

CONTEMPORARY AFRICA
Political Science 453

Program of African Studies,
Wednesdays 9am to noon

William Reno, Spring 2009
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This syllabus is available at: www.willreno.org

Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease.

--- President George W Bush, Jr, June 2001.

We are prepared to send election observers to Florida as needed.

--- Governor Adesina, Oyo State, Nigeria, November 2001.

Objectives: This is an advanced political science graduate seminar in contemporary African politics. It covers the major controversies in the political, economic, and security challenges that African societies have faced in the last two decades and are likely to face in the coming decade. This course assumes some familiarity with African politics and history. It is likely that some of the students will have come from Africa or have lived and worked in Africa, though those who are not included in these categories are absolutely welcome in this course.

This class is designed to accommodate students from across a range of disciplines. The class will provide information and approaches that political science graduate students will find to be useful to prepare for the comparative politics comprehensive exam. Anthropologists and historians will find that some of the readings are written by scholars in their disciplines. These students also will see how political scientists approach some of the questions that are central concerns in their disciplines. Students from Sociology, Journalism, the Business School, and elsewhere are welcome and will profit from this course too.

The reading assignments are chosen with a view to linking the study of Africa to broader currents of the study of comparative politics and international relations. This approach will equip advanced graduate students with scholarship that they can use to reflect upon broad political questions. Developments in Africa also shed light on basic issues of wider interest such as how political leaders constitute legitimate authority amidst insecurity and disorder. What is the relationship between ethnicity and poverty? Why is corruption compatible with economic growth in some circumstances but not in others? Does democratization increase or decrease the risks of internal warfare? Why is African civil society more vigorous in terms of the density of organizing, yet apparently less effective at promoting change than post-Soviet varieties, contrary to general expectations in 1989? Will states as currently constituted in Africa survive? Are

Africans inventing new forms of political organizations—states and non-states—that are compatible with global society and are able to manage global economic pressures? What are the prospects for closer regional cooperation? Is the era of military rule finished or just in abeyance?

Course Requirements and Grading Distribution: Each student will be required to complete readings, actively participate in seminar meetings, and write a term paper. (There will be modified requirements for undergraduates who take this course.) Students will also submit written commentaries on readings at the beginning of each class, starting with the second week class meeting. These commentaries are intended to provide students with easily accessible notes that will help serve as preparation for those who plan to take political science field exams.

Students will turn in summaries of weekly readings at the start of each class. These summaries may simply be a condensed version of your regular reading notes. Students will submit five of these commentaries for formal evaluation. These will take the form of one to two page double space essays that reflect basic issues and questions raised in each week's readings. These issues and questions may also reflect earlier reading especially where prior weeks' assignments address related topics. The five essays will receive evaluations of excellent, good, fair, or poor.

Students will pick a class in which to give a five minute oral presentation to initiate discussion. Presenters will refrain from summarizing readings. A good strategy is to start with an explanation of how and why that week's readings contrast / reinforce approaches to similar topics encountered earlier in the term. Putting the readings into a broader context, either in reference to the study of Africa, or in the wider terms of political science, always is a good idea.

Each student will compose a paper based on readings or topics addressed in the course. Those who are struggling to find a topic for a second year political science paper may focus on a particular research topic, formulated in consultation with the instructor. This paper should be about 12-15 pages long and have normal margins. It should not employ fonts for the blind or near blind. A hard copy of this paper will be due on Friday, May 29th (the last day of WCAS classes), by 5pm at my office in African Studies, 620 Library Place.

Classroom presentations, commentaries on readings, and general participation will count toward fifty percent of the course grade evaluation. The paper will constitute the remaining fifty percent of the course grade evaluation.

Required Textbooks:

Nicolas van de Walle. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis*, (NY: Cambridge).

Christopher Clapham, 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (NY: Cambridge).

The bulk of the readings are contained in a hefty reading packet. Students can arrange during the first week to photocopy this material. The photocopy expenses are surely less than the cost of purchasing several books in the stead of these articles and extracts, and this approach to the readings permits the inclusion of more interdisciplinary material.

The readings are selected with an eye toward presenting new analyses and information. Many of the articles are authored by recent graduates and graduate students. Many of these articles are presentations of dissertation research that one suspects will appear as books.

Readings tend to focus on North American and European sources and authors. This should not be taken as evidence that there are not African scholars who produce worthwhile work. This absence is partly due to the focus of this course to link the study of Africa (here in North America) to the wider field of comparative politics and international relations as they are studied in this country. That's a practical choice made with an eye toward providing graduate students with the tools to respond to the wider discipline on its terms. The works of many African scholars may in fact be superior to that of their non-African colleagues. It certainly would be a good next step to use this work in the preparation of term papers, and to some of the examples that are included in this syllabus.

CLASS CALENDAR

Week One: Introduction to the Course

We will have a discussion about the course. Those who are readers of French will receive the classic essay by Emmanuel Terray, "Le climatiseur et la veranda," in *Afrique plurielle, Afrique actuelle: hommage à Georges Balandier*, [ont participé Alfred Adler ... et al.]. Paris: Karthala, 1986, 37-44. We will talk about this essay, en anglais.

Week Two: Historical Legacies and the Distinctive Interaction of Internal and External Politics in Africa.

Are African states distinctive? How does Africa's colonial and Cold War era legacies of state-formation limit or enhance the comparability of politics in this region to other regions? Clapham considers the nature of state formation in Africa. He identifies Cold War era competition as having especially pernicious effects on African states. Why did this occur in Africa and not in East Asia, which also was an arena of proxy battles during the Cold War? Are causes of state weakness also internal? The influence of the global political economy on the domestic politics of African states is a consistent theme throughout the book.

Christopher Clapham, 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (NY: Cambridge).

Week Three: Patronage Politics ("Neo-Patrimonialism")

Why is patronage politics (seemingly) so pervasive in Africa? Why is patronage politics in Africa so much more injurious to economic and political stability in Africa, compared to similar levels in other regions? Several of these articles take an institutionalist perspective toward understanding the operation of patronage-based politics in Africa. Can this aspect of politics be understood within the general institutionalist paradigm, as it is applied to politics in other societies? This concerns comparability, as some of the other articles point to specific cultural features of African societies that those scholars believe is responsible for patronage-based politics.

Max Weber. 1957. "Traditional Authority," in his *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, (Glencoe, IL: Free Press), 341-58.

Giorgio Blundo. 2006. "Corruption in Africa and the Social Sciences: A Review of the Literature," in Giorgio Blundo & Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa*, (New York: Zed Books), 15-68.

J-P Olivier de Sardan. 1999. "A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37:1, 25-52.

Peter Evans, James Rauch. 1999. "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth," *American Sociological Review*, 64:5, 748-66.

Christian von Soest. 2007. "How Does Neopatrimonialism Affect the African State's Revenues? The Case of Tax Collection in Zambia," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45:4 (Dec), 621-45.

Leonardo Arriola. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 42:2, no pagination yet.

Michael Schatzberg. 2001. "Matrix I—The Father-Chief," in his *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 145-73.

William Reno. 2002. "Mafiya Troubles, Warlord Crises," in Mark Beissinger & Crawford Young, *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 105-27.

Week Four: The Elusive Quest for Economic Growth, I

Does external assistance hinder or does it promote positive economic performance? What is the relation between domestic politics and poor economic performance? This week's reading considers the possibility of moral hazard; that economic assistance provides reluctant reformers with incentives to avoid making difficult decisions. The book also makes controversial claims about the ideologies of African technocratic elites and their views about the causes of economic failure.

Nicolas van de Walle. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis*, (NY: Cambridge).

See also Macartan Humphreys and Robert Bates. 2005. "Political Institutions and Economic Policies: Lessons from Africa," *British Journal of Political Science*, 35: 3 (July), 403-26.

Week Five: The Elusive Quest for Economic Growth, II

Does Africa's position in the world's political economy have a part in an explanation of Africa's poor economic performance? Why does the exploitation of natural resources appear to be linked to political and economic turmoil in some countries in Africa but not in others? These articles look at the relationship between Africa's position in global society and the organization of external economic links in ways that recall Clapham's work from the second week. That helps to frame the consideration of the articles further down on this week's list that analyze the seemingly tight links between the exploitation of natural resources and the development of a predatory style of politics.

Arthur Goldsmith. 2001. "Foreign Aid and Statehood in Africa," *International Organization*, 55:1 (Winter), 123-48.

Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56, 563-95.

Randall Stone. 2004. "The Political Economy of IMF Lending in Africa," *American Political Science Review*, 98:4 (Nov), 577-91.

Thomas Callaghy. 2001. "Networks and Governance in Africa: Innovation in the Debt Regime," and William Reno, "How Sovereignty Matters: International Markets and the Political Economy of Local Politics in Weak States," in T Callaghy, R Kassimir, R Latham, eds. *Intervention & Transnationalism in Africa*, (NY: Cambridge University Press), 115-48 & 197-215.

Nathan Jensen & Leonard Wantchekon. 2004. "Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 37:7 (Sept), 816-40.

Una Okonkwo. 2002. "Igbo Emigrants in Chicago Invest at Home, 1986-1996," in J Guyer, L Denzer, A Agbaje, eds. *Money Struggles and City Life*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann), 239-55.

Sandra Joireman. 2007. "Enforcing New Property Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Ugandan Constitution and the 1998 Land Act." *Comparative Politics*, 39:4 (July),

Week Six: Ethnic Politics.

Is Ethnic Identity Essential or Contingent? What Is the Impact of Violence and Uncertainty on Ethnic Politics? The first article examines the impact of rapid social change on group identities. The second considers that impact of formal institutional structures on the formation of these identities. The rest of the readings analyze the role of conflict in shaping ethnic and other group identities.

Robert Melson & Howard Wolpe. 1970. "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," *American Political Science Review*, 64:4, 112-30.

Daniel 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 (Nov), 529-45.

Crawford Young. 2002. "Deciphering Disorder in Africa: Is Identity the Key?" *World Politics*, 54:4 (July), 532-57.

James Fearon & David Laitin. 2000. "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization*, 54:4 (Autumn), 845-77.

James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner, Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review*, 101:4 (Nov), 709-25.

Donald Rothchild. 2001. "Ethnic Fears and Security Dilemmas: Managing Uncertainty in Africa," Miroslav Nincic, Joseph Lepgold, eds. *Being Useful: Policy Relevance and International Relations Theory*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan), 237-66.

Week Seven: The Military in Politics & Other Forms of Authoritarian Rule

Have militaries been banished from politics? Are contemporary attempts to seize power by force more prone to failure? What causes this: external sanctions or aspects of domestic politics? This section addresses the problems of institutionalization under different forms of authoritarian rule.

Patrick McGowan. 2003. "African Military Coups d'État, 1956-2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41:3 (Sept), 339-70.

Samuel Decalo. 1998. *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships*, (Gainesville: Florida Academic Press), 261-87.

Herbert Howe. 2001. "Changing Security Patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa," "Roots and Results of African Military Unprofessionalism," in his *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), 1-71.

Maj. Gen. Chris Alli. 2001. "Military Interventions and *coups d'états*," in his *Federal Republic of Nigeria Army*, (Lagos: Malthouse Press), 208-47.

Arthur Abraham. 1997. "War and Transition to Peace: A Study of State Conspiracy in Perpetuating Armed Conflict," *Africa Development*, 22, 3, 101-16.

Adigun Agbaje. 2002. "Personal Rule and Regional Politics in Ibadan Under Military Regimes, 1986-1996," in J Guyer, L Denzer, A Agbaje, eds. *Money Struggles and City Life*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann), 3-26.

Week Eight: Civil Society and Africa's Experience with Democracy.

Under what conditions are elections stabilizing or destabilizing events? When and how is 'civil society' likely to coalesce around liberal ideas and when is it likely to espouse ill-liberal ideas? This section explores

Richard Joseph. 1987. "The Problem of Democracy," in his *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, (NY: Cambridge & Ibadan: Spectrum), 15-68.

Harris Mylonas & Nasos Roussias. 2008. "When Do Votes Count? Regime Type, Electoral Conduct, and Political Competition in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 41:11 (Nov), 1466-91.

Staffan Lindberg Minion K.C. Morrison. 2008. "Are African Voters Really Ethnic or Clientelistic? Survey Evidence from Ghana," *Political Science Quarterly*, 123:1, 95-122.

Daniel Posner. 2007. "Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 40:11 (Nov), 1302-27.

Catherine Boone. 2009. "Electoral Populism Where Property Rights are Weak: Land Politics in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa," *Comparative Politics*, 41:2 (Jan), 183-201.

Nicolas van de Walle. 2003. "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41:2 (June), 297-321.

Augustine Ikelegbe. 2001. "The Perverse Manifestation of Civil Society: Evidence from Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 39:1, 1-24.

Adam Ashforth, 1998. "Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in the New South Africa," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 38, 505-532.

David Harris. 1999. "From 'Warlord' to 'Democratic' President: How Charles Taylor Won the 1997 Liberian Election," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37:3 (Sept), 431-55.

Daniel Smith. 2007. "'Fair Play Even among Robbers': Democracy, Politics, and Corruption," in *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 112-37.

Week Nine: Civil Society and Social Movements More Widely Considered:

Why are there no revolutions in Africa? Why do some insurgents show a greater ideological coherence, compared to others? These readings consider why anti-regime rebels were so much more cohesive in the 1960s and 1970s, compared to most today. Some address the issue of the remarkable violence of some of these rebels. Does this violence challenge rational choice understandings of behavior in conflicts, or can that approach explain this behavior in some African conflicts? A number of the readings cover the experiences of specific armed groups. Their behavior and organization betrays the influence of international politics and the particular domestic politics in which they operate. Finally, Kalyvas asks whether there really is anything new in the behavior of these armed groups.

Mostafa Rejai. 1980. "Theory and Research in the Study of Revolutionary Personnel," *Handbook of Political Conflict* (NY: Free Press), 100-31.

Ibrahim Abdullah. 1998. "Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front / Sierra Leone," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 36:2, 203-35.

Femi Otubanjo. 1993. "African Guerrillas and Indigenous Government," Martha Crenshaw, ed. *Terrorism in Africa*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co.), 116-40.

Yoweri Museveni. 1997. "Further Setbacks and Betrayals," "Fighting Sectarianism and Tribalism," and "Tactics and Infiltration" in his *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*, (London: Macmillan), 82-86, 90-92.

Gérard Prunier. 1998. "The Rwandan Patriotic Front," in Christopher Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas*, (London: James Currey), 119-33.

Jeff Goodwin. 2001. "Between Success and Failure: Persistent Insurgencies," in his *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-91*, (NY; Cambridge), 217-53.

Thandika Mkandawire. 2002. "The Terrible Toll of Post-Colonial 'Rebel Movements' in Africa: Towards an Explanation of the Violence against the Peasantry," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40:2, 181-215.

Stathis Kalyvas. 2001. "'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" *World Politics*, 54:1 (Oct), 99-118.

Week Ten: Problem of Maintaining and Constituting Order.

Can Africa's weaker states survive? Why have they proven to be so durable, even after almost half a century of independence? These readings consider the dilemmas confronting proposals for redesigning Africa's political frameworks. Kamanu observes the surprising emergence of collective understandings among African leaders in their pursuits of personal security. Mazrui, Anonymous, and Anderson find surprising instances of international and internal self-regulation to preserve order. These developments should be interesting to anyone who studies cooperation in the absence of strong formal institutions.

Jeffrey Herbst. 1996/97. "Responding to State Failure in Africa," *International Security*, 21:3 (Winter), 120-44.

Steve Brayton. 2002. "Outsourcing War: Mercenaries and the Privatization of Peacekeeping," *Journal of International Affairs*, 55:2 (Spring), 303-29.

Onyeonoro Kamanu. 1974. "Secession and the Right of Self-Determination: An OAU Dilemma," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 12:3, 355-76.

Filip Reyntjens. 2005. "The Privatisation and Criminalisation of Public Space in the Geopolitics of the Great Lakes Region," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 43:4 (Dec), 587-607.

Ali Mazrui. 1993. "Thoughts on Assassination in Africa," Martha Crenshaw, ed., *Terrorism in Africa*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co.), 5-40.

Anonymous. 2002. "Government Recognition in Somalia and Regional Political Stability in the Horn of Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40:2 (June), 247-72.

William Reno. 2008. "The Privatization of Africa's International Relations," in John Harbeson & Donald Rothchild, eds., *Africa in World Politics: Reforming Political Order*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2008), 190-212.

Pierre Englebert and Denis M. Tull. 2008. "Postconflict Resolution in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States." *International Security* 32: 4 (Spring), 106-139.