AFRICAN POLITICS

Course Aims

The central aim of this course is to provide you with an introduction to the study of African politics. We will examine some of the main factors which shape contemporary African politics, including the state; social groups and classes; the military; ethnic, religious, gender and other identities; international financial institutions and more generally the world economy and international arena. It looks at these forces in their historical, social, economic, political, and cultural contexts. The course is particularly concerned with who makes the rules of the political game in Africa, what cultural and social influences shape these rules, and how these rules are created, maintained, and changed through political processes. The goals of the course are to provide you with concrete knowledge of African politics, including some basic historical information concerning some of the major states in Africa (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal, Mozambique, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Sudan), as well as to introduce students to broader analytic issues and themes.

In addition to learning about the countries listed above, you will be required to choose one African country that will be the focus of your writing and research over the course of the semester. Because most of you know very little about the history or politics of sub-Saharan Africa, this assignment is designed to encourage you to investigate and analyze at least one country in great depth during the semester. During the second week of class, each of you will choose one country that you will focus on throughout the semester. The goal is that you will apply the concepts and broad historical trajectories we discuss in class to a particular country.

Course Requirements

• Class Participation and Attendance

Your daily participation and attendance are two of the most important features of this course and accounts for 10% of your grade. Each of us will bring different ideas and bits of knowledge to class discussions and the course is designed for us to share our different opinions in an intense, yet polite, manner. I do not claim to dispense Truth with respect to African politics, and it is my hope that we will learn from each other over the course of the semester. Thus, there will be very few traditional lectures given. Instead, each class I will choose - at random - two to three students to lead class discussion for that day. I will ask questions concerning the assigned readings and students will be expected to have read the material closely enough to respond in a thoughtful manner. Because you never know when your number may turn up, it is best to be prepared each class for your turn in the “hot seat.” Your class participation grade will depend on how prepared you are when you are one of the leaders of class discussion. I encourage you to take notes on the assigned readings and use these to help you answer questions, but you will not be allowed to re-read the text during the discussion. You are allowed to decline your role as class leader one time without any penalty, but more than this will affect (in a negative way) your class participation grade. While this process may seem intimidating at first, it will become more familiar to you over the course of the semester and will help you learn how to construct, and deconstruct, arguments. This, by the way, will prove to be helpful for the midterm, the writing assignments, and the final exam.
In addition, after the midterm, each student will be required to bring to class a newspaper article on your country and briefly discuss its importance. Students will know in advance when they are supposed to bring an article.

Regular attendance is required for this course and more than one absence will lower your participation will be lowered 5% for each subsequent absence unless you provide a verifiable written excuse from a doctor.

Arriving late to class is disruptive and rude. Your class participation and attendance grade will be lowered if you consistently come to class late.

- **Examinations**

The midterm will be on **Wednesday, March 16** and will cover all the material assigned up to that date unless specified differently by the instructor. The midterm will include identification terms, short essays, and a long essay and it will be closed book. The date and time of the final will be announced in class. The final exam will have a take-home section and an in-class ID section. You will receive the take-home question on May 6. You will write a 12-15 page essay on a particular question. This essay will be due on the last day of class (**May 16**). You will have an in-class identification exam on **May 18 from 2-4 pm**.

There will also be one map quiz (February 11).

Under no circumstances will you be allowed to take the quizzes, midterm or final at an earlier or later date.

- **Community Service-Learning**

Because we will be learning about different states, societies, and cultures, it is important that you interact with people from African countries and cultures while taking this class. This will allow you to apply your knowledge in a different setting and will enable you to gain a first-hand understanding of a variety of political worldviews. Understanding this diversity is central to your ability to appreciate the complexities of African politics. To best provide for this opportunity, this course provides a community service-learning component. Over the course of the semester, you will spend approximately 10 hours working in a community-based program. In addition to providing an opportunity for you to interact with people from different countries, this experience will also enable you to participate in the local community and learn more about those who live in San Diego. As part of this process, you will keep a journal of your activities and impressions while volunteering. In total, the journal should be at least four to five pages in length. We will spend class time discussing your participation in the program.

We will discuss the details of your community service-learning site during the first week of class.

*Students that cannot or do not want to participate in community service-learning may write a 25-30 page (double spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins) research paper on a topic that is approved by the instructor. This paper will be in addition to the other required writing assignments.*

- **Reaction Papers**

Students will be required to complete two reaction papers (5-7 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins). The purpose of these papers is for you to apply one or two concepts that we will discuss in class to your specific country. For these papers, you will find one academic article or book chapter that relates to your country and the concept you want to analyze. Your paper will provide an analysis and/or critique of the article or book chapter in light of what we have learned in class. Also, you should feel free to incorporate any experiences from your community service-learning site where appropriate.
Grading

Midterm: 20%
Reaction Papers: 20%
Final: 40%
Participation and Attendance: 10%
CSL Journal: 5%
Map Quiz: 5%

All assignments are due in class on the specified due date. You may not email assignments unless I have given you prior permission. Missed or late exams or papers will not be accepted unless students notify me before the absence or late paper and have a written verifiable medical excuse. All late papers will be graded down one full grade per day and the assignment will not be accepted after three days. Those who present me with a verifiable medical excuse will be allowed to take a makeup exam that will be scheduled for the last day of the semester.

Academic Integrity

I expect you to comply fully with the standards of academic integrity set forth by the University of San Diego. Any incident of academic dishonesty (as defined in the Undergraduate Bulletin) will be punished to the full extent allowed by the University.

Books and Other Materials

All of these books should be available in the bookstore. The other materials for the course are on E-Reserve and traditional reserve with Copley Library. These materials are designated with an “ER” in the syllabus. The password for the E-Reserve readings is: ps360. Please notify me as soon as possible if any of these materials are not available.

- Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control
- Chinua Achebe. 1980. Things Fall Apart
- Global Studies: Africa (10th Edition) [GS]


I have established a web page for this course that contains links to many interesting sites related to African politics and history. You can find it at: http://home.sandiego.edu/~jmwilliams/.

Course Outline and Readings

Jan. 31 Introduction to course
Feb. 2 Various articles and statistics [ER]; GS, chapters on Botswana and Sudan
Feb. 4 Sklar, “The African Frontier for Political Science” [ER]; GS, pages 21-25; 55-58; 119-122; 163-65
Library Visit (meet in lobby of Copley Library at 11:20 am)
Section I: Precolonial Political Structures and the Legacy of Colonialism

Feb. 7  Herbst, 3-33
Feb. 9  Herbst, 35-58; GS, chapters on Ghana, Nigeria, and DRC
Feb. 11 Schatzberg, “Representations of Power” [ER]
Map Quiz
Feb. 14  Herbst, 58-97
Feb. 16 Rathbone, “Native Courts, Local Courts, Chieftaincy and the CPP in Ghana in the 1950s” [ER]; Vaughan, “Chieftaincy Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria, 1893-1951” [ER]
Feb. 18 Crowder, “The Administration of French West Africa” [ER]; GS, chapters on Senegal, Mozambique
Feb. 21 Achebe – Things Fall Apart (entire)

Section II: The First Liberation and State-Society Relations

Feb. 23 Davidson, “The Challenge of Nationalism” [ER]; Azikiwe [ER]
Fact Sheet on Country Due
Feb. 25 Green, “Mau Mau Oathing Rituals and Political Ideology in Kenya: A Re-Analysis” [ER]; GS, chapters on Kenya and Zimbabwe
Feb. 28 Herbst, 97-137; GS, chapters on Sierra Leone and Nigeria
March 2 Callaghy, “Zairian Absolutism and the State-Society Struggle” [ER]
March 4 Herbst, 139-173
March 7 Ihonvbere, “The ‘irrelevant’ state, ethnicity, and the quest for nationhood in Africa” [ER]
March 9 Boone, “States and ruling classes in postcolonial Africa: the enduring contradictions of power” [ER]
Reaction Paper #1 Due
March 11 Herbst, 173-99
March 14 Movie
March 16 Midterm
March 18 CSL Discussion; CSL Journal Due
March 21 Spring Break
March 23 Spring Break
March 25 Spring Break
March 28 Spring Break
Section III: The Second Liberation and State-Society Relations

March 30  Bratton and van de Walle, “Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa” [ER]

April 1  Schaffer, “From Democratie to Demokaraasi” [ER]

April 4  Young, “The third wave of democratization in Africa: ambiguities and contradictions” [ER]; Bratton, “Second Elections in Africa” [ER]; Bratton, “Support for democracy in Africa: intrinsic or instrumental” [ER]

April 6  Holm, “The development of civil society in a democratic state: The Botswana model” [ER]; Orvis, “Kenyan civil society: bridging the urban-rural divide” [ER]

April 8  Fatton, “Africa in the age of democratization: The civic limitations of civil society” [ER]

April 11  Ihonvbere, “Politics of Constitutional Reforms and Democratization in Africa” [ER]; van de Walle, “Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa’s emerging party systems” [ER]

April 13  Alexander, “The Local State in Post-War Mozambique: Political Practice and Ideas about Authority” [ER]

April 15  Widner, “Building judicial independence in common law Africa” [ER]

April 18  Helle-Valle, “Seen from Below: Conceptions of Politics and the State in a Botswana Village” [ER]

April 20  Schatzberg, "Highjacking Change: Zaire's 'Transition' in Comparative Perspective" [ER]


April 25  Ukiwo, “Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria” [ER]; Vandenbeng, “Ethnic-sectoral cleavages and economic development: reflections on the second Kenya debate” [ER]

April 27  Longman, “State, civil society, and genocide in Rwanda” [ER]; GS, chapters on Rwanda and Burundi

April 29  Lemarchand, “Patterns of State Collapse and Reconstruction in Central Africa: Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes Region” [ER]

May 2  Corey and Joireman, “Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda” [ER]

May 4  Dallaire, “Looking at Darfur, Seeing Rwanda” [ER]

Reaction Paper #2 Due; Take Home Question Given


May 13  Herbst, 251-73; Young, “The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics” [ER]

May 16  CSL Discussion; **Take Home Essay Due**

May 18  **Final Exam (2-4 pm)**
**CSL Journal Due**