AN INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN POLITICS
POSC 433

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Class Hours: MWF 0125-0215 PM
Office Hours: M3:30-4:00pm, W3:30-4:00pm and F9:30-10:45am
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Like much of the politics of the developing world, issues involving non-Western civilizations, the legacies of colonialism, decolonization and post-colonialism, and contemporary world politics globalization pervade the politics of Africa. However, in the region of the world once constituting more than one third of the UN’s membership states, politics in Africa does have its own distinctive manifestation. An introduction to African politics, this course will provide for its participants a general survey of the main issues regarding politics in the continent. Areas covered range from political system types, political economies, and political cultures of diverse African countries and regions.

The department of political science has designated this course as a second writing course. As a result the course emphasizes the development of participants’ analytical and critical oral, written and research communication skills. The course is conducted like a writing workshop and a seminar.
TEXTS AND GRADING REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts:

Grading Requirements
1. At least five writing assignments, including one oral presentation from ‘suggested readings’ (two pages each) (20%)
2. Participation in at least one Reserve Reading Roundtable (5%)
3. Midterm concept essay (written) (five pages) (25% for research paper and 10% for in-class presentation)
4. Book report (written) (three pages) (5%)
5. At least five Country Case Study reports (Do BBC country timeline search on country, and be prepared for in-class discussion on the contemporary politics/main political issues of country) Submit notes/talking points only. (10%)
6. Final short research essay (written) (eight pages) (20%)
7. Class participation and attendance (oral) (demonstrated reading/questioning/in-class responses) Full attendance is required(5%).

CALENDAR AND EVENTS

WEEK ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN STUDIES AND AFRICAN POLITICS

Reserve Reading (Read Only: No Assignment Required)

September 1:
Introduction to Course

September 3:
Maps and Orientations:
African Politics quiz/slide show
WEEK TWO:

THE IMAGE OF AFRICAN POLITICS

Reserve Reading (Read Only: No Assignment Required)

September 6: NO CLASS- LABOR DAY

September 8
Keim, Mistaking Africa, Chapter 1 & 2, page 4-21
- Changing our Mind about Africa (Keim)
- Discussion on ‘Image of African Politics: Afro-pessimism vs. Afro-optimism’

September 10
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, ‘State, Civil Society and External Interests’ Chapter 1, pages 1-6

WEEK THREE:

September 13: ROUNDTABLE SEMINAR:
Keim, Mistaking Africa, Chapter 3-9, pages 27-156
- Darkest Africa
- Our Living Ancestors
- Real Africa, Wise Africa
- We Should Help Them
- Cannibalism
- Africans in tribes
- African safari
- Race and culture: the same and other

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Reserve Reading 3: WRITING ASSIGNMENT ONE
- David Magang, ‘Democracy in African Tradition: the case of Botswana’
- Discuss the concept of ‘indigenous African government’ in this reading (one page essay)

Suggested web-site searches:
- Mysteries of ancient Egypt
- Kingdoms of the Medieval Sudan
- Wonders of the African World
- The Mali Empire
- The Great Zimbabwe
**September 15:**

**September 17: Roundtable**
Jomo Kenyatta. 195.‘The Kikuyu System of Government’ in Facing Mount Kenya
David Magang, ‘Democracy in African Tradition: the case of Botswana’
- Discuss the concept of ‘indigenous African government’ in this reading (one page essay)

**WEEK FOUR**

**AFRICA’S LEGACY OF LATE COLONIALISM**

*Required Reading: BOOK REPORT*  
Ferdinand Oyono.1966. *Houseboy*, Heinemann

**September 20:**  

**September 22**  
- How have Africa’s imperially imposed borders affected the continent politically, economically and socially?

**September 24: Roundtable**  
Ferdinand Oyono.1966. *Houseboy*, Heinemann

**WEEK FIVE:**

**NATIONALISM, DE-COLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE**

*Reserve Reading 4: WRITING ASSIGNMENT TWO*  
- Discuss the role that ideology played in Africa’s post-colonial development. Use the text case study or an independent case for extra credit

*Reserve Reading 5: WRITING ASSIGNMENT THREE*  
- Discuss the economic and political arguments that Nyerere makes in proposing an alternative development path for Africa

**September 27:**  

**September 29: Roundtable**
  - Discuss the role that ideology played in Africa’s post-colonial development. Use the text case study or an independent case for extra credit

**October 1: Roundtable**
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 2, ‘Country Case Socialism and Ujamaa in Tanzania’ pages 48-56
  - How does African nationalism compare and contrast to nationalisms found elsewhere in the world?
  - Discuss the economic and political arguments that Nyerere makes in proposing an alternative development path for Africa

**WEEK SIX:**

MULTI-NATIONALITY, THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY & THE ETHNIC FACTOR

**Reserve Reading 5: WRITING ASSIGNMENT FOUR**
  - ‘Power-Sharing and Conflict Management in Africa: Nigeria, Sudan and Rwanda’ in African Development by R.T. Akinleye
  - ‘Elections and Ethnic Violence in Cote d’Ivoire: the unfinished business of succession and democratic transition’ in African Issues by Cyril Daddieh
  - Choose a case study (Sudan, Nigeria, Rwanda OR Cote d’Ivoire) to discuss the ‘ethnic factor’ in the country’s politics.

**October 4:**

**October 6:**
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 4, ‘Ethnicity’ pages 57-65

**October 8:**
Class Cancelled

**WEEK SEVEN:**

**October 11: Roundtable**
R. T Akinleye, ‘Power-Sharing and Conflict Management in Africa: Nigeria, Sudan and Rwanda’ in African Development
Cyril Daddieh ‘Elections and Ethnic Violence in Cote d’Ivoire: the unfinished business of succession and democratic transition’ in African Issues
• Choose a case study (Sudan, Nigeria, Rwanda OR Cote’ D’ Ivoire) to discuss the ‘ethnic factor’ in the country’s politics.

Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 4, ‘Case Study: Nigeria’ pages 65-73

• How have ethnic identities assisted or hindered the political processes in post-colonial Africa?

October 13:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 5, ‘Social Class’ pages 74-92

October 15:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 5 ‘Case Study of Botswana’ pages 92-98

• Should the ruling elite in African states be termed a ‘class’ or is it more a coalition of elites forming a hegemonic bloc?

WEEK EIGHT MIDTERM:

October 18:
Midterm Review

October 20:
Midterm Lab: Tutorial Available

October 22: Midterm Roundtable Midterm Due
Submit and Present your Midterms

WEEK NINE:

AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Reserve Reading 6: WRITING ASSIGNMENT FIVE

• Discuss the rise and effectiveness of one-party regimes in Africa

October 25:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 6, ‘Legitimacy: Neo-patrimonialism, Personal Rule and the Centralization of the African State’ page 99-113

October 27:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 6, ‘Case Study: Cote’ D’ Ivoire’ pages 114-120

• To what extent did clientelism legitimate personal rule in post-colonial Africa?

October 29
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 7, ‘Coercion: Military Intervention in African Politics’
WEEK TEN

Reserve Reading 7: WRITING ASSIGNMENT SIX
- Jimmy Kandeh. ‘The Militariat’ in Review of African Political Economy
- John Markakis. 1986 ‘Radical Military Regimes in the Horn of Africa’ in Military-Marxist Regimes in Africa
- Discuss the rise and effectiveness of military regimes in Africa

November 1:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 7, ‘Case Study: Uganda’
- To what extent can African military coups be explained by environmental (socio-economic/political culture) factors?

November 3: Roundtable
- Discuss the rise and effectiveness of one-party regimes in Africa

November 5:

WEEK ELEVEN:

AFRICA IN THE POST COLD WAR:
THE RETREATING STATE AND DEMOCRACY

Reserve Reading 7: WRITING ASSIGNMENT SIX
- Young, Crawford, ‘The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa: ambiguities and contradictions’ in Richard Joseph’s State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa, Lynne Rienner, 1999
- Describe Africa’s Third Wave of Democracy

November 8:

November 10:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 11, ‘Case Study: Algeria’ pages 232-241
- Did the 1990’s democratization re-legitimize the African state?

November 12:
Movie: Hopes on the Horizons, (VHS 7844)
WEEK TWELVE:

November 15: Roundtable
Young, Crawford, ‘The Third Wave of Democratization in Africa: ambiguities and contradictions’ in Richard Joseph’s State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa, Lynne Rienner, 1999

- Describe and critically discuss Africa’s Third Wave of Democracy

AFRICA AND GLOBALIZATION

November 17:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 8, ‘Sovereignty: External Influences on African Politics’ pages 141-156

November 19:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 8, ‘Case Study: Somalia’ pages 156-162

- Has the intervention of external interests merely served to underwrite the power of the African state in the post-colonial period?

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Reserve Reading 8: WRITING ASSIGNMENT SEVEN

- Discuss the effects of globalization on contemporary African politics

November 22:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 9, ‘Sovereignty again: Neo-colonialism, structural adjustment and Africa’s Political Economy’, pages 165-181

November 24:
Alex Thomas, An Introduction to African Politics, Chapter 9, ‘Case Study: Ghana’ pages 181-186

- What has been the political and social impact of structural adjustment?

November 26: NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING

WEEK FOURTEEN

Reserve Reading 9: WRITING ASSIGNMENT EIGHT

- Patrick Bond, Fanon’s Warning: a civil society reader on the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), AWP/AIDC, 2002
- Can NEPAD address Africa’s current political and development challenges?

Suggested Websites
African Union.org
November 29:
- Why did states like the Democratic Republic of the Congo reach a point of crisis by the 1990s?

December 1: Roundtable
Movie, *Ken Saro Wiwa: an African martyr* (VHS 5619)
- Discuss the effects of globalization on contemporary African politics

December 3:
- Can the African Union and NEPAD address Africa’s current political and development challenges?

WEEK FIFTEEN

December 6:
Review Lesson: Final Research Paper’

December 8:
Tutorial

December 14:
Final Due

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1 Select an African country from the African Union country list: (you cannot select a country that is one of our eight case studies. Everyone must select a different country, so please register your country with me today!). Select a chapter (1-5) from Alex Thomas’ *An Introduction to African Politics*, and write a five-page essay on your country. Your essay must follow the following methodological instructions: Choose ONE question from the ‘Questions raised by this chapter’ and use the response to that question as a guide to construct a thematic/thesis for your ‘analytical’ essay. I must identify at least SIX of the concepts in your essay. Your essay should define those concepts and apply their meaning in empirical terms to your selected country.

2 Use the same African country from the African Union country list: (you cannot select a country that is one of our eight case studies. Everyone must select a different country, so please register your country with me today!). Select a chapter (6-11) from Alex Thomas’ *An Introduction to African Politics*, and write an eight-page essay on your country. Your essay must follow the following methodological instructions: Choose ONE question from the ‘Questions raised by this chapter’ and use the response to that question as a guide to construct a thematic/thesis for your ‘analytical’ essay. I must identify at least SIX of the concepts in your essay. Your essay should define those concepts and apply their meaning in empirical terms to your selected country.