

African Politics

(Political Science 359, African Studies 390)

Winter, 2012, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 15:30 to 16:50

Annenberg G15

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TAs: Valerie Freeland, Moses Khisa

“I’ve always thought that underpopulated countries in Africa are vastly underpolluted.”

-- Lawrence Summers, economist, former President of Harvard University & former US Treasury Secretary.

“If the United States of America or Britain is having elections, they don't ask for observers from Africa or from Asia. But when we have elections, they want observers.”

-- Nelson Mandela, 1993 Nobel Prize for Peace, first democratically elected President of South Africa.

Course Description:

This course surveys core issues in the evolution of African politics since the colonial era. The geographic focus is sub-Saharan Africa. While North Africa will enter into some of the discussions, the bulk of the course will concentrate on the historical experiences and contemporary legacies of the politics of the vast region to the south of the Sahara Desert.

This course focuses on explanations for what many perceive to be a crisis in African politics. In an oft-cited comparison, when Ghana became independent in 1957 its citizens enjoyed a higher income and standard of living than South Koreans. The United Nations Development Programme's [*Human Development Report 2010*](#) noted that South Korea has a per capita income (converted for purchasing parity) of \$22,029, compared to Ghana's \$2,480. South Koreans live an average of 80.6 years, which is 16.4 years longer than the average for Ghana. Of the 177 countries that this report rates across a range of social indicators, all but one of the bottom 25 states are located in Africa. This latter figure indicates Africa's subordinate position in a global hierarchy of development, an outcome that would have surprised many observers in the 1950s and 1960s.

The bulk of this course will trace developments that have shaped the internal politics of Africa's states. The first part of the course focuses on colonial legacies, Pan-African visions of a post-colonial future, struggles for national liberation, the role of ethnicity in political life, the military coups d'états that begin soon after the wave of national independence, and the rise of “big man politics” and patronage-based political networks. The second part takes stock of dramatic developments since the 1980s. The first section

concerns economic reforms. Though a few have been of indigenous origin, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank shaped and oversaw the implementation of the great majority of these economic programs. The second concerns the replacement of authoritarian regimes with electoral multi-party civilian regimes through the combined pressures of indigenous and external forces. The last part of the course considers contemporary African political trajectories. These include the problem of “failed states” and internal conflict, a condition that has directly affected about a dozen of Africa’s 52 states since 2000. While the focus of many media reports, this is not the continent’s only trajectory. The course explores other politics, including political movements that look beyond states as primary legitimate units for politics. We finish the class with a view to detecting new trends in African politics.

Course Requirements:

Students must complete all required assignments to have the opportunity to receive a passing grade in this course. The relative weight of each assignment is as follows:

Participation / attendance	10%
A map quiz	5% Thursday, 17 Jan
A midterm exam	25% Thursday, 9 Feb [Graded by 16 Feb]
A final exam	30% Wednesday, 14 March, 19:00 to 21:00
A paper of no more than 10 pages	30% due in class on Thursday, 3 March

Participation / attendance can be satisfied with regular attendance and observable evidence of having read assignments, etc. The contrary, such as the failure to show up for class, will have a measurable negative impact on evaluation. The map quiz will require filling in the names of countries and capital cities on an unlabeled map. The readings contain a map with necessary labels and one with outlines of countries. You also can practice at <http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/afrquiz.html>. The midterm exam will be short answer and essay format administered in class. I will provide further details about the exam in due course. The final exam will be comprehensive, with a focus on material from the second half of the course. This will be administered during the regular two hour final exam period noted at the end of the class calendar below.

The paper is due at the end of the last class on the 3rd of March. This paper should be limited to ten pages. The topic of the paper should address the last heading of the class calendar: “Which Direction Now?” One could propose a pan-African solution to contemporary problems. Others may argue for further market reforms. Others find answers in electoral democracy. There is no single “correct answer” that is required for this paper. Evaluation will be based upon the coherence of argument and presentation of evidence against at least one other reasonable alternative. Readings from class may be used to provide data and other information for an argument. Students are free to consult work outside of the assigned readings. As length is limited, this writing assignment should not evolve into a major research project. Writers will, however, benefit from incorporating *African based debates and data* into their arguments. The Herskovits

Library, located on floor five of the Main Library's East Tower (and of which we will have a tour) houses the world's largest collection of these materials.

Booklist

There are five required texts for this course. A reading packet provides students with the writings of African social scientists directed to wider audiences, primary documents, media commentaries and related material [mostly] from the African continent. Assigned items from this packet are denoted as "*" in the class calendar. The reading packet is available at Blackboard and Quartet. Books, possibly including used copies, are available at Beck's at 716 Clark. Denzer's book be available at the first class meetings and will cost \$22. This Nigerian publication is hard to find in the US in any other way.

Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics*. Routledge, 2010 (3th Edition) Paperback, ISBN: 978-0415479561.

Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2004, Paperback, ISBN: 978-0333682739.

Robert Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. Cambridge, 2008. Paperback, ISBN-13: 9780521715256.

John W Harbeson & Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics: Reforming Political Order*, 4th ed. Westview Press, 2009. Paperback, ISBN: 9780813343648.

LaRay Denzer. 2001. *Folayegbe M Akintunde-Ighodalo: A Public Life*. Sam Bookman.

Class Calendar

Jan 3: Introduction: What is so special about studying African politics at Northwestern University? The Program of African Studies and the Herskovitz Library of African Studies (the largest collection of its kind on the planet) Opportunities for undergraduates who wish to conduct research about Africa, including on the African continent; what our undergraduate students have done in the past.

To be mashed with....

Jan 5: Colonial Legacies in African Politics: Are African colonies that become independent states somehow "artificial" and thus difficult to maintain? Are patterns of colonial administration responsible for setting Africa on a particular political trajectory?

Denzer, "Okeigbo" and "Queen's College," in her *Folayegbe Akintunde-Ighodalo*, 1-39.

Thomson, "Introduction" and "History: Africa's Pre-colonial and Colonial Inheritance," in his *Introduction to African Politics*, 1-31.

Nugent, "African Independence" and "A Profile of Africa at Independence," in his *Africa since 1940*, 7-70.

Harbeson & Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics*, chapter by Crawford Young, "Heritage of Colonialism," 19-38.

- "The Rhodes Colossus" *Punch* [London], 10 Dec 1892
- Petroleum Department, Colonial Office [London] "Concession to prospect for Oil," 26 Feb 1932.
- District Commissioner, Kailahun District [Sierra Leone], "Confidential," 12 Oct 1949.

Liberation and After

Jan 10: Nationalism: Why were some colonial rulers more willing to depart than others? Did differences in the process of decolonization have a lasting impact on politics? What is identifiably "post-colonial" about politics in Africa today?

Denzer, "Changing Horizons" & "London," 41-103.

Nugent, "The Shape of Things to Come: Irredentism, Secessionism and the Pan-African Ideal," & "Modernity and Tradition, Power and Prestige: Monarchs, Chiefs and Politicians, 1956-74," 71-137.

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Ali Mazrui, "Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter-Conquest," 72-106.

- Acting Governor, Nigeria to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "Disturbances in Warri Province," 14 Oct 1952.
- Opopo National Assembly [Nigeria], "A Resolution", Oct 1958.

Jan 12: The Politics of Liberation: Why was socialism a particularly attractive ideology for those seeking liberation from colonial and apartheid rule? What were the interests of

Denzer, "Not too Obedient Servant," 105-35.

Nugent, "'Ism Schisms': Socialism and Home-Grown Capitalism, 1960-85," 138-203. (You may want to read, but are not required to read Nugent, "Second Liberation: Guerrilla Warfare, Township Revolt and the Search for a New Social Order", 260-325.

Thomson, "Ideology: Nationalism, Socialism, Populism and State Capitalism," 32-59.

- Justin Nyoka, "Inside Free Zimbabwe," *Zimbabwe News*, Nov-Dec 1978, 18-28.
- Movimento Popular de Liberação de Angola, "Memorandum to the 15th Session of the African Liberation Committee of the Organization of African Unity," Dakar, 15 July 1969.

Jan 17: Ethnicity and Politics, Women in Politics: To what extent is ethnicity an artifact of administrative institutions and the politics of recent decades? Does Africa produce a distinctive politics of gender?

Denzer. "Women's Empowerment" & "Flag-Bearers," 171-231.

Thomson, "Ethnicity and Religion," and "Social Class," 60-108.

- VOA, "ChevronTexaco Reaches Agreement with Ijaw Women," 2002.
- Ka'ro Ooji're Youth Council, [Yoruba ethnic association pamphlet], no date.

The issue of women in politics appears in ABANTU for Development, "[A Women's Manifesto for Ghana](#)," 2004. There are huge numbers of ethnic association web sites. One example includes [Asantahene Otumfuo Nana Osei Tutu II Fund](#).

*** Map quiz at the start of class ***

Jan 19: State Administration in Africa: Why does corruption appear to be a particularly tenacious problem? Is corruption related to culture or to legacies of colonial and post-colonial administration?

Robert Bates, first four chapters in *When Things Fell Apart*, 3-74. [continue to read this for your 16 April assignment]

- Government of Sierra Leone, "Application for an Alluvial Diamond Mining License"
- "Sierra Leone Exchange Control Form M", 1989.

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Jan 24: Military Interventions in Politics Is the era of military coups at an end? What is the fate of those who try to launch coups in the 21st century?

Denzer. "Permanent Secretary," 137-70.

Nugent, "Khaki Fatigue: Military Rule in Africa, 1960-85,' 204-59

Thomson, "Coercion: Military Intervention in African Politics," 132-53..

- "Want to Get Ahead Faster?" *Punch* [London], 3 Feb 1971.
- Col. Anthony Ukpo, "Introductory Speech on the Occasion of the Launching of the New Direction of the War Against Indiscipline," National Stadium, Lagos, 5 July 1986.

Jan 26: Personal Rule – The Rise of Big Men and the Politics of Patronage Was patronage politics inevitable? What role does culture play alongside circumstance?

Denzer. "Retirement and After," 233-57.

Thomson, "Legitimacy: neo-patrimonialism, Personal Rule and the Centralisation of the African State," 109-131.

Bates, "Subnational Tensions," 75-93.

- "Suspension of Paramount Chief..." [Sierra Leone], 18 Oct 1982.
- "Suspension of Paramount Chief..." [Sierra Leone], 17 Jan 1983.
- "Petition against Paramount Chief..." [Sierra Leone], 19 Nov 1982.

The Vicissitudes of Reform

Jan 31: Debt Crises and the Collapse of Economic Nationalism To what extent can one say that Africa adopted "incorrect policies," versus "correct policies" but at the wrong time (or wrong place)? There will be a closer examination of Africa's export of human capital to the US and elsewhere—"Africa's foreign aid program".

Nugent, "Invasion of the Acronyms: SAPs, AIDS and the NGO Takeover," 326-67.

Thomson, 'sovereignty I: External Influences on African Politics,' 154-87.

Bates, "Things Fall Apart" & "Conclusion," 97-139.

- Amadu Jacky Kaba, "Africa's Migration Brain Drain," USA- Africa Institute, 2004.

See also “[New Data on African Health Professionals Abroad](#),” [2007], and Delanyo Dovlo, “[Brain Drain in Africa: An Emerging Challenge to Health Professionals’ Education](#),” *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, 2:3 (2004), 1-18. On the migration of health care professionals from southern Africa, see Queens University’s Southern Africa [Migration Project](#). [Migration Policy Institute](#) provides an analysis of relevant data from the 2010 US Census.

Feb 2: Economic Reform: Structural Adjustment How has economic reform changed Africa’s societies and Africa’s politics?

Denzer. “Faith and Work,” 259-84.

Thomson, “Sovereignty II: Neo-colonialism, Structural Adjustment and Africa’s Political Economy,” 188-214.

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Thomas Callaghy, “Africa and the World Political Economy: Still Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place?” 39-71.

- Jenny Aker, “Can You Hear Me Now? How Cell Phones are Transforming Markets in Sub-Saharan Africa,” Center for Global Development, 2008.
- Bob Majirioghene, “Idi-Iroko: A City of Smugglers,” *Tell* [Lagos], 3 March 2008.

The World Bank Africa region website contains links to multitudes of documents about economic reform: www.worldbank.org/afr.

Feb 7: Democratization: First Elections What explains the sudden onset of pressures for political reform? To what extent were these pressures internal and to what extent were they external to African states?

Nugent, “Democracy Rediscovered: Popular Protest, Elite Mobilisation and the Return of Multipartyism,” 368-433.

Thomson, “Democracy: Re-legitimising the African State?,” 243-74”

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Aili Tripp, “In Pursuit of Authority: Civil Society and Rights-Based Discourses in Africa,” 140-63.

- “Stability is Kenya’s Most Precious Possession,” [Kenya], 1992.
- “Don’t Risk Your Future with Other Candidates” [Uganda], 2001.

There is a great African elections database that is available at africanelections.tripod.com/. Of interest is the 2010 African Union report, [Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence](#).

Feb 9: Midterm Exam in class [Graded exams will be returned in class on Thursday, 16 Feb]

Which Direction Now?

Feb 14: The Consolidation of Electoral Civilian Regimes Should democratic consolidation eradicate old practices of politics or should it seek to incorporate them?

Denzer, "Matriarch," 285-90.

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by John Harbeson, "Promising Democratization Trajectories in Africa's Weak States," 109-39.

- Sierra Leone ballot, 2007.
- African Union, *Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflict* [Report of the Panel of the Wise], 2010.

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation's [Index of African Governance](#) and the US-based [National Democratic Institute](#) and [International Republican Institute](#) promote democratic consolidation. The African Union [Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance](#) provides an official AU statement on democratic consolidation.

Feb 16: The Internal Politics of Violence and the Collapse of Order: The financing of rebellion. Is the "criminalization of the state" [or of insurgency] sustainable?

Nugent, "Millennial Africa: The National Question Revisited," 434-89.

Thomson, "The Crisis of Accumulation, Governance and State Collapse," 215-42.

Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis & Béatrice Hibou, "From Kleptocracy to Felonious State?" in J-F Bayart, S Ellis & B Hibou, *Criminalization of the State in Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1-31 [in reading packet]

- National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government, "Memorandum of Understanding," 17 Jan 1992 and Monrovia government response.
- United Nations Security Council, "Overview of Prices of Weapons and Ammunition at the Somali Arms Markets," in *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia*, 24 April 2008.

- “Blueprint to Stop Drug and Airport Menace,” *For di People* [Sierra Leone], 13 July 2008.

One also might want to visit the website of the UN Office on Drug and Crime to read their Oct 2011 report, [Organized Crime and Instability in Central Africa: A Threat Assessment](#) or [Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa](#) on the problem of “narco-states”.

Feb 21: Global Responses to the Collapse of Order: How effective is external intervention? Are international tribunals a viable and sustainable solution?

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Donald Rothchild, “The US Role in Promoting Peaceful African Relations,” 241-75.

- Special Court for Sierra Leone, “The Prosecutor against Charles Ghankay Taylor,” 7 March 2003.

Students who are interested in this topic may wish to read reports of the UN Security Council. A good example is United Nations Security Council, [Report of the Panel of Experts Appointed Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1395 \(2002\), Paragraph 4, in Relation to Liberia](#), 11 April 2002.

Feb 23: The Politics of Security: How viable is the project of reform of Africa’s militaries? What is the impact of the Global War on Terror on African militaries’ relationships with their own societies?

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Will Reno, “The Privatization of Africa’s International Relations,” 190-212.

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Princeton Lyman, “The War on Terrorism in Africa,” 276-304.

- “United States Military / Not on Parade”, *Africa Confidential*, 28 Feb 2008, 9 [on US area command for Africa]

[AFRICOM](#) maintains a web site. The UK Ministry of Defense posts an interesting document that explains how the UK military—civilian [Africa Conflict Prevention Pool](#) plans to work with NGOs and local authorities in “state-building” projects. The US equivalent is found in the Department of Defense Directive [3000.05](#) of 2005 (reissued in 2009) on the joint role of humanitarian organizations and the US military in training local militaries

Feb 28: Alternatives to State Politics as Usual? What are the limits of politics? Where should one look for new kinds of political engagement? Societal formulations of politics.

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by Denis Tull, "China's Engagement in Africa," 323-44.

Thandika Mkandawire, "[Running While Others Walk](#): Knowledge and the Challenge of Africa's Development," *Africa Development*, 36: 2 (2011), 1-36.

- Osman Sankoh, "Is Tupac Alive?" *Concord Times* [Freetown], 11 & 18 Nov 2000.

March 1: Pan-African Alternatives (or Addition?) to State Politics Is the African Union a Pan-African alternative, or just politics as usual?

Harbeson & Rothchild, chapter by I William Zartman, "Inter-African Negotiations and Reforming Political Order," 213-37.

- "Edward Wilmot Blyden," *Sierra Leonean Heroes: Fifty Great Men and Women who Helped to Build Our Nation*, Freetown, 1988.
- African Union, [African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Violence](#) (2007)

***** 1 March: Papers should be written soon! *****

***** Papers are due (via email to your TA) by noon on Saturday, 3 March *****

March 3: African Politics and the NU Student "So you want to work for an NGO in Africa?" We're looking at the politics of that too.

- Omar Kalinge Nnyago, "Can the Donors Support Regime Change in Uganda?" *Daily Monitor* [Kampala], 18 July 2008.
- Craig Timberg, "Paradise in Poverty: How NGOs Live Here," *Democrat* [Monrovia], 2 June 2008.

The final exam will be administered on WEDNESDAY, 14 March from 19:00 to 21:00 in Annenberg G15, which also serves as the classroom throughout the term.

What do we **not** study adequately during this term? Religion in politics (such as the evolving role of Islam and evangelical Christianity in political change), the varieties of youth politics, and a myriad of issues related to the Africa's place in global society have been given short-shrift. We have to work within the constraints of the term system, and if you want more courses on these topics, one suggestion is to lobby for them.