

African Politics

84:373 | Fall Semester 2017 | 3 credits
MW, 1:50-3:20pm in Sage 4218

*"I am an African.
I am born of the peoples of the continent of Africa.
The pain of violent conflict of the peoples of Liberia, Somalia,
the Sudan, Burundi and Algeria is a pain I also bear...
The dismal shame of poverty, suffering, and human
degradation of my continent is a blight that we share...
Whatever the setback of the moment, nothing can stop us now!
Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace!
However improbable it may sound to skeptics, Africa will
prosper!"*

—Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa; excerpt from a speech delivered on the adoption of the South African Constitution Bill, May 8, 1996

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Civil war. Ebola. Corruption. Poverty. Famine. Diamonds. Ethnic conflict. Genocide. Instability. *The Lion King*. If any of us were asked to quickly give a thumbnail sketch of what "Africa" is like, we'd probably mention a few of the things on this list. Unlike Europe, North America, or even South America, Africa seems to regularly fall off of our collective radar unless we're hearing about something dramatic and, usually, pretty terrible.

This semester we will become familiar with some of the complexities of African politics. Because we cannot possibly do the continent justice in 14 short weeks, we'll explore two "core" case studies (the Great Lakes region and South Africa) and examine how they influence the countries around them, paying particular attention to the roles colonialism, ideology, ethnicity, foreign influence and democracy play on the continent.

PREREQUISITES

Students will find that information and skills learned in 84:101 (Introduction to Comparative Politics) as well as other upper-level courses in comparative politics (e.g., 84:309, 84:326, 84:379, 84:313) are useful in this course. They are not required, but some background knowledge—particularly introductory-level material—will be assumed. If you find you are having trouble with the material due to a lack of background knowledge, please do not hesitate to contact me about it and I will do my best to help you.

COURSE NUMBER NOTE

This is a "special topics" course in the department with a temporary course number (373). That number will likely change to a permanent number this semester.

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Professor Tracy H. Slagter
Ph.D., University of Iowa (2006)

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Dept. Office Location: Sage Hall 4631
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REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Thomson, Alex. 2016. *An Introduction to African Politics*, 4th ed. New York: Routledge.

Naipaul, V.S. 1979. *A Bend in the River*. New York: Vintage International.

Other readings will be available to you on D2L or via Polk Library's online databases. Please bring your book(s) and readings to class with you each meeting.

A NOTE TO POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS

Political Science majors should take Political Methodology (245) in either their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. 84:245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (401), and cannot be taken concurrently. If you are currently a political science major or if you think you will be one of our majors in the future, it is important that you save your graded coursework from this class. If you have questions, please see me or any faculty member after class.

GLOBAL SCHOLAR DESIGNATION

This course may count toward the Global Scholar certificate at UW Oshkosh. *Global Scholar* courses build upon the knowledge, skills and perspectives that students gain in their (required) USP Global Citizenship (GC) course. Together, GC and GS courses aim to provide students with the knowledge of nations, cultures or societies beyond the U.S.; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical and contemporary global challenges and opportunities; and the skills needed to engage with the responsibilities of informed

citizenship in a complex, interdependent and changing world.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- *Understand* issues facing Africa today and *explain* their historical and political precedents;
- *Analyze* the ways in which African politics depart from and conform to expectations we have of other political systems around the world;
- *Examine* how outside forces (e.g., colonialism, trade, disease) have shaped and continue to influence Africa, and how African countries have responded to those influences;
- *Interpret* a wide variety of social science research on African politics;
- *Discover* the development of African identities through literature and relate it to politics; and
- *Develop* a research critique based on African literature and identify and analyze sources to relate it to concrete cases.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

I use a **93/90/87** grading scale in this course (which means that 93 is the cut-point for an A, 90 for an A-, 87 for a B+, etc.). Your grade will be determined as follows:

- **Participation (10%):** In an upper-division course, there's nothing worse than a roomful of students who won't say a word. If you show up for class every session but never say a word, you can expect, at maximum, a C for this portion of your grade. One way to ensure that you have something to contribute is to stay updated on what's happening in Africa. Here's one good place (of many) to start: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>
- **Discussion Guide & Leadership (15%):** each student will prepare one discussion guide for class use. Details will follow in class.

- **Exams (20% for the first exam, 30% for the second):** Two in-class examinations will cover the content of the course. Exams will consist of short essay questions, identification questions, and some completion tasks.
- ***A Bend in the River* Research Critique (25%):** Naipaul's book illustrates so many of the concepts we'll talk about this semester, and will serve as a springboard for your final project. Complete details will follow in class, but you should have the book fully read by Thanksgiving.

COURSE FORMAT

This is an upper-division course in political science, and as such it will be taught in a seminar style as much as is practical. This means that lecturing will be minimal and that student input is required for the course to be successful (and fun). As such, I expect that students will attend class each week prepared to discuss the readings — this means that completing the readings ahead of time is essential.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

I will not tolerate plagiarism of any kind. All students should familiarize themselves with the University's policies on academic dishonesty and know the consequences of plagiarism or cheating. In this course, plagiarism on any assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

CHANGES

I reserve the right to change any part of this syllabus at any time in order to accommodate the needs, interests, and pace of this particular group.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND DUE DATES

A note on reading for class: my highest expectation of you is the one that will be the most difficult for you to meet, and it is that you carefully read the assigned materials before our class meetings. By this, I mean that I want you to engage in *close reading and critique*, not just a quick skim in the minutes before class. A lot of research exists to support reading print documents instead of reading them on a screen, so I encourage you to print (double-sided) the readings, put them in a huge binder, grab a favorite pen, and mark up your texts with underlines, questions, and reminders to yourself. Trust me, our class discussions will be better for it. Thank you!

- September 6 Introduction to course, format, and assignments + pre-colonial Africa
Readings: syllabus and Thomson, Chapter 2
- September 11 Colonialism: the Belgian Congo Experience
Reading: Hochschild, Adam. 1998. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York: Mariner Books. Chapters 7, 10, and 15 (D2L)
- September 13 Colonialism's Reminders
Reading: Young, Crawford. "The Heritage of Colonialism." in J. Harbeson, D. Rothchild, *Africa in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press AND Crowder, Michael. 1964. "Indirect Rule – French and British Style." *Africa* 34: 197-205. (D2L) AND Herbst, Jeffrey. 1989. "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa." *International Organization* 43: 673-692.
- September 18 Decolonization & African Nationalism
Readings: Thomson, Chapter 3; AND Englebert and Hummel. 2005. "Let's Stick Together: Understanding Africa's Secessionist Deficit." *African Affairs* 104: 399-427.
- September 20 Ethnicity, Religion and Personal Rule in Africa
Readings: Thomson, Chapters 4 and 6 AND Jackson, Robert and Carl Rosberg. 1982. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Selections on D2L)
- September 25 The Military and Authoritarianism in African Politics
Reading: Thomson, Chapters 7 and 10
- September 27 External Influences
Read: Thomson, Chapters 8 and 9
- October 2 **Exam I**
- October 4 Case 1: Defining The Great Lakes Problem
Reading: Lemarchand, René. 2009. "The Geopolitics of the Great Lakes Region." In *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; AND Daley, Patricia. 2006. "Challenges to Peace: conflict resolution in the Great Lakes Region of Africa." *Third World Quarterly* 27: 303-319 AND watch this: Crash Course World History 221: Congo and Africa's World War at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uArRzwKHvE>
- October 9 Case 1: Tales of Two Genocides
Reading: Lemarchand, René. 2008. "The Burundi Genocide." In Samuel Totten and William Parsons, eds., *Century of Genocide*. New York: Routledge AND Lemarchand, René. 2008. "The 1994 Rwanda Genocide." In Samuel Totten and William Parsons, eds., *Century of Genocide*. New York: Routledge.

- October 11 Case 1: Post-Genocide Recovery?
Reading: Reyntjens, Filip. 2010. "Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda." *African Affairs* 110: 1-34; AND Thomson, Susan. 2011. "Whispering Truth to Power: the Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-Genocide Reconciliation." *African Affairs* 110: 439-456.
- October 16 Case 1: Using Governance to Cope
Reading: Lemarchand, René. 2006. "Consociationalism and Power Sharing in Africa: Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo." *African Affairs* 106: 1-20 AND Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2003. "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41: 297-321.
- October 18 Case 1: Women Post-Genocide
Reading: Mageza-Barthel, Rirhandu. 2015. *Mobilizing Transnational Gender Politics in Post-Genocide Rwanda*. New York: Ashgate. (Excerpt, D2L)
- October 23 No class; catch up on reading!
- October 25 No class; catch up on reading!
- October 30 Case 1: Recent Research | Odds and Ends of Note
Reading: Gaynor, Niamh. 2015. "Poverty amidst plenty: structural violence and local governance in western Congo." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 33: 391-410; AND Ingelaere, Bert and Nina Wilen. 2017. "The civilized Self and barbaric Other: ex-rebels making sense of sexual violence in the DR Congo." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 35: 221-239.
- November 1 African Democracy
Reading: Thomson, Chapter 11 and other TBA.
- November 6 Case 2: South Africa's Colonial and Apartheid Past
Reading: Deegan, Heather. 2011. *Politics South Africa*. New York: Pearson. Chapters 1-4.
- November 8 Case 2: South Africa After Apartheid
Reading: Selections from Sparks, Allister. 1997. *Tomorrow is Another Country*. London: Arrow Books. (D2L)
- November 13 Case 2: The African National Congress (ANC)
Reading: Runciman, Carin. 2016. "The 'ballot and the brick' protest, voting, and non-voting in post-apartheid South Africa." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 34: 419-436; AND Reddy, Thiven. 2010. "ANC Decline, Social Mobilization and Political Society..." *Politikon* 37: 185-206.
- November 15 Case 2: Women and South African Politics
Reading: Waylen, Georgina. 2007. "Women's Mobilization and Gender Outcomes in Transitions to Democracy." *Comparative Political Studies* 40: 521-546; AND Hassim, Shireen. "Representation, Participation, and Democratic Effectiveness..." Chapter 3 in Ann Marie Goetz and Shireen Hassim, eds., *No Shortcuts to Power*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- November 20 Case 2: South African Leadership?
Reading: Mandela, Nelson. 1993. "South Africa's Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 72: 86-97. AND Le Pere, Garth. 2017. "Ubuntu as Foreign Policy: the Ambiguities of South Africa's Brand Image and Identity." *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 39: 93-115.

- November 22 **Thanksgiving Recess:** no class! **NOTE:** you should have completed your reading of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* by the end of the break (or much sooner)
- November 27 Case 2: South Africa and HIV/AIDS
Reading: "It's natural to look for a source:' a qualitative examination of alternative beliefs about HIV and AIDS in Cape Town, South Africa." *Public Understanding of Science* 26: 369-384; AND Lodge, Tom. 2015. "The Politics of HIV/AIDS in South Africa: government action and public response." *Third World Quarterly* 36: 1570-1591.
- November 29 Case 2: South African Democracy Today
Reading: Vincent, Louise. 2011. "Seducing the People: Populism and the Challenge to Democracy in South Africa." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29: 1-14; AND (TBA)
- December 4 Conclusions
Reading: Hyden, Goran. 2006. "Quo Vadis, Africa?" Chapter 12 in *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- December 6 Catch-Up, Review and/or Peer Review of Papers (if desired)
- December 11 **Exam 2**
- December 13 **Final Papers DUE by class time today! (Submit to D2L Dropbox.)**