

## **Africa in World Affairs**

IR B-6917

Spring 2017

Wednesday 7:15-9:15pm

NAC 6/293

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Office Hours

Monday 5:00-7:00

NAC 4/143B

This course provides a broad overview of African politics with a particular focus on states and their place in world affairs. Often, Africa is depicted as a homogenous entity. In much journalistic and academic writing, Africa is depicted as a unified entity which is either rising or falling, moving forward or falling backward, becoming more peaceful or descending into violence. This course starts with a different assumption. That is, politics in Africa are incredibly heterogeneous, and always have been. Diversity characterizes African politics more so than homogeneity and to describe Africa and its politics in homogenous terms is an analytical mistake. There is no African state; there are only African states.

This course provides students with analytical tools through which to understand the diversity of African politics. It does so in two ways. First, it introduces students to six different perspectives on African states – their origins, their trajectories, and their place in the world system. In other words, it begins by introducing students to different ways of analyzing African politics. There is no such thing as a neutral analytical perspective and this course enables students to see the benefits and costs of different forms of argument about African politics. Second, it introduces students to several critical topics in African politics, providing an introduction to political issues from a variety of different analytical perspectives.

The course focuses largely on states because patterns of state formation profoundly shape a country's politics and the life course of its citizens. Among other questions, we will ask: Are contemporary African politics best understood as a legacy of the continent's encounter with colonialism or are they better understood as a product of post-colonial institutional development? To what degree has Africa's geography shaped the formation of African states? How does culture impact the ability of African states and international donors to implement policies? To what degree is the shape and trajectory of the African state impacted by the politics of the world system?

To explore these questions we will read foundational work by, among others, Bates, Comaroff and Comaroff, Herbst, Mamdani, and Young.

**Course Assignments and Evaluation:** The goal of the course is to improve students' abilities to think critically about the world around them and specifically about politics in Africa. Therefore,

assignments are directed at improving such skills. There are two main requirements: two reading response papers and a research paper.

### **Response Papers**

Students will be required to write two response papers of 4-5 pages length during the first part of the semester. The papers should engage the readings for a theoretical perspective in a given week (e.g. Colonialism and Its Legacies). Papers should lay out the argument of the readings, ask how persuasive the argument is, and examine what the perspective's potential advantages and weaknesses are for understanding African politics.

Papers will be due at the first class for the next the theoretical perspective (e.g. papers on Geographies of Power and Prosperity will be due at the beginning of the class on Colonialism and Its Legacies). Students are free to choose to write on whatever perspective they wish.

### **Research Paper**

Students must write a 12-15 page research paper on a topic of the student's choosing in which they apply one of the perspectives discussed in class to examine an aspect of African politics.

### **Grading**

The response papers constitute 20% each, the research paper 40%, and participation 20% of the final grade.

The course is designed as a seminar, hence active, thoughtful, and respectful participation on the part of students is crucial to the success of the class. Students are expected to arrive to class each session having read and thought about the assignments and prepared to discuss them.

**Learning Outcomes:** The primary goals of this course are for students to be able to assess the benefits and costs of different forms of argument about African politics and to be able to read and critically evaluate academic and journalistic work on contemporary African politics.

### **Books to Purchase:**

- Robert Bates. 2008. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Crawford Young. 1994. *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Juan Obarrio. 2014. *The Spirit of the Laws in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Course Outline

### Week 1 Introduction (January 30)

No Reading

### Week 2 Geographies of Power and Prosperity (February 6)

Jeffrey Herbst. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: Chapters 1-5.

### Week 3 Colonialism and Its Legacies (February 15)

**NOTE: Class is on Wednesday this week due to CUNY Schedule**

DUE – Papers on Geographies of Power

Crawford Young. 1994. *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: Chapters 1 and 4-7 and 9 [skim Chapter 4].

### Week 4 – NO CLASS – February 20 – Presidents’ Day

### Week 5 Institutions, Choices, and Their Effects (February 27)

DUE – Papers on Colonialism and Its Legacies

Daniel Posner and Daniel J. Young. 2007. “The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa.” *Journal of Democracy* 18 (3): 126-140.

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*: Chapters 3 and 9.

Robert Bates. 1981. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*. Berkeley: University of California Press: Chapters 5-6.

### Week 6 Africa in the World System (March 6)

DUE – Papers on Institutions and Their Effects

William Reno. 2001. “How Sovereignty Matters: Global Markets and Political Economy of Local Politics in Weak States.” In *Intervention and Transnational in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*. Thomas M. Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir, and Robert Latham, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Carolyn Nordstrom. 2001. "Out of the Shadows." In *Intervention and Transnational in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*. Thomas M. Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir, and Robert Latham, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.

James Ferguson. 2006. "Governing Extraction: New Spatializations of Order and Disorder in Neoliberal Africa." In *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

### **Week 7 Culture and Power (March 13)**

DUE – Papers on Africa in the World System

Juan Obarrio. 2014. *The Spirit of the Laws in Mozambique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Introduction, Chapters 1-4, 7.

### **Week 8 The Patrimonial State (March 20)**

DUE- Papers on Culture and Power

Jean-Francois Bayart. 2000. "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion." *African Affairs* 99: 217-267.

Achille Mbembe. 2001. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press: Chapter 2.

Paller, Jeffrey W. 2014. "Informal Institutions and Personal Rule in Urban Ghana." *African Studies Review* 57(3): 123-142.

## **SECTION 2: TOPICS IN AFRICAN POLITICS**

### **Week 9 The Politics of Ethnicity (March 27)**

DUE – Papers on the Patrimonial State

Mahmood Mamdani. 1996. *Citizen and Subject, Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: Chapters 1 and 2.

Dan Posner. 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.

John L. and Jean Comaroff. 2009. *Ethnicity Inc.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapter 5

### **Week 10 The Politics of State Collapse (April 3)**

Robert Bates. 2008. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press 1-4, 6.

William Reno. 1995. "Reinvention of an African Patrimonial State: Charles Taylor's Liberia." *Third World Quarterly* 16 (1): 109-120.

Catherine Boone. 2007. "Africa's New Territorial Politics: Regionalism and the Open Economy in Côte d'Ivoire." *African Security Review* 50 (1): 59-81.

Andrew Apter. 1999. "IBB=419: Nigerian Democracy and the Politics of Illusion." In *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa*. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 267-298.

### **Week 11 April 10 – NO CLASS – Spring Break**

### **Week 12 Economic Growth and Development (April 20)**

**NOTE – Class Canceled Due to Professor Conflict**

### **Week 13 Economic Growth, Development, and Corruption (April 24)**

Macartan Humphreys and Robert Bates. 2005. "Political Institutions and Economic Policies: Lessons from Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 35: 403-428.

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

Daniel Smith. 2008. *A Culture of Corruption*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 2.

James Ferguson. 2006. "De-moralizing Economies: African Socialism, Scientific Capitalism, and the Moral Politics of Structural Adjustment." In *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Timothy Mitchell. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press: Chapter 1.

### **Week 15 The Politics of Law (May 1)**

Daniel M. Brinks and Varun Gauri. 2014. "The Law's Majestic Equality? The Distributive Impact of Judicializing Social and Economic Rights." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2): 375-393.

Larry Diamond. 2008. "The Rule of Law versus the Rule of Big Men." *Journal of Democracy* 19(2): 138-149.

Mark Fathi Massoud. 2013. *Law's Fragile State: Colonial, Authoritarian, and Humanitarian Legacies in Sudan*. New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapters 1 and 6.

Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. 2003. "Reflections on Liberalism, Policulturalism, and ID-ology: Citizenship and Difference in South Africa." *Social Identities* 9 (4): 445-473.

### **Week 16 The Politics of Health (May 8)**

Varun Gauri and Evan Lieberman. 2006. "Boundary Institutions and HIV/AIDS Policy in Brazil and South Africa." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41 (3): 47-73.

Adam Ashforth. 2002. "An Epidemic of Witchcraft? The Implications of AIDS for the Postapartheid State." *African Studies* 61 (1): 121-143.

Mark Hunter. 2010. *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press: Chapters 7 and 8.

### **Week 17 Humanitarian Intervention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (May 15)**

Mahmood Mamdani. 2007. "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency." *The London Review of Books* 29 (5), 8 March

Read also the comments on the article Available at:

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mahmood-mamdani/the-politics-of-naming-genocide-civil-war-insurgency>

Severine Autessere. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence and International Intervention." *International Organization* 62 (2): 249-280.

Paul Collier. 2009. "Post-conflict Recovery: How Should Strategies Be Distinctive?" *Journal of African Economies*.

Severine Autessere. 2012. "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and Their Unintended Consequences." *African Affairs* 111 (443): 202-222.

**FINAL PAPERS DUE MAY 22 – NO EXTENSIONS!!!**