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Office Hours: W 1-3pm (or by apt)

Wesleyan University
Spring 2018
Tues/Thurs: 1:20-2:40
Location: PAC 104

GOV282: AFRICAN POLITICS

Course Description

This course introduces students to modern African politics, focusing on the political trends and trajectories that the region has taken from the colonial era to the present. We begin by focusing on the region's major political experiences—from colonial rule, independence struggles, the rise of authoritarian regimes, economic crisis, demands for democratization, and mass violence—that have shaped the lives and histories of people across Africa. We also focus on persistent themes and theoretical debates as well as more contemporary struggles, including the role of ethnic identity and foreign aid, and new forms of protest politics in the social media age. By taking both an historical and thematic approach, students will gain an understanding of how the diverse political histories of countries across the continent have shaped current political institutions, levels of stability and economic opportunity, and modes of social and political participation today. Further, in exploring these themes and questions, this course will highlight both what is specific to Africa and its sub-regions as well as its comparability to other world regions. The course draws on scholarly articles and books, works of fiction and non-fiction, and documentary and feature films.

Readings

This course has five books that I highly recommend for purchase. All are available at the campus bookstore (or online purchase) as well as 4-hour reserve at the library. All other readings are available online (i.e. Moodle).

Ghermandi, Gabriella. 2015. [*Queen of Flowers and Pearls*](#), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Munk, Nina. 2013. [*The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and The Quest to end Poverty*](#). Anchor Books.

Okeowo, Alexis. 2017. [*A Moonless, Starless Sky: Ordinary Women and Men Fighting Extremism in Africa*](#). Hachette Books.

Olopade, Dayo. 2014. *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules & Making Change in Modern Africa*. Boston: Mariner Books.

Young, Crawford. 2012. *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960-2010*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Assignment	% Grade	Date
Class Participation	15	
Map Quiz	5	2/13
Film review (2)	15	See list of dates
Book review	10	See list of dates
In-Class Mid-Term Exam	25	4/3
Final Take-Home Exam	30	5/15

1. Participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend and participate actively in each class. Emphasis will be placed on quality of participation, including responses to the instructor's questions about the readings, as well as the thoughtfulness with which the student engages with other classmates. Students are allowed two unexcused absences.

2. Map Quiz (5%)

A map quiz early in the semester requires students to name each African country and its capital city. I will hand out a map the second day of class. Students may find it useful to practice online. The Washington Post has a good practice 'test':

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/do-you-know-africa/>

3. Film Reviews (15%)

Students must write two film reviews from among the seven recommended films on the syllabus. Reviews should explain how the film relates to a particular theme or issue in African politics that we have analyzed in class. How for example, does the film portray relations of power between civilians and the state? How effective is this portrayal?

What does it capture well or misrepresent? Provide specific examples and scenes from the movie. Discuss major themes in the course materials through references to class discussions and readings. Reviews should be **2-3 pages, doubled-spaced** (12 point, Times New Roman).

Films Review Due Dates:

- *Lumumba* (2/20)
- *T-Shirt Travels* (3/6)
- *An African Election* (3/29)
- *Kinyarwanda* (4/10)
- *The Pearl of Africa* (4/26)
- *Miners Shot Down* (5/1)
- *The Land Between* (5/8)

4. Book Review

Students will write one book review of on the book of their choosing (from the list provided below). A specific due date corresponds to each book, depending on the book that the student selects for review. Students should model their reviews off those that appear in the New York Review of Books or a book review in Vox. Students should help explain the importance and message of the book for general audience. The key difference however, is that students need to highlight how the book demonstrates key lessons or themes discussed in the course, explaining how (and to what extent) the author succeeds in demonstrating or revealing a particular argument or theme about political life on the continent (TNR, 12pt, 2-3 pages double-spaced).

Book Review Due Dates:

- Gabriella Ghermandi, *Queen of Flowers and Pearls* (2/20)
- Okeowo, Alexis. *A Moonless, Starless Sky* (4/24)
- Olopade, Dayo. *The Bright Continent* (5/3)
- Munk, Nina. *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and The Quest to end Poverty* (5/8)

5. Final Paper

A final paper is due the first day of exam period, on **5/15**. This final exam paper is a 7-page response to 1-2 essay questions. Students will receive essay prompts the final day of class. More information will be provided as the exam approaches. Essays are due via Moodle at **5/15, at 11:59pm**.

COURSE POLICIES:

Students are expected to complete all readings, attend all classes, and participate actively. All assignment must be turned in before class via Moodle (hardcopy versions are also accepted). Extensions and incompletes will not be granted under any circumstances other than significant and verifiable personal emergencies or other extenuating circumstances. In such cases, please provide documentation from your class dean or health care professional.

Do not plagiarize. You must properly cite all your sources. Please consult a reference librarian, someone at the Writing Workshop, or ask me if you have any questions about sources and citations. Failure to cite properly is a form of plagiarism. You must adhere to all aspects of the Wesleyan Honor Code.

1. Introduction to African Politics and Society: Images of Africa

THURS: 1/25

Representations of Africa/ Talking about Africa/ Africa is NOT a country...

- Wainaina, B. 2005. "[How to Write about Africa. Some Tips: Sunsets and Starvation are Good.](#)" *Granta* 92: pp. 91-97.
- Karen Attiah. August 24, 2017. "[The New York Times shows how to fail miserably while writing about Africa](#)"
- Karen Attiah, Washington Post. 12 Jan 2018. "[It's not just Trump: Western media has long treated black and brown countries like 'shitholes.'](#)"
- [Chimamanda Adichie on What Americans Get Wrong About Africa:](#)

Visualizing/Re-imagining Africa

- Kari, A and G. Alandry, "Photo Project: Kroo Bay" (Sierra Leone). <http://www.doculab.eu/project/kroo-bay/>
- "[Rainbow Coalition: African subcultures bursting with color-in pictures.](#)" *Guardian*, 27 July 2016.
- ['Borders Within: Trans-Nigeria Project' \(Photo Project\)](#)

TUES: 1/30

- Dayo Olopade, Chap 1: "Orientation: A New Map of Africa"
- Maya Jasanoff, August 18, 2017. "[With Conrad on the Congo River.](#)"
- Kaplan (1994) "[The Coming Anarchy](#)" *The Atlantic Monthly*

- Karen Attiah, July 6, 2016. "[Louise Linton just wrote the perfect White-Savior-in-Africa story.](#)"
- Amrani, Iman. "[Why don't we think of North Africa as part of Africa?](#)" *The Guardian*, Sept 9 2015.

2. Legacies of Slavery and Colonial Rule

THURS: 2/1

Pre-colonial African States and the Slave Trade

- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. "Power and Space in Pre-Colonial Africa." In *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP. pp 35-57.
- Nathan Nunn and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa" *American Economic Review* 101 (December): 3221–3252

TUES: 2/6

Scramble for Africa and Onset of Colonialism

- Al-jazeera Documentary: [Africa – States of Independence – The Scramble for Africa.](#)
- Gabriella Ghermandi, [Queen of Flowers and Pearls, Part 1](#) (Novel about Ethiopia)

Recommended:

- Jomo Kenyatta. 1965. *Facing Mount Kenya*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapter 9

3. Colonial Rule and the Struggle for Independence

THURS: 2/8

Colonialism

- Gabriella Ghermandi, [Queen of Flowers and Pearls \(Part 2\)](#)
- Englebert, Pierre & Kevin Dunn, *Inside African Politics* (Chap 2)

Recommended:

- Mamdani, Mahmood (1996) *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter 1-2.

TUES: 2/13

The Anti-Colonial Struggle:

- Branch, A. & Z. Mampilly (2015) Chap 2: “Mobs of Mobilizers: Nkrumah, Fanon, and Anti-colonial Protest,” in *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change*.
- Sarah R. Dorman (2016). *Understanding Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*. Chapter 2 (“the Politics of Liberation”).

Recommended:

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

Map Quiz

4. Independence, Nationalism, and Re-Building the State

THURS: 2/15

- C. Young. Chap 3: “Decolonization, The Independence Settlement, and Colonial Legacy,” In, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*.
- Kenneth Kaunda. 1962. *Zambia Shall be Free*, London: Heinemann. Chapter 17, “A Year of Decision.”

Film: [*Lumumba*](#)

TUES: 2/20

- Young, C. Chap 4: “The Road to Autocracy: Breakdown of the Decolonization Settlement,” In, *The Postcolonial State*.
- Schatzberg, Michael G. "Power, Legitimacy, and ‘Democratisation’ in Africa." *Africa* 63.04 (1993): 445-461.

- [“Uganda Lifts an Age Limit, Paving the Way for a President for Life,”](#) *New York Times*, Dec 20 2017.

5. Practices of Power: Patronage and Customary Authority

THURS: 2/22

- Bratton, Michael and Nicholas van de Walle. 1997. “Neopatrimonial Rule in Africa,” Chapter 2, pp. 61-82, in *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Baldwin, Kate. 2015. *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa*. Chap 1.
- Paller, Jeffrey W. 2014. "Informal Institutions and Personal Rule in Urban Ghana." *African Studies Review* 57(3): 123-142.

6. Hard Times: The Debt Crisis and Structural Adjustment

TUES: 2/27

- Van de Walle, Nicolas, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis*, Ch. 1 (skim chap 2)
- Leonard, David and Scott Straus (2003). *Africa's Stalled Development: International Causes and Cures*. Chap 2.

THURS: 3/1

- Olopade, Chap 3: “Fail States: Why African Government Hasn’t Worked”
- Branch & Mampilly: Chap 3: “A Democratic Transition? Anti-austerity protests and the limits of reform”

Film: [“T-Shirt Travels”](#)

7. Social Identities: Ethnicity, Citizenship, and Belonging

TUES: 3/6 - Ethnicity & Race

- Ndegwa, Stephen N. 1997. "Citizenship and ethnicity: an examination of two transition moments in Kenyan politics." *American Political Science Review*, 91(03): 599-616.
- Robinson, Amanda. (2014) 'National Versus Ethnic Identification in Africa: Modernization, Colonial Legacy, and the Origins of territorial Nationalism', *World Politics*, 66(4): 709–746.

Suggested:

- Posner, Daniel. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review* 98 (4):529–45.
- Verwey, Cornel, and Michael Quayle (2012): "Whiteness, racism, and Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa." *African Affairs*, 111 (445): 551-575.
- "[One team, one nation: Football, ethnic identity, and conflict in Africa.](#)" Afrobarometer Working Paper # 177 (2017).

THURS: 3/8 – Citizenship, Belonging, and Land

- Boone, Catherine (2007) "Property and Constitutional Order: Land Tenure Reform and the Future of the African State." *African Affairs*, 106(425): 557-586.
- Bøås, Morten. " 'New' Nationalism and Autochthony: Tales of Origin as Political Cleavage." *Africa Spectrum* (2009): 19-38.

[Spring Break: 3/9-3/26]

8. Challenges of Democratization

TUES: 3/27

Democracy and Political Participation

- Zuern, Elke. "Democratization as liberation: competing African perspectives on democracy." *Democratization* 16.3 (2009): 585-603.
- Lindberg, Staffan I. "The surprising significance of African elections." *Journal of Democracy* 17.1 (2006): 139-151.

Film: [An African Election \(2010\)](#)

THURS: 3/29

Elections, Fraud, & Violence

- Straus, S., & Taylor, C. (2012) Democratization and electoral violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990-2008. In: Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *Voting in Fear: Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 15-38.
- Dorman, Sarah R. (2016). *Understanding Zimbabwe: From Liberation to Authoritarianism*. Chapter 6 (“the Politics of Exclusion”).

TUES 4/3:

****MID-TERM EXAM****

THURS 4/5: - *No Class*

9. Violent Conflict and Genocide

TUES: 4/10

- Autesserre, Severine. 2008. “The Trouble with Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict.” *Foreign Affairs* 87(3), 94-110.
- “A LRA Love Story,” *A Moonless, Starless Sky* (pgs. 3-29; 123-156).

Suggested:

- Amony, Evelyn (2015) *I Am Evelyn Amony: Reclaiming My Life from the Lord's Resistance Army*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

THURS: 4/12

Mass Violence and Genocide

- Straus, Scott. 2015. *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa*: Cornell University Press. Chapters 4 (skim); 6; 9.

10. Violent Extremism

TUES: 4/17

Violence and Extremism: Nigeria and Boko Haram

- Nigeria,” *A Moonless, Starless Sky* (pgs. 65-100; 184-207).
- “[Vigilantism is Flourishing in Nigeria](#) – with Official Support.” *The Conversation*, Nov 9 2017.
- “[Rescued and deradicalised women are returning to Boko Haram. Why?](#)” Hilary Matfess, *African Arguments*, 1 Nov 2017.

Suggested:

- “[Education is Forbidden.](#)” *Roads & Kingdoms*, 19 Feb 2017.
- [How to Write about Boko Haram](#), *The Republic*, Sa’eed Husaini, April 14 2017.

THURS: 4/19

Violence and Extremism: Somalia & Al-Shabaab

- [Council on Foreign Relations: Al-Shabaab](#)
- “Somalia,” *A Moonless, Starless Sky* (pgs. 101-122; 208-236).

11. Women, Power, and Representation

TUES: 4/24

- Tripp, Aili Mari. (2015). *Women and power in post-conflict Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. (Pgs 3-33).
- Medie, Peace A. "Fighting gender-based violence: The women's movement and the enforcement of rape law in Liberia," *African Affairs* 112.448 (2013): 377-397.

Suggested:

- Burnet, Jennie E. "Gender balance and the meanings of women in governance in post-genocide Rwanda." *African Affairs* 107.428 (2008): 361-386.

Film: [the Pearl of Africa](#) (2016)

12. The Politics of Poverty Relief

THURS: 4/26

- Sachs, Jeffrey D. "The Development Challenge." *Foreign Affairs* (2005): 78-90. (Skim before reading *Idealist*)
- Olopade, Chap 4: "Stuff we Don't Want: Doing Bad in Africa"
- Olopade, Chap 7: "The Commercial Map: Development for Sale"
- "[How DR Congo lost control of the fabric of its culture and economy.](#)" Quartz Africa, Dec 13 2017.

Film: [Miners Shot Downs](#)

TUES: 5/1:

- Munk, Nina. 2013. *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to end Poverty.* Anchor Books.

THURS: 5/3:

- Munk, Nina. 2013. *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to end Poverty.* Anchor Books.

Film: [The Land Between](#)

13. What's Next for the Continent?

TUES: 5/8:

- Olopade: Chap 6: "The Technology Map: Lessons in Leapfrogging"
- "[Africa's Generational War](#)," John Githongo. *Foreign Policy*. Jan 5 2018.
- Christine Mungai, "[What US intelligence predicted about Africa today 15 years ago, and how terribly wrong they were](#)," *Mail & Guardian*, 19 January 2015.
- '[Africa Rising' in retreat: Signs of new resistances](#)', Patrick Bond, 17 Sept 2017.