

CONTEMPORARY AFRICA (SIS 265-001)
American University, School of International Service

Spring 2011
Mon/Thurs, 11:20 – 12:35 in Ward 303
Office hrs: Thursdays, 2 – 5 & by appt
Location: SIS 343

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COURSE OUTLINE

This course explores the economic, social, and political challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today, placing them in historical and global contexts. Key themes include democratization, the origins of conflict, and path dependent development. The course balances regional knowledge with broader comparative theory in order to address questions about African exceptionalism, democracy, and political culture.

In the first unit on colonialism we will discuss colonial rule, including how it transformed cultural, economic, and political life. We'll discuss (and question) the lasting impact of nationalism and decolonization on economic and political development. The second unit analyzes the politics of the post-independence era including the rise of one-party states, increased political centralization, and economic experiments in socialism. The third unit examines challenges to peace and security in contemporary Africa. We'll discuss the social and historical causes of violence in Rwanda and examine emerging security threats in Uganda, with a critical discussion of counter-terrorism. The fourth 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 development? We'll evaluate different claims about the impact of economic liberalization and debate the causes of corruption. The last unit examines trends and causes of recent democratization, weighing the impact of historical factors as well as recent elections. It also explores the qualities of apparently "successful" democratic cases.

Learning Outcomes:

Demonstrate understanding of course concepts by applying them to a well researched case study.

Develop and defend political positions through both essays and collective learning exercises.

Interpret and contextualize political trends by using academic sources and familiarity with themes common in African studies.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

These books are available at the bookstore on campus and on reserve in the library:

- Meredith, Martin. 2006. *The Fate of Africa: a History of Fifty Years of Independence*. Public Affairs.
- Chabal, Patrick. 2009. *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*. London: Zed Books.
- Diamond, Larry and Marc Plattner. 2010. *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat* (2nd edition). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Recommended:

- Thomson, Alex. 2010. *An Introduction to African Politics* (3rd edition). London: Routledge.

You should also subscribe to IRIN news bulletins pertaining to your case study (see below). Go to <http://www.irinnews.org>. 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. Additional required materials may be distributed in class or via Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade will be calculated based on the following distribution:

- An in-class test on February 14 (20%)
- Policy memo and role playing simulation on March 14 (20%). NOTE: You should plan on coordinating with your team members before the simulation.
- Blog posting on your case study, due February 22 (5%)
- Research paper on your case study and the Chabal book, due on April 7 (20%)
- In-class final exam on May 2 (25%)
- Class participation, including Blackboard participation (10%)

Emailed assignments will not be accepted without the prior permission of the instructor. Consult the link <http://carllevan.com/teaching/student-resources/> for information about style guides, formatting, and some note taking tips. AU's Academic Integrity Code will be strictly enforced.

You are expected to be an active participant in class discussions, especially when we refer to your case study. You are also required to post at least one message on Blackboard before **February 22** which identifies your case study and summarizes its colonial experience. In addition, the instructor may ask students to post a message following particular class discussions.

UNIT 1: IMPERIALISM AND DECOLONIZATION

(1) Why Africa? (January 10)

(2) Colonial Rule (January 13)

Meredith, Introduction

* Crowder, M. 1964. "Indirect Rule: French and British Style," *Africa* 34 (July), 197 – 205.

→ MLK holiday, January 17

(3) Rural Rebellions (January 20)

* Elkins, Caroline. Chapter 1, "Pax Britannica," in *Imperial Reckoning: the Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. New York: Holt (2005), 4-30.

* Maathai, Wangari Chapter 3, "Education and the State of Emergency" in *Unbowed: A Memoir*. New York: Anchor Books (2006), 53 – 72.

(4) The Age of Nationalism (January 24)

Meredith, Chapter 1, "The Gold Coast Experiment" and Chapter 4, "L'Afrique Noire"

* Azikiwe, Nnamdi. *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1961), 154 – 162.

(5) Decolonization (January 27)

Meredith, Chapter 5, "Winds of Change" and Chapter 7, "The White South"

→ VIDEO IN CLASS: *Wind of Change: the End of Colonialism in Africa* (DVD 4034)

UNIT 2: THE POST-COLONIAL MOMENT

(6) Post-Imperial Politics (January 31)

Meredith, Chapter 8, “The Birth of Nations” and Chapter 9, “The First Dance of Freedom”

* Kwame Nkrumah. Excerpts from *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Nelson (1965), pp. 239 – 259.

(7) Mobilizing for Development (February 3)

Meredith, Chapter 10, “Feet of Clay” and Chapter 14, “In Search of Ujamaa”

* Julius Nyerere, “Freedom and Development,” in *Freedom and Development*, Oxford University Press (1973), pp. 58 – 71.

(8) Class debate (February 7)

Chabal, Patrick. Introduction. *The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*.

Frantz Fanon, “Reciprocal Bases of National Culture and the Fight for Freedom,” 1959.

Available at: <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/fanon/national-culture.htm>

(9) Authoritarianism and Personal Rule (February 10)

Meredith, Chapter 11, “A House Divided” and Chapter 13, “The Coming of Tyrants”

(10) In-class test (February 14)

UNIT 3: SECURITY AND CONFLICT

(11) Ethnic Violence in Rwanda (February 17)

Meredith, Chapter 27, “The Graves Are Not Yet Full”

Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 1, “The Politics of Being” (pages 24-36)

(12) Somalia (February 21)

Meredith, Chapter 26, “Black Hawk Down”

Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 2, “The Politics of Belonging.”

(13) Debating Contemporary Security (February 24)

* LeVan, Carl. “The Political Economy of African Responses to the U.S. Africa Command,” *Africa Today* 57, 1 (fall 2010), 2-23.

Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 7, “The Politics of Suffering.”

(14) Governance and the War on Terror in Museveni’s Uganda (February 28)

Andrew Mwenda, Chapter 17, “Personalizing Power in Uganda,” in Diamond and Plattner.

* Rubengoya, Joshua. 2009. “The Politics of Uganda’s Anti-Terrorism Law and its Impact on Civil Society,” in *Civil Society Under Strain: Counter-Terrorism Policy, Civil Society and Aid Post-9/11*. Eds. Jude Howell and Jeremy Lind. Kumarian Press (2009), 209-226.

(15) Rebellion in Northern Uganda (March 3)

Resolve Uganda, “From Promise to Peace: A Blueprint for President Obama’s LRA Strategy”

Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, “A Response to Resolve’s *From Promise to Peace*”

IN CLASS VIDEO: “Invisible Children,” DVD 2558

→ Spring Break

- (16) **Role Playing Scenario (March 14)**
POLICY MEMO DUE

UNIT 4: DEVELOPMENT PARADOXES AND PARADIGMS

- (17) **The Post-Colonial Economic Hangover (March 17)**
Meredith, Chapter 16, “The Slippery Slope”
Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 3, “The Politics of Believing.”

- (18) **The Politics of Economic Reform (March 21)**
Meredith, Chapter 22, “The Lost Decade”
* Naomi Chazan, “The Political Transformation of Ghana Under the PND,” in *Ghana: The Political Economy of Recovery*. Ed. Don Rothchild. Boulder: Lynne Rienner (1991), 21-47.

- (19) **The End of “Afro-pessimism”? (March 24)**
Lewis, Peter. Chapter 7, “Growth without Prosperity in Africa,” in Diamond and Plattner.
Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 5, “The Politics of Striving.”

Recommended:

Johnson, Ellen Sirleaf. Introduction to *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries are Leading the Way*.
www.cgdev.org/doc/books/Emerging_Africa/CGD_EmergAfrica_FM_intro-FINAL.pdf

- (20) **Corruption and Development (March 28)**
Guest lecture: Ambassador John Campbell, PhD

* Campbell, John. 2011. Chapter 2, “If Nigeria Is So Rich, Why Are Nigerians So Poor?” in *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Campbell, John. 2010. “Electoral Violence in Nigeria,” Council on Foreign Relations Planning Memo No. 9. www.cfr.org/publication/22930/electoral_violence_in_nigeria.html

UNIT 5: WHICH WAY DEMOCRATIZATION?

- (21) **Democratization and Liberalism (March 31)**
Diamond, Larry. Chapter 4, “The Rule of Law versus the Big Man,” in Diamond and Plattner.
Clark, John. Chapter 6, “The Decline of the African Military Coup,” in Diamond and Plattner.
Chabal, Patrick. Chapter 4, “The Politics of Partaking.”

Recommended:

Meredith, Chapter 23, “The Struggle for Democracy”

- (22) **Toward Institutional Consolidation (April 4)**
Posner and Young, Chapter 5, “The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa,” in Diamond and Plattner.

Bratton, Michael. Chapter 8, "Formal versus Informal Institutions in Africa," in Diamond and Plattner.

Prempeh, Kwasi. Chapter 2, "Presidents Untamed," in Diamond and Plattner.

(23) Case Study Assignment Due (April 7)

(24) Nigeria's Elections (April 11)

Guest lecture: Professor Patrick Ukata

Suberu, Rotimi, Chapter 9, "Nigeria's Muddled Elections," in Diamond and Plattner.

Owudiwe, Ebere, and Chloe Berwind-Dart. 2011. "Breaking the Cycle of Electoral Violence in Nigeria." Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace.

<http://www.usip.org/publications/breaking-the-cycle-electoral-violence-in-nigeria>

(25) Kenya (April 14)

Chege, Michael. Chapter 14, "Kenya: Back from the Brink" in Diamond and Plattner.

Kiai, Maina. Chapter 15, "The Crisis in Kenya," in Diamond and Plattner.

NOTE: Additional materials may be posted on Blackboard for this class:

(26) A South African Success Story? (April 18)

Meredith, Chapter 24, "A Time of Triumph" (you should probably review Chapter 7 too)

Friedman, Steven. Chapter 19, "An Accidental Advance? South Africa's 2009 Elections," in Diamond and Plattner.

(27) Illiberal Setbacks (April 21)

Bratton and Masunungure, Chapter 24, "Zimbabwe's Long Agony," in Diamond and Plattner.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2009 "Lessons of Zimbabwe," *London Review of Books*, December 4, 2008. <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v30/n23/mahmood-mamdani/lessons-of-zimbabwe>.

(28) Conclusion and Review (April 25)

IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM, MAY 2

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.