

**The Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa**  
**PSC 407T/607T**  
**Fall 2007 Syllabus**

Instructor: Prof. Robert L. Ostergard  
Department of Political Science  
Office: MSS 231  
(775) 784-4601 ext. 2805  
Email: orobert@unr.edu (best way to contact me)  
Office hours:

## Introduction

The image we often have of Africa is of a continent faced by challenges that seem almost insurmountable: political instability, economic deprivation, human rights abuses, natural disasters, civil wars, revolutions, and ethnic conflict, just to name a few. In fact, it is these types of issues that make the study of African politics important, interesting and challenging. Students are sometimes reluctant to undertake the study of Africa and African politics because of the complexities of the relationships on the continent. However, it is these complexities that make Africa and African politics interesting and, at times, provocative. While courses in modern African politics tend to focus on problems that plague Africa, these problems are set in a background of rich historical and cultural heritages found nowhere else in the world. Hence, at best, this course could only be considered an introductory survey to the topic of African politics and government.

As such, we are concerned with a number of topics and themes in the study of modern African politics, including, but not limited to the colonial background and its consequences, ethnicity, the role of the military in African politics, ideology in Africa's political development, dependency, democracy and political stability. While a thematic approach to African politics is stressed in the course, an underlying current in the course will be the tensions that exist between opposing forces in African politics (referred to in political lingo as dialectics). Some of these influences include foreign and indigenous influences, anarchy and order, democracy and authoritarianism, socialism and capitalism, political decay and development.

### **Objectives:**

- **Understanding African Government & Politics:** The course seeks to promote interest and thinking about the government and politics of the African Continent.
- **Familiarity with current issues:** The course seeks to promote an understanding of current events in Sub-Saharan Africa and to try to put them in current, historical, economic and political perspective.

• **Development of Research, Information, and Communication Skills:** One of the central goals of a university education is to enhance your capacity for independent investigation and research. This course provides a setting for practice in the use of a broad range of skills in these areas.

## Evaluation Components

### Undergraduate Level (407T)

Grading in the class will be based on the +/- letter grading system (i.e. B+, B, B-, etc)

#### *Participation & Journal (20%)*

Your participation in this class will be instrumental to the discussion and lectures. You will be asked to read daily the BBC's news reports regarding Africa (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm>), and other sources (such as [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/About\\_African/ww\\_news.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/About_African/ww_news.html)). Class discussions will focus on the readings and current events in Africa. Finally, students will be asked to develop a country expertise. In the second week of the course, you will be randomly assigned a country in Sub-Saharan Africa. For that country, you will be asked to keep a journal in which you will write a brief summary of the topic we are covering in a given week as it relates to your country and you will also be asked to write about current events in your country. So, for instance, if we are covering the impact of colonialism on Sub-Saharan Africa, you will be asked to write a short 1-2 page description of how colonialism has affected your country. The specific topics for you to address will be under each section in the syllabus. Likewise, you will be called upon in class to provide input on these topics as it relates to your country. You will become the expert in the class for your country.

#### *Exams (20% each = 40%)*

The exams will be given at approximately the half way point of the course and at the end of the course.

#### *Quiz (10%)*

This will be a map quiz that will be given at the beginning of the semester to make sure that everyone is up to speed with the geography of the continent.

#### *Semester Research Paper (30%)*

You will be asked to write a research paper on a subject pertinent to the topics of this course. Guidelines for the paper will be passed out for this paper within the next 2-3 weeks, but for now, students should read the Baglione book to familiarize themselves with how I will want the sections of the paper organized. The paper length will be approximately 15-20 pages.

### Graduate Level (607TG)

Grading in the class will be based on the +/- letter grading system (i.e. B+, B, B-, etc)

#### Participation (20%)

Midterm and Final Exam (20% respectively)

Research Paper, empirically based (quantitative or qualitative methods are fine here) (40 %)

## The Rules of the Game

### *Class Protocol*

The primary goal that I have when applying protocol and an evaluation component to my class is to make sure that everybody has an equal chance to do well. I do not care if I issue all “A’s” or all “F’s”. What is important for me is whether the process is fair, the rules are understood, and that interference with those rules is minimized. I see my primary role as keeping the playing field level for everyone. While the rules, protocol and evaluation components seem “draconian” or “tedious,” when you look at them, all they are saying to you is that if everyone is here with the same purpose—to learn and to explore the issues at hand for the semester—then we will have a smooth semester. It is when people try to bypass the normal rules and to create an unfair advantage that things get messy. Because of past issues, I have spelled out exactly some of the problems that may crop up during the semester and how they will be dealt with in my classroom. If you cannot abide by these conditions, then it is best for you to leave this classroom now instead of creating problems for both of us this semester.

Students are expected to treat each other with the respect with which they would want to be treated. The same courtesy should be extended to my teaching assistants and to myself. You will be treated with the same respect that you treat others. On the other hand, should you decide not to follow that “golden rule,” I have no problem in handling that type of behavior in several ways that I have found to be tremendously successful. Every student in this class has worked hard to be at UNR and to be in this class. I will not tolerate students in my class who cannot respect the right of others to enjoy an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The types of behavior that students should be cognizant of include:

- Talking during lectures
- Reading material during a lecture
- Electronic equipment being used inappropriately in a lecture hall
- Sleeping in lecture hall

***I reserve the right to remove from the lecture hall any student who is disruptive or is not engaged in the material.***

**Students are also advised that they must obtain in advance the permission of the Professor or any outside speakers before using any recording devices within the lecture hall or discussions.**

Along these lines, I will make specific comments regarding the latest fads in technology in my lecture hall. Part of having modern “toys” is having the responsibility that comes with them. At any given time, the great majority of students—having paid money for the course and having dire concern over their grades—will also be concerned about the lectures and discussions. Modern communication devices such as cell phones, PDAs, beepers, cell phones, wireless email receivers, cell phones, portable music players, cell phones, and cell phones are a significant distraction to your colleagues, and equally important, to your professor. **Please turn off your personal communication devices before entering my classroom.** I trust that I will not have to address this potentially embarrassing issue in my lecture hall during this semester. Likewise, because of the inappropriate use of laptops in

previous classes, **laptops will not be permitted in my classroom.** The problem of web surfing and the lack of attention to the discussion at hand have forced me to conclude that laptops are a tremendous distraction during class for both students and the class in general.

### *Academic Dishonesty*

With regard to academic dishonesty, this topic has become a sad commentary on today's student body. As easier access to information becomes available, students, in many cases, have adopted a carefree attitude towards the documentation of their research. As a result, I have been forced to impose standards and procedures that will be used in the evaluation of all my students' research. The following is from the *Student Handbook* of the University of Nevada, which governs student conduct.

#### ***Subsection A: Definitions***

*Academic dishonesty is against university as well as the system community standards. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: Plagiarism: defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one's work to be used in this fashion. Cheating: defined as (1) obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual or unauthorized use of books, notes, text and other materials; (2) obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination; (3) taking an examination for another student, or arranging for another person to take an exam in one's place; (4) altering or changing test answers after submittal for grading, grades after grades have been awarded, or other academic records once these are official.*

#### ***Subsection B: Sanctions for Violation of Academic Standards***

*Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following: (1) canceling the student's enrollment in the class without a grade; (2) filing a final grade of "F"; (3) awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question; (4) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper. A student may also be subject to discipline for academic dishonesty pursuant to the provisions of the Board of Regents Code, Title 2, Chapter 6.*

(Student Handbook, p. 168).

The Department of Political Science's statement on plagiarism is as follows:

*Plagiarism is theft. It is using other people's written or spoken words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7 to 10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism, unless the words are enclosed in quotation makers and a source cited. It doesn't matter if these words are copied from a Web site, a textbook, a newspaper article or your roommate's paper. Copying words is plagiarism. You must include citations and quote marks when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline. So is deception, making up stuff and passing it off as the truth. Both are firing offenses in the professional world. In the Department of Political Science, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism and deception, namely:*

- *A grade of "F" on a minor assignment*
- *A request that the student drop the class*
- *Withdrawal of the student by the professor*
- *An "F" in the course*
- *A notation on the student's transcripts*
- *Expulsion from the university.*

*A combination of these penalties may also be used. If you need more information or have questions about plagiarism, ask your nearest political science professor.*

Self-plagiarism is cheating and will result in a failing grade as well. This policy also includes using papers from previous courses and submitting them as a new paper for the current course.

**My policy** here is simple: students who violate any of the conditions established by the Department of Political Science and/or university regulations with regard to academic dishonesty will fail my course (you will not be allowed to drop it or withdraw from it), and I will pursue administrative charges against the student to the extent that the University of Nevada, Reno will allow. There is no excuse for academic dishonesty. If you do not know procedures for documentation or understand conditions for exams, it is your responsibility to investigate or to ask about them. **As a final word on this, you will be required to submit your research paper to turnitin.com, a plagiarism check website. Instructions for doing this will be available later in the semester. If you have problems with this policy, you need to withdraw from my course now, as this policy is not up for debate.**

### *Late Papers & Incompletes*

A very simple, straightforward policy: I don't accept late papers without prior approval from me or without some type of medical documentation. Late papers will be downgraded one full grade per day (an "A" goes to a "B"). I also will not issue incompletes except under the most extraordinary of circumstances. Likewise, if you are experiencing a personal emergency, especially around exam and paper due dates, you need to bring this situation to the attention of the university's Student Advocacy Services (<http://www.unr.edu/stsv/studentlife/index.html>) or the university's Counseling Services (<http://www.unr.edu/stsv/cs/>).

### *Special Circumstances*

Students who need to have special arrangements for exams, class lectures or anything associated with the class should see me at the beginning of the semester as soon as possible so that we can make those arrangements as needed. Students with concerns in general should see me at the beginning of class.

**Note:** I realize that everybody has special circumstances at home, at work, etc. You should make the decision at the beginning of this class whether you can commit the time and energy needed for this class. I am not in the position and should not be placed in the position of making "special exceptions" for people. It is unfair to the rest of the class and it puts you and me in an awkward situation.

## The Agenda

### *Books*

The core readings will be found in the following books; articles assigned will be listed in the syllabus. The articles should be available through the UNR library's journal databases or on reserve.

Bratton, Michael and Nicolas Van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scott, Gregory and Stephen M. Garrison. 2006. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson.

Moss, Todd J. 2007. *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Press.

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AFRICA: THE PAST AND THE PRESENT CONDITION

*Journal Topic: Describe the current government and economic condition of your country.*

Carol Lancaster. 2005. "Development in Africa: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly, *Current History*, 104/682: 222-27.

Thomas Callaghy, "Africa: Back to the Future?" *Journal of Democracy*, 5/4 (October 1994), 139-52.

Moss, Chapter 1

Graduate Readings

Naomi Chazan. 1999. "The Diversity of African Politics: Trends and Approaches" Naomi Chazan, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, and Donald Rothchild. 1988. *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

### WEEK 2: THE COLONIAL LEGACY

*Journal Topic: Briefly describe what is considered to be the most significant colonial impact on your country.*

Moss, Chapter 2

Ali Mazrui, "Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter-Conquest," in J. Harbeson, D. Rothchild *Africa in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press: 110-35.

Crawford Young. 2000. "The Heritage of Colonialism," in J. Harbeson, D. Rothchild, *Africa in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press: 23-42.

#### Graduate Readings

Mazrui, Ali A. 1983. "Francophone Nations and English-Speaking States: Imperial Ethnicity and African Political Formations." In Donald S. Rothchild & Victor A. Olorunsola (Eds.), *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas* (pp. 25-43). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

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

### WEEKS THREE & FOUR: THE MILITARY & AUTHORITARIAN RULE

*Journal Topic: What has been the role of the military in the post-colonial period of your country. Has your country suffered any military coups?*

Moss, Chapter 3

Bratton and Van de Walle, Chapter 2

Mazrui, Ali A. 1977. "Soldiers as Traditionalizers: Military Rule and the ReAfricanization of Africa." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 12(4): 236-58.

Decalo, Samuel. 1990 *Coups & army rule in Africa: motivations & constraints* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-32

#### Graduate Readings:

Welch, Claude E. 1972. "Praetorianism in Commonwealth West Africa." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2: 203-222. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28197207%2910%3A2%3C203%3APICWA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

Ihonvbere, Julius O. 1996. "Are Things Falling Apart? The Military and the Crisis of Democratisation in Nigeria" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2.: 193-225. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28199606%2934%3A2%3C193%3AATFATM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2>

Huntington, Samuel. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Chapters 1 & 4.

WEEKS FIVE, SIX, AND SEVEN:  
ETHNICITY, CLASS & RACE

*Journal Topic: What is the ethnic composition of your country? What do you think is the most important way in which ethnic problems have manifested themselves in your country?*

Moss, Chapter 4

Strauss, Scott. "Darfur and the Genocide Debate (Sudan)." *Foreign Affairs* V84 (1).

Lemarchand, René. 1998. "Genocide in the Great Lakes: Which Genocide, Whose Genocide?" *African Studies Review*, 41/1: 3-16.

Tourngara, Jeanne Maddox. 2001 "Ethnicity and Political Crisis in Cote d'Ivoire," *Journal of Democracy*, 12/3: 63-72.

Ibrahim, Jibrin. 1991. "Religion and Political Turbulence in Nigeria"

*The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1.: 115-136.

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28199103%2929%3A1%3C115%3ARAPTIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S)

[278X%28199103%2929%3A1%3C115%3ARAPTIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28199103%2929%3A1%3C115%3ARAPTIN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S)

Bannon, Alicia, Miguel, Edward, & Posner, Daniel N. 2004. Sources of Ethnic Identification in Africa. (Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 44). (available at:

<http://www.afrobarometer.org/AfropaperNo44.pdf>)

E. Gyimah-Boadi, "Civil Society in Africa," *Journal of Democracy*, 7/2 (April 1996), 118-32.

Graduate Readings:

Ellis, Stephen. 1998. "Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36/2: 175-201.

Sklar, Richard. 1979. "The Nature of Class Domination in Africa" *Journal of Modern Africa Studies* 17:4.

Diamond, Larry. 1982. "Cleavage, Conflict, and Anxiety in the Second Nigerian Republic." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4.: 629-668.

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28198212%2920%3A4%3C629%3ACCAIT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B)

[278X%28198212%2920%3A4%3C629%3ACCAIT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28198212%2920%3A4%3C629%3ACCAIT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B)

Keller, Edmond. 1995. "The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 4.: 621-634.

[http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28199512%2933%3A4%3C621%3ATEOTON%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W)

[278X%28199512%2933%3A4%3C621%3ATEOTON%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-278X%28199512%2933%3A4%3C621%3ATEOTON%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W)

WEEKS EIGHT, NINE, AND TEN:  
STATE CRISIS Pt I: FROM CIVIL WAR TO DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

*Journal Topic: Has your country undergone a democratic transition in the past ten years? How did newspapers or scholars describe your country's last election?*

*Journal Topic: Has your country experienced a civil war in its history? What do you think was the root cause of the war?*

Bratton and Van de Walle, Chapters 1, 3, 5, 7

Moss, Chapter 5

Harbeson, John W. 2005. "Ethiopia's Extended Transition." *Journal of Democracy* 16(15): 144-58

Lewis, Peter 2003. "Nigeria: Elections in a Fragile Regime" *Journal of Democracy* 14(3):131-44

Eriksen, Stein. 2005 "The Congo war and the prospects for state formation: Rwanda and Uganda compared," *Third World Quarterly* 26:7.

McNulty, Mel. 1999 "The Collapse of Zaire: Implosion, Revolution, or External Sabotage," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39/1: 53-82.

Thomas Callaghy, 200. "Life and Death in the Congo," *Foreign Affairs*, 80/5 (September/October): 143-49.

John Makumbe, "Zimbabwe's Hijacked Election," *Journal of Democracy*, 13/4 (October 2002), 87-101.

#### Graduate Readings

Reno, William. 2005. "The Politics of Violent Opposition in Collapsing States." *Government and Opposition*. 40 (2).

Reno, William. 1998. "Sierra Leone's Transition to Warlord Politics," *Warlord Politics and African States* Boulder: Lynne Rienner: 113-45.

Zolberg, Aristide. 1968. "The Structure of Political Conflict in the New States of Tropical Africa," *American Political Science Review*, 62/1: 70-87.

Sklar, Richard. 1963, *Nigerian Political Parties*. New York: NOK Publishers: pp. 1-86.

WEEKS ELEVEN, TWELVE, THIRTEEN:  
STATE CRISIS Pt. II: ECONOMIC DECLINE AND COLLAPSE

*Journal Topic: Briefly describe the current economic conditions of your country. What do you consider to be the most serious problem facing the country in terms of its economic development?*

Moss, Chapters 6-10, 11-13

Englebert, Pierre. 2000. *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. Chapter: "Accounting for Africa's Development Crisis."

Poku, Nana and Bjorg Sandkjaer. 2007. "HIV/AIDS in the Context of Poverty: Africa's Deadly Predicament." In Robert L. Ostergard, Jr. *HIV/AIDS and the Threat to National and International Security*. Basingstoke: Palgrave: Chapter Six.

Callaghy, Thomas "Africa and the World Economy: More Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place," *Africa in World Politics*, J. Harbeson, D. Rothchild, *Africa in World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press 43-82.

#### Graduate Readings

Macartan Humphreys. "Economics and Violent Conflict." Harvard School of Public Health CPI: Available at [www.preventconflict.org/portal/economics/Essay.pdf](http://www.preventconflict.org/portal/economics/Essay.pdf)

Gyimah-Boadi, E.1998 "The Rebirth of African Liberalism," *Journal of Democracy*, 9/2: 18-31.

Fredland, Richard. 1998. "AIDS and Development: An Inverse Correlation?" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36/4: 547-68.

Callaghy, Thomas, 200.1 "Networks and Governance in Africa: Innovation in the Debt Regime," in T. Callaghy et. al., *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa* (Cambridge UP): 115-48.

Collier, Paul. 1999. "Aid 'Dependency': A Critique." *Journal of African Economies*, 8(4), 528-545.