6. Why, and to what degree, do the following cause conflict: Scarcity, crisis of modernity, elite and factional competition, ethnicity, weak states.
7. What do you think are important determinants of the Boko Haram conflict?

Research Exercise 9 (due Friday, Nov. 2): Economics

Nov. 5: Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution

- E&D Chapter 7, pp. 298-312
- The Economist. 2005. "From chaos, order," March 3rd.
- The Economist. 2012. "Helping to calm a continent." June 9.
- The Economist. 2017. "Helping the Central African Republic avoid another catastrophe." March 16.

Study questions:

1. What forms of peacekeeping and conflict resolution are most efficacious?
2. What are some strengths and weaknesses of the approach to prevent a return to conflict in the Central African Republic?

Nov. 7: International Relations

- E&D Chapter 8, pp. 313-372
- The Economist. 2015. "Chinese investment in Africa: Not as easy as it looks." Nov. 21

Study questions:

1. To what degree is Africa politically and economically marginalized within the practice of world politics?
2. To what degree is Africa ignored or marginalized by theorists of world politics?
3. What were/are the main goals of the OAU and the AU? How successful were they in achieving their goals?
4. How have bilateral relations with nations outside of Africa evolved over time? How do they differ?

Research Exercise 10 (due Friday, Nov. 9): War and Peace

Nov. 12: Review

Nov. 14: Midterm Exam 2

Nov. 19: Research Design

- <https://politicalscienceguide.com/home/course-papers/>

- <https://politicalscienceguide.com/home/policy-paper/>

Research Projects

Nov. 20: Research design due

Nov. 25: Rough draft of final research paper due

Nov. 26-28: Student Presentations

Finals Week: Final Paper Due