

POLITICAL SCIENCE 597.02: POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD
Current Issues in African Politics and Economics

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Class Meeting Times:
Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11:18
Derby Hall Room 0080

Office Hours:
Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-12:30
Derby Hall Room 2081

Course Objectives

“Although most Africans are poor, our continent is potentially extremely rich.” Kwame Nkrumah, First President and Independence Leader of Ghana

“Ours is not a poor country and even though we are now a poor people.” John Kufuor, Current President of Ghana

This course is an advanced undergraduate level course examining the political economic problems in contemporary Africa. Unlike other parts of the world, Africa has continued to confound the researcher; after almost fifty years of independence the lives of many people across the continent are not much better than they were in the 1960's. This course traces developments both across time (starting from the end of the post-Colonial period) until the present as well as across countries and regions, in order to understand why many Africans' today are no better off than previous generations. This course will survey the colonial and post-colonial experience; dependency and state-led economic development; the military regimes during the 1970's and 1980's; structural adjustment and the rise of democracy in the 1990's; and a brief foray into failed states and the African Union (AU) at the end. The goal of this course is to link the historical past in Africa with the contemporary problems the continent is facing.

This course may be quite different than other courses you may have had/have/or may have at Ohio State. This course is meant to serve as a “capstone” experience whose goals and learning objectives, as defined by the university, are:

“Goals/Rationale:

Thematic upper-division course work, drawing upon multiple disciplines, enriches students' experiences of the contemporary world.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to contemporary issues.
2. Students write about or conduct research on the contemporary world.”

The goal of this course is to therefore to develop critical thinking skills that, in the future, are not only pertinent to the study of African politics and economics that this course focuses upon, but also to other courses and experiences you may have. The course is therefore structured slightly differently than other courses and is based around four two-week cycles. The first week in a

sequence examines an issue facing Africa both currently and historically and includes comprehensive reading on the topic; the second week in a sequence is structured around how the issues that Africa has faced historically may be or have been applied to contemporary debate. The assignments (discussed in detail below) will reflect the goals of critical thinking, both written and oral, that are extremely pertinent to this class. You should focus on: 1) developing views on issues where you think deeply and critically about an issue; 2) understanding alternative views and how and why others may agree with them; 3) being able to defend your views (in a rational way) when presented with these alternative views; and 4) developing your knowledge on Africa and how its political and economic institutions are structured.

Course Assignments, Grading, and Attendance

Grades for this course are determined by four criteria:

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Bi-Weekly Response Papers: 40%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Assignments must be turned in on time and will be docked one letter grade (10%) for each day they are turned in late (unless approved by me in advance). The grading scale used for this course is: 100-90 A; 90-80 B; 80-70 C; 70-60 D; Below 60 E.

Tests encompass 50% of the grades for this course. The tests will be composed of essay and short answer questions, each section worth about 50% of the grade for the exam. The final exam will be comprehensive and given at the time scheduled by the Registrar's Office.

The second component of your grade will be four bi-weekly response papers, worth ten percent of your grade each. These papers are meant to reflect critical thinking on the issues we will be discussing. The goal of the short papers is to probe the issues in depth and offer well thought out responses. They should discuss your views about the issues, backing them up with empirical evidence from the class or from reputable outside sources (these include journals, books, or newspapers; these may be available on the internet, but you should avoid using "internet" sources such as blogs, think-tank reports, ect.). Although outside resources are suggested, they are not required. The papers must be between 2-3 pages in 12 point Times-New Roman font with standard 1-inch margins. Do not write above three or below two pages. One aspect of presenting your work (be it in this class, or a future academic or job environment) will be to present a coherent well-rounded argument that is not in book form; in order to do so for this class you will have to write at least a couple of pages, but you also want to avoid being long-winded. The papers are due on the first class meeting after a DEBATE week (listed on the course schedule below). Your paper should reflect one of the two issues we discuss during a debate week (just one the first week) and offer your position on the issue and discuss why you (and others) believe your view is the correct interpretation of the data.

The final component of your grade will be class attendance and participation. You are *strongly* encouraged to attend class. Attendance will be taken and will be a primary component of your grade. Furthermore you are expected to participate when attending; participation is included as part of the attendance component of your grade.

Sensitive Issues

This course will explore some issues that many would consider to be sensitive. This class is based around developing fruitful discussion in a debate-like format. Remember; there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to any of the issues we discuss and every attempt will be made to present contradicting viewpoints on an issue. That said, comments that are deemed to be blatantly out of decorum will be censored and students reprimanded. One goal of this course is to develop a constructive dialogue on issues facing Africa today and our discussion on those issues should reflect the constructive aspect of this dialogue.

Academic Integrity

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy.

If you have any questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty please contact myself or refer to the OSU Committee on Academic Misconduct: <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>, specifically the FAQ section.

Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

Required Books and Readings

Moseley, William. 2004. Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial African Issues. 1st Edition. Mc-Graw-Hill/Dushkin. ISBN: 0072845171

Schraeder, Peter. 2003. African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation. 2nd Edition. Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN: 053456769X

In addition a couple of articles will be used for this course. They will be available at JSTOR- <http://www.jstor.org> from a campus computer (or available off campus with login). They will also be available on electronic reserve.

Course and Reading Schedule

WEEK 1: Introduction

Day 1 (June 20): Introduction to the course

Day 2 (June 22): Kaplan, Robert. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy." *The Atlantic Monthly* Vol 237: No. 2. pp. 44-66, especially 44-54

Stable URL:

<http://proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/login?url=http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9404280908>

(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE OR AVAILABLE ONLINE THROUGH OSCAR)

WEEK 2: Pan-Africanism and Independence

Day 3 (June 27): Schraeder- Chapter 3 "Political and Economic Impacts of Colonialism" pp. 49-77

Day 4 (June 29): Schraeder- Chapter 4 "Nationalism and the Emergence of the Contemporary Independence Era" pp. 80-97

WEEK 3: The Colonial Legacy: Past and Present (Debate)

Day 5 (July 4): NO CLASS

Day 6 (July 6): Moseley- Moseley- Issue #2 "Has the Colonial Experience Negatively Distorted Contemporary African Development Patterns?" pp. 18-34

WEEK 4: Corruption and Neopatrimonial Rule in Africa

Day 7 (July 11): Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg. 1984. "Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in Africa." *Comparative Politics* Vol. 16: No. 4. pp. 421-442.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4159%28198407%2916%3A4%3C421%3APRTAPI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>

(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE OR AVAILABLE ONLINE AT JSTOR)

See Also (recommended): Schraeder- Chapter 9 "Military Coup d'États' and Military Governments" pp. 201-219

Day 8 (July 13): MIDTERM

WEEK 5: Economic Stagnation and Growing Debt (Debate)

Day 9 (July 18): Moseley- Issue #19 "Are African Governments Inherently Disposed to Corruption?" pp. 338-358

Day 10 (July 20): Moseley- Issue #5 "Should Developed Countries Provide Debt Relief to the Poorest, Indebted African Nations?" pp. 74-88

WEEK 6: The Fall of the Military Regimes and the Emergence of Democracy

Day 11 (July 25): Schraeder- Chapter 10 "Democratic Experiments and Multiparty Politics" pp. 222-241

Day 12 (July 27): van de Walle, Nicholas. 1999. "Economic Reform in Democratizing Africa." *Comparative Politics* Vol. 32: No. 1. pp. 21-41.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0010-4159%28199910%2932%3A1%3C21%3AERIADA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE OR AVAILABLE ONLINE AT JSTOR)

WEEK 7: Structural Adjustment and Democracy: The Future for Africa? (Debate)

Day 13 (August 1): Moseley- Issue #17 "Are Multi-Party Democratic Traditions Taking Hold in Africa?" pp. 296-317

Day 14 (August 4): Moseley- Issue #3 "Have Structural Adjustment Policies Been Effective at Promoting Development in Africa" pp. 34-51

WEEK 8: Ethnic Violence, State Decay, and the Role of the African Union

Day 15 (August 8): Schraeder- Chapter 5 "Ethnicity and Class" pp. 100-125

Day 16 (August 10): Schraeder- Chapter 11 "Foreign Policy-Making and the Pursuit of Pan-Africanism" pp. 244-267

WEEK 9: State Decay and Communal Violence: Will Africa Fail? (Debate)

Day 17 (August 15): Moseley- Issue #20 "Are International Peacekeeping Missions Critical to Resolving Ethnic Conflicts in African Countries?" pp. 358-378

Day 18 (August 17): Moseley- Issue # 16 "Are Women in a Position to Challenge Male Power Structures in Africa?" pp. 280-294

WEEK 10: Course and Final Exam Review

Day 19 (August 22): Moseley- Issue #1 "Is Africa a Lost Cause?" pp. 2-17

FINAL EXAM REVIEW

Day 20 (August 24): FINAL EXAM