

# African Politics

## POLITSC 4250

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Office hours: Thurs. 10am-12pm  
Or by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introductory survey of Sub-Saharan African politics from the pre-colonial period to the contemporary era. We will examine the common themes, issues, and trends that shape politics and development across forty-nine countries. The goals of the course are for you to gain an understanding of how context shapes political behavior, in general, and how historical and political forces have influenced African politics, in particular. You will also learn how social science methodologies are used to understand political processes.

The material for this course is organized around the following broad themes: pre-colonial and colonial legacies, democratization, ethnic politics, violent conflict, and economic development. While the course is not designed as a study of individual countries, in exploring the themes and trends that dominate politics across Africa, you will learn quite a bit about a variety of countries on the continent.

This course fulfills a Social Science General Education (GE) requirement in the study of Organizations and Policies. The expected learning outcomes for this GE are:

1. Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they apply to the study of organizations and politics.
2. Students understand the formation and durability of political, economic, and social organizing principles and their differences and similarities across contexts.
3. Students comprehend and assess the nature and values of organizations and politics and their importance in social problem solving and policy making.

To achieve these expected learning outcomes, students will read original research published in top academic journals and university presses and class time will be devoted to understanding the research process, from theory generation to empirical analyses. By tracing the evolution of political organizations from pre-colonial times to today, we will identify the perennial challenges to political rule in Africa and the ways in which a variety of ways in which those challenges were met by different political organizations and institutions. Finally, the course will put students in the shoes of policy makers in Africa in order to think through the interests and constraints of both states and non-state actors in addressing, and sometimes perpetuating, problems of order and development.

This course also fulfills the Diversity General Education requirement in Global Studies. The expected learning outcomes for this GE are:

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

To achieve these expected outcomes, students will learn over the course of the semester about the history, culture, and politics of many different precolonial polities, colonies, and post-colonial states through case study readings, in-class lectures and discussions, and the presentation of case study research by students. Through learning about the role of the international community in the history of African political development, students will reflect on their own role and responsibility as a global citizen in addressing both the problems and the possibilities of politics in Africa.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to succeed in the course, you should be prepared to meet the following requirements:

1. **Attend class.**

This course will rely largely on material discussed in lecture. Class attendance is expected (and will improve your performance on exams and assignments), but you are adults free to make your own choices about the effort you will devote to this class.

2. **Read the assigned materials.**

The course schedule details course reading assignments day-by-day. Students are expected to have read the assigned material *before* class. We will have irregular in-class quizzes and assignments to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading and to help stimulate class discussion. *Bring readings with you to class* and be able to succinctly state the author's argument as well as your critique of their work.

3. **Be attentive and participate in class.**

Students will maximize the course's benefits by actively listening to lecture and discussion and contributing to in-class discussions and activities. It is the responsibility of the student to raise questions when something is unclear.

4. **Complete required assignments and take scheduled exams on time.**

All exams must be taken when scheduled and assignments must be turned in on time, with exceptions made only for the following excused absences:

- Documented University sanctioned event

- Documented death in the family
- Observation of a religious holiday
- Illness or injury that prevent attendance

If an exam is missed due to an *excused* absence, a make-up exam will be scheduled through the OSU Testing Center's Make-Up Examination Program. Exams missed due to an *unexcused* absence will receive a grade of 0 and cannot be made up. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized a letter grade for each 24-hour period they are turned in after the due date and time.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

### 1. Map Quiz – 10%

A Map Quiz will be administered in class on Thursday of Week 3. Students will be given a blank map of Africa and will be expected to write in the name of a random sample of countries. A list of the 49 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and a current map are provided at the end of this syllabus.

### 2. In-Class “Pop” Quizzes – 10%

Over the course of the semester, you will be given an undisclosed number of in-class “pop” quizzes. Each quiz will be given at the beginning of class, and will ask a few basic questions about the readings for that day (main argument, key facts, results, conclusions, etc.) that will be easily answered if you have done the reading for class ahead of time. Filling in your name will count as one question so that you get some credit for simply showing up. Your lowest three in-class quiz scores will be dropped, and your overall in-class quiz grade will be an average of the remaining quizzes. Because the three lowest scores are dropped, there will be no make-ups for missed quizzes.

### 3. Country Case Studies (Paper and Presentation) – 25%

During Week 2, students will be randomly assigned to groups of four-five and each group will be randomly assigned an African country. Each member of the group will be responsible for applying a different topic from the course to that country. You will be expected to carry out research on the topic, as it applies to your country, throughout the semester, and to seek assistance from the other members of your group, the professor, and OSU librarians. A 1500-2000 word report will be due in Week 11, and group presentations will be made in Weeks 12 and 13. While group members are expected to work together and coordinate their presentations, students will be evaluated individually on both the written report and the presentation. A comprehensive description of the assignment, with information on criteria and evaluation, will be distributed in Week 2.

### 4. Mid-Term Exam – 25%

The mid-term exam will draw from assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions through Week 5. The mid-term exam will be a mixture of short answer questions (mul-

multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or identification questions) and a short essay. A make-up exam will only be permissible if associated with an excused absence (see above).

#### 5. **Final Exam – 30%**

The final will focus more heavily on material from Weeks 7-16, given that you will already have been tested on earlier material, but some questions will require you to draw from material in the first half of the course. The final exam will include short answer questions (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or identification questions) and two short essays. A make-up exam will only be permissible if associated with an excused absence (see above).

Letter grades correspond to the following percentages:

|           |           |           |              |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| A: 93-100 | B: 83-86  | C: 73-76  | D: 60-66     |
| A-: 90-92 | B-: 80-82 | C-: 70-72 | E: $\leq$ 60 |
| B+: 87-89 | C+: 77-79 | D+: 67-69 |              |

## COURSE MATERIALS

The following books are available for purchase at the OSU book store and are on reserve in Thompson Library:

Dowden, Richard. 2009. *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. New York: PublicAffairs.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

All other readings will be available through the Carmen course site:  
<https://carmen.osu.edu/d21/home/11105267>.

## COURSE POLICIES

### **Academic and Personal Integrity:**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc>.

### **Distractions:**

Please arrive on time and do not leave before the end of class. I prefer that you do not use your laptop or cell phones during class time. If you must use your laptop to take notes, please sit on the last 4-5 rows of the classroom and refrain from checking email and browsing the internet.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. For additional information, visit <http://ods.osu.edu>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION**

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#### **Thursday 8/22** Course Introduction

### **WEEK 2: STUDYING AFRICAN STATES AND SOCIETIES**

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#### **Tuesday 8/27** Perspectives on Africa

Dowden: Chapter 1.

Osondu, E.C. 2008. Waiting. *Guernica: A Magazine of Art and Politics*, October.

#### **Thursday 8/29** Researching Africa

Herbst: Introduction & Chapter 1

Groups and countries will be assigned for the case study project, group members will discuss topic assignments, and an OSU librarian will present resources for conducting research.

## WEEK 3: PRE-COLONIAL POLITICS AND COLONIAL CONQUEST

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### **Tuesday 9/3** Precolonial Africa

Herbst: Chapter 2.

Bates, Robert. 1983. "The Centralization of African Societies," Chapter 2, pp. 21-85 in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kenyatta, Jomo. 1965. "The Gikuyu System of Government," Chapter 9, pp 179-221 in *Facing Mt. Kenya*. New York: Random House.

### **Thursday 9/5** The Scramble

Herbst: Chapter 3, pp. 58-80.

Pakenham, Thomas. 1991. Introduction, pp. xxi-xxiii, in *The Scramble for Africa: White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876 to 1912*. New York: Perennial.

Map Quiz

## WEEK 4: COLONIAL RULE

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### **Tuesday 9/10** Colonial Policies

Herbst: Chapter 3, pp. 81-96.

Young, Crawford. 1994. "The Colonial State Institutionalized," Chapter 5, pp. 141-181 in *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

### **Thursday 9/12** End of Colonial Rule

Dowden: Chapter 4.

Young, Crawford. 1994. "Toward African Independence," Chapter 6, pp. 182-217 in *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

## WEEK 5: POST-COLONIAL CHALLENGES

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### Tuesday 9/17 Colonial Borders

Herbst: Chapter 4, pp. 99-116 and 133-136.

Asiwaju, A. I. "Introduction," in *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries*. London: C. Hurst.

Englebert, Pierre. 2000. "State Legitimacy and Development Capacity," Chapter 5, pp. 71-122, in *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Jackson, Robert and Carl Rosberg. 1982. "Why Africa's Weak States Persist," *World Politics* 35(1): 1-24.

### Thursday 9/19 Geography

Herbst: Chapter 5.

Herbst: Chapter 9.

## WEEK 6: MID-TERM

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### Tuesday 9/24 Mid-Term Review

We will use class time to review the material covered so far.

### Thursday 9/26

Mid-Term Exam

## WEEK 7: POLITICAL SYSTEMS

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### Tuesday 10/1 Authoritarianism & "Big Man" Politics

Dowden: Chapter 3.

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.

Fitzgerald, Mary Anne. September 8, 1997. "Obituary: Mobutu Sese Seko," *The Independent*. London, UK.

### **Thursday 10/3** Democratic Transitions

Bratton, Michael and Nicholas van de Walle. 1997. "Africa's Divergent Transitions, 1990-1994," Chapter 3, pp. 97-129, in *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sandbrook, Richard. 1996. "Transitions without Consolidation: Democratization in Six African Cases," *Third World Quarterly* 17(1): 69-87.

## WEEK 8: INFORMAL POLITICS

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### **Tuesday 10/8** Chieftaincy

Herbst: Chapter 6.

Baldwin, Kate. *forthcoming*. "Why Vote with the Chief? Political Connections and Public Goods Provision in Zambia," *American Journal of Political Science*.

### **Thursday 10/10** Patronage Politics

Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior," *World Politics* 55(3): 399-422.

Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42(10): 1339-1362.

## WEEK 9: ETHNIC POLITICS

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### **Tuesday 10/15** Origins of Ethnic Identities

Bates, Robert. 1983. Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics, Chapter 9, pp. 152-171, in Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola, eds., *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.



Posner, Daniel. 2003. "The Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: The Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia." *Comparative Politics* 35(2): 127-146.

**Thursday 10/17** Implications of Ethnic Differences

Dowden: Chapter 9

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): 529-545.

WEEK 10: CIVIL WAR

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**Tuesday 10/22** Economic Origins of Conflict

Collier, Paul. 2007. "The Conflict Trap," Chapter 2, pp. 17-37, in *The Bottom Billion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Berkeley, Bill. 2001. "The Rebel," Chapter 1, pp. 21-61, in *The Graves Are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe, and Power in the Heart of Africa*. New York: Basic Books.

**Thursday 10/24** Political Origins of Conflict

James Fearon and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil Wars." *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90.

Cederman, Lars-Erik, Nils B. Weidmann, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2011. "Horizontal Inequalities and Ethnonationalist Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 478-495.

WEEK 11: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**Tuesday 10/29** Africa's Growth Tragedy

Dowden: Chapter 10

Collier, Paul and Jan Willem Gunning. 1999. "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13: 3-22.

**Thursday 10/31** Causes of Underdevelopment

Bloom, John and Jeffery Sachs. 1998. "Geography, Demography, and Economic Growth in Africa." *Brookings Papers in Economic Activity* 2: 207–295.

Englebert, Pierre. 2000. "Accounting for Africa's Development Crisis," Chapter 6, pp. 125-149, in *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Country case study reports are due no later than  
Friday, November 1 at 5pm.

## WEEK 12: GROUP PRESENTATIONS I

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### **Tuesday 11/5** Uganda & Kenya

Dowden: Chapter 2

Dowden: Chapter 15

Student presentations on Uganda and Kenya.

### **Thursday 11/7** Nigeria & Angola

Dowden: Chapter 16

Dowden: Chapter 8

Student presentations on Nigeria and Angola.

## WEEK 13: GROUP PRESENTATIONS II

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### **Tuesday 11/12** Somalia & South Sudan

Dowden: Chapter 5

Dowden: Chapter 7

Student presentations on Somalia and South Sudan.

## Thursday 11/14 DR Congo & South Africa

Dowden: Chapter 13

Dowden: Chapter 14

Student presentations on Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa.

## WEEK 14: CURRENT ISSUES I

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### Tuesday 11/19 Foreign Aid

Sachs, Jeffrey. 2005. "The Development Challenge." *Foreign Affairs* 84(2): 78-90.

Moyo, Dambisa. 2009. Forward, pp. ix-xii, & "The Myth of Aid," Chapter 1, pp. 3-9, in *Dead Aid*. New York: FSG Press.

### Thursday 11/21 China in Africa

Dowden: Chapter 17

Brautigam, Deborah. 2010. "Africa's Eastern Promise: What the West Can Learn from Chinese Investment in Africa." *Foreign Affairs* 89(1):

## WEEK 15: CURRENT ISSUES II

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### Tuesday 11/26 AIDS Crisis

Dowden: Chapter 12

de Waal, Alex. 2003. "How will HIV/ AIDS transform African Governance?" *Africa Affairs* 102: 1-23.

## WEEK 16: LOOKING FORWARD

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### Tuesday 12/3 The Future of Africa

Dowden: Chapter 18 & Epilogue

Miguel, Edward. 2008. "Is it Africa's Turn?" *Boston Review* May/June: 7-12.

## FINALS WEEK

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Final exam is scheduled for  
Monday, December 9, 8:00-9:45am.

## COUNTRIES OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

|                        |                   |                      |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Angola                 | Gabon             | Niger                |
| Benin                  | Gambia            | Nigeria              |
| Botswana               | Ghana             | Rwanda               |
| Burkina Faso           | Guinea            | São Tomé & Príncipe* |
| Burundi                | Guinea-Bassau     | Senegal              |
| Cameroon               | Ivory Coast (Côte | Seychelles*          |
| Cape Verde*            | d'Ivoire)         | Sierra Leone         |
| Central African        | Kenya             | Somalia              |
| Republic               | Lesotho           | South Africa         |
| Chad                   | Liberia           | South Sudan          |
| Comoros*               | Madagascar*       | Sudan                |
| Democratic Republic of | Malawi            | Swaziland            |
| the Congo              | Mali              | Tanzania             |
| Djibouti               | Mauritania        | Togo                 |
| Equatorial Guinea      | Mauritius*        | Uganda               |
| Eritrea                | Mozambique        | Zambia               |
| Ethiopia               | Namibia           | Zimbabwe             |

\*Island countries.

# POLITICAL MAP OF AFRICA



Produced by the Cartographic Research Lab  
University of Alabama