State and Society in African Politics (SIS 654-001 / 471-001H)
American University, School of International Service

Fall 2013
Thursdays, 5:30 - 8 pm in Ward 301
Course TA: Yoonbin Ha (yoonbin.ha@gmail.com)
http://carllevan.com

Dr. Carl LeVan
levan@american.edu
SIS room 343, Tel. 885-2457
Office hrs: Thursdays 1-4 and by appt

Course Description and Objectives
This course explores the economic, social, and political challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today, placing them in historical and political contexts. Key themes include democratization, conflict, economic development, and the nature of the state. The course balances regional knowledge with comparative theory in order to address questions about African exceptionalism, democracy, path dependence, and the effects of political institutions on governance.

The first unit analyzes colonial rule, including how it affected traditional bases of authority and transformed the structure of economic life. We examine the lasting impacts of nationalism and decolonization, and discuss the politics of the post-independence era including the rise of one-party states, increased political centralization, and economic experiments in socialism. The second unit explores the sources of instability and dictatorship, and studies the policy challenges presented by these phenomena. The third unit focuses on puzzles of African development: Why are so many countries rich in resources but poor in per capita terms? Have external actors helped or hurt post-colonial development? We also evaluate the impact of economic liberalization and foreign aid. The last unit starts by considering some of the social transformations in Africa after the end of the cold war. We then compare different causes of democratization, and consider the role of patronage in sustaining contemporary illiberal regimes.

Learning Outcomes
- Identify core themes and ongoing debates in African politics, and situate them within comparative studies
- Prepare students for advanced political research through the use of scholarly resources
- Effectively apply theories and concepts from the course to practical problems facing Africa
- Learn how to identify and interpret emerging issues

Required Materials
These books are available at the campus bookstore:

Required readings posted on Blackboard are marked with an *asterisk* below; other required readings noted below are available via the Internet link provided in the syllabus. Please note that the syllabus may change; additional materials may be distributed in class or via Blackboard.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Papers are graded on the following scale: 100 to 94 is an A, 93 to 90 is an A-; 89 to 87 is a B+, 86 to 84 is a B, 83 to 80 is a B-, etc. A passing grade cannot be awarded without completion of all course requirements. If you anticipate missing an assignment deadline due to a medical or other emergency, please notify the professor before the due date. Your course grade will be calculated based on the following distribution:

- In-class test on September 26 (20%)
- Policy analysis paper, due on October 18 (20%)
- Analytical essay on Unit 3 of the course, due November 1 (15%)
- Short review of *Nostalgia for the Future*, posted to Blackboard on November 14 (10%)
- In-class final exam on December 12 (25%)
- Class participation (10%)

Early papers are always welcome. Late papers will be penalized. Use one-inch margins, 12-point type, and double-spacing. All papers must follow a standard formatting style such as Chicago, APSA or MLA. The AU library has examples posted at: http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/citation/. If you use in-text (Author year, page) citations, you still must include a bibliography. Please consult the style guide on my website, where I have also posted tips, suggestions, and resources: http://carllevan.com/teaching/student-resources/. Papers will not be accepted by email without prior permission. AU’s Academic Integrity Code will be strictly enforced. For information see: http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm.

UNIT 1: COLONIALISM AND NATIONALISM

(1) Imperial Images (August 29)
Lange, Chapters 1 and 2.

(2) Nationalism (September 5)
Class will meet at the library’s media services center (lower level) to watch a video


(3) Colonial Legacies (September 12)
Prepare for a class debate on nationalism.
Finish reading Lange. You can skim chapters 6 and 7.

(4) Decolonization and Development (September 19)
Hyden, Chapter 4, “The Economy of Affection” and Chapter 6, “The Policy Deficit”

(5) In-class test (September 26)

Some recommended readings for Unit 1:
Hyden, Goran. Chapter 1, “The Study of Politics and Africa”

UNIT 2: AUTHORITARIANISM AND INSECURITY

(6) Dictatorship and Personal Rule (October 3)
Hyden, Chapter 5, “Big Man Rule”

(7) State building and Counter-terrorism (October 10)

(8) Islam and Insecurity (October 17)


⇒ Hardcopy of policy analysis paper **due on October 19** by noon – put under my office door

Some recommended readings for Unit 2:

**UNIT 3: DEVELOPMENT PARADOXES AND PARADIGMS**

(9) **Economic Reform, Aid, and Debt** (October 24)
**GUEST:** Victoria Ayer, Senior Anti-corruption and Good Governance Advisor, USAID

Hyden, Chapter 10, “The External Dimension”
Piot, Charles. Chapter 5.

(10) **Explaining (Old and New) Patterns of African Growth** (October 31)

Recommended readings for Unit 3:
UNIT 4: POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN AFRICAN STATE & SOCIETY

(11) Civil Society Transformations (November 7)
Hyden, Chapter 7, “The Agrarian Question”

(12) African Cultures at the “End of History” (November 14)
Piot, Charles. Read all except for Chapter 5.

→ Online book review due at the beginning of class.

(13) Explaining Democratization (November 21)
Tripp, Introduction and Chapter 1.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (November 28)

(14) Illiberal Politics and the Case of Uganda (December 5)
Finish reading Tripp.

Recommended Reading for Unit 4:

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean’s office for course and school/college-specific information.