

POLC42H3: Topics in Comparative Politics (African Politics)

**Department of Political Science
University of Toronto Scarborough**

Summer 2019

Instructor

Karol Czuba, PhD

Office hours: Wednesday, 5.15-6.15 pm, in HL 502.

Teaching assistant

Michael Braun

Time and location

Wednesday, 3-5 pm, in MW 110.

Introduction

This course is designed to introduce you to the politics of contemporary Africa and to provide you with an opportunity to think critically about how context affects political behaviour and institutions. We will explore the themes, issues, and trends that shape politics in Africa, across some 50 countries and nearly one billion people. I hope that the course will inspire in you a lasting interest in Africa and African politics.

The course addresses some key questions in African politics:

- What are the legacies of the continent's precolonial and colonial political history?
- Why is the capacity of African states generally low?
- What can be done to improve political accountability in the region?
- What explains Africa's slow economic growth?
- Why have some African countries experienced high levels of political violence while others have not?

In the first part of the course, we will review Africa's recent political history, focusing on the impacts of colonization and on the types of states that have emerged from the continent's colonial experience and evolved in the subsequent decades. In the second part, we will turn to the challenges that postcolonial governments face as they attempt to manage the interests of diverse societies and reform their economies and political institutions.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Identify the key themes, issues, and trends that shape African politics.
- Know the key scholarly contributions intended to explain important aspects of African politics.
- Develop your own perspective on these issues.

Most importantly, active participation in the course and completion of the assignments should help you to enhance your ability to think clearly, logically, and critically about the course content and other political phenomena.

Contact information

You are strongly encouraged to raise questions not answered by the syllabus during the class and office hours. Please use the Quercus messaging function for electronic communication with the course instructor

and teaching assistant. You will receive a response within one working day. All questions regarding grading and assignment feedback should be addressed to the teaching assistant. All other questions should be addressed to me (i.e. the instructor).

Grading scheme

Map quiz	5%
Research proposal	10%
Research essay	30%
Term test	15%
Final exam	30%
Participation and in-class involvement	10%

Test/exam dates and assignment submission deadlines:

Map quiz: 29th May

Term test: 12th June, 3.10-5 pm, in MW 110

Research proposal: 26th June

Research essay: 24th July

Final exam: 10th August, 9-11 am, in MW 160

Assignment preparation guidelines

Map quiz

You will be asked to identify from memory several African countries by filling in a blank map. You must also know each African state's former colonizer. This exercise is designed to ensure that students are familiar with the countries we will discuss in the course.

Term test and final exam

The test and exam will include a mix of short answer and essay questions and will test your familiarity with the material covered in the lectures and readings, as well as your ability to analyse what you have learned.

Participation and in-class involvement

You will be expected to participate in each class by having read the required readings and be prepared to answer questions in class (verbally or in writing). In addition, in some classes I will post a link to a Kahoot! page with a small number of questions relating to material covered in that class. This is a low-stakes exercise intended to ensure and measure your engagement with the course content. You will have a few minutes to answer the questions. Correct answers will contribute to your overall participation grade.

Research proposal

The main assignment of the course is divided into two parts—research proposal and research essay—to provide you with formative assessment of your work. Your task in the assignment is to answer one of the questions listed below.

The purpose of the research proposal is to provide you with feedback about your work that you can use as you prepare your research essay. The proposal is also intended to assist you in selecting your essay question, locating sources, and organizing your ideas. Research proposals should be between 3-4 double-spaced pages (not including the bibliography and, if you choose to have one, the cover page). Proposals should: a) identify your selected question and the argument that you intend to advance; b) outline what other scholars who have studied the topic have argued and what evidence they have provided to support their arguments; c) identify the limitations of the existing research on the subject and explain how your research will fill an existing gap in the literature; d) consider how they relate to the theories/explanations of development that we have covered in the course; e) outline your basic argument; and f) explain what kinds of data you will collect to support your argument. The proposal should follow the standard essay format. You should also

attach a one-page proposed bibliography to your proposal. You must cite your sources. If you use another author's words, you must enclose them in quotes and cite the source. If you use another author's ideas directly or indirectly, you must also cite the source. Please use the Chicago style.

Research essay

The research essay must be on the same topic as the research proposal. The essay should be between 8-10 double-spaced pages (excluding the bibliography and the cover page). Make sure that you clearly state your argument in the introduction, determine its scope, define the key concepts, support your assertions with evidence (citing any contrary views or evidence as relevant), and conclude by summarizing your findings and outlining any questions or avenues that may require future research. Research essay of this length should draw upon at least 10-12 *academic* sources. Please incorporate a minimum of two sources from the course syllabus in your essay. You must cite your sources. If you use another author's words, you must enclose them in quotes and cite the source. If you use another author's ideas directly or indirectly, you must also cite the source. Please use the Chicago style.

Research proposal and essay questions

1. What explains subnational variation in the provision of public goods in Africa? Critically evaluate the scholarly literature on the subject, identify the explanation that is in your assessment most compelling, and explain the underlying mechanisms.
2. According to many scholars, African states' control over borderlands is limited. Does this claim still hold today? Critically evaluate relevant academic literature and identify empirical evidence of the contemporary applicability of scholars' arguments on the subject.
3. What explains the prevalence of civil conflict in Africa? Review the existing evidence on the subject, identify the explanation that is in your assessment most compelling, and explain the underlying mechanisms.
4. Why do some—and not other—social identities become politically salient in specific contexts? Identify the processes whereby identities acquire political salience, critically evaluate the scholarly literature on these processes, specify an argument that you find compelling, test it using 1-3 empirical cases in Africa, and explain the applicability of that approach to your chosen cases.
5. To what extent are the governments of postcolonial African states responsible for the current levels of economic development on the continent? Critically evaluate the scholarly literature on the subject, identify the explanation that is in your assessment most compelling, and explain the underlying mechanisms.
6. In the late 1980s nearly every African country was ruled by an authoritarian regime. Three decades later, half of the countries on the continent have democratized, and the others are autocratic. What explains this recent regime type heterogeneity and the trajectories of democratization and authoritarian retrenchment in Africa? Critically evaluate the scholarly literature on the subject, identify the most compelling explanation, and explain the mechanisms.

Evaluation criteria for the assignments

Adequacy of research

Your findings should be derived from thorough research. Your work should be free of factual errors or unsupported and/or undocumented assertions. You should link your findings to those of other scholars and draw meaningful conclusions based on your evidence.

Cogency of the argument

Your written work should have a clear focus and an argument that is logically constructed and internally coherent. Your analysis should display understanding of the topic and originality of thought.

Organization and style

Your work should be completely free of grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors. The organization of the paper should assist the reader by providing a readily understandable presentation of background information, research findings, analysis, and conclusions.

Assignment submission policy

Assignment submission

You will be required to submit your research proposal and research essay online on Quercus. Assignments submitted via email or in hard copy will not be accepted. You are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work *and* finished versions of all of your assignments. You should keep all assignments until the marked assignments have been returned to you and the grades have been posted on ACORN.

Turnitin.com statement

Normally, as part of the online submission to Quercus students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Late submission policy

A late submission penalty of 1% per weekday (Monday to Friday) will be applied to any assignments submitted after the submission deadline.

Extensions

Only valid and documented reasons (such as severe illness or the death of a close relative) will be accepted for late submission of assignments or for requesting to write a make-up test. You should submit research proposal or essay extension requests to your TA. Please contact me (i.e. the instructor) to request to write a make-up test.

Please note that while valid documentation may result in the reduction of a late penalty, it does not guarantee that the penalty will be entirely eliminated. Computer problems (such as crashes, viruses, corrupted disks, etc.) will not be accepted as grounds for extensions. Make sure you back up your work in reliable media often and avoid leaving work to the last minute to prevent problems.

Grade appeals

If you wish to appeal your grade for any assignment, you should approach your TA within two weeks after that assignment was returned to you. The TA may decide to keep the grade that you originally received, lower it, or raise it. If you are not satisfied with the TA's decision, you can submit a 150-200 word written explanation of why you wish to have the grade reviewed to mw. I will decide whether or not to review the grade based on the strength of your argument. If I decide to review the grade, he may also keep the grade that you were assigned by your TA, lower it, or increase it.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the UofT degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments:
 - Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
 - Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
 - Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
 - Making up sources or facts.
 - Including references to sources that you did not use.
 - Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - Working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work;
 - Having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
 - Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.
- On tests and exams:
 - Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
 - Looking at someone else's answers
 - Letting someone else look at your answers.
 - Misrepresenting your identity.
 - Submitting an altered test for re-grading.
- Misrepresentation:
 - Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
 - Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. You are strongly encouraged to explore the numerous resources available on the UofT writing website at www.utoronto.ca/writing.

Class schedule and readings

All course readings are available on Quercus. To access readings, select the Library Course Reserves option from the Quercus course menu. The list of readings will then appear in a new tab.

Part 1. Historical legacies

Class 1: Introduction to African politics

Chazan, Naomi. 1999. "The Diversity of African Politics: Trends and Approaches," in Naomi Chazan (ed.), *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 5-34.

Class 2: Precolonial Africa

Evans-Pritchard, E. E., 1940. Chapter 4 ("The Political System") in *The Nuer. A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 139-142, 147-150, and 174-184.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. Chapter 2 ("Power and space in precolonial Africa") in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 35-57.

Class 3: Colonialism in Africa

Young, Crawford. 1994. Chapters 1 (“Bula Matari and the Contemporary African Crisis,” Section 1: “Bula Matari: The Origins”) and 2 (“Constructing Bula Matari”) in *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 1-2, 77-80, 95-113, and 138-140.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. Chapter 2 (“Decentralized Despotism”) in *Citizen and Subject*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter 2, pp. 37-44 and 49-61.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. Chapter 3 (“The Europeans and the African Problem”) in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 58-96.

Class 4: Decolonization and nation-building (and map quiz)

Freund, Bill. 1998. Chapter 8 (“The Decolonization of Africa: 1940-60”) in *The Making of Contemporary Africa, 2nd ed.* London: Macmillan Press, pp. 167-203 (skim 169-176 and 184-203).

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. Chapter 4 (“The Political Kingdom in Independent Africa”) in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 97-103.

Bates, Robert. 1983. Chapter 4 (“The Commercialization of Agriculture and the Rise of Rural Protest”) in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 92-104.

Class 5: African states and Africa’s states-system

Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. Chapters 1 (“The Challenge of State Building in Africa”) and 4 (“The Political Kingdom in Independent Africa”) in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 15-28 (skim pp. 21-28) and pp 103-113.

Jackson, Robert and Carl Rosberg. 1982. “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and Juridical in Statehood.” *World Politics* 35(1): 1-24 (skim pp. 2-21).

Ensminger, Jean. 1996. Chapter 6 (“Collective Action: From Community to State”) in *Making a Market: The Institutional Transformation of an African Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 143-165.

Class 6: Term test

Part 2. Key issues in contemporary African politics

Class 7: Neopatrimonialism and state-society relations in Africa (research proposal due)

Bratton, Michael, and Nicholas Van de Walle. 1997. Chapter 2 (“Neopatrimonial Rule”) in *Democratic Experiments in Africa*, pp. 61-68.

Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. “Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin.” *World Politics* 55: 399-403 406-407 413-414, 421-422.

Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. “Patronage and Political Stability in Africa,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(10): 1339-1341, 1341-1349, and 1358-1359 (skim pp. 1349-1358).

Class 8: Identity: gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and African politics

Posner, Daniel. 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): 529-530 and 543-544 (skim pp. 530-543).

Miguel, Edward. 2004. “Tribe or Nation? Nation-Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania,” *World Politics* 56(3): 327-328, 335-339, and 360-362 (skim other pages).

Maxwell, David. 2000. “Catch the Cockerel before Dawn: Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 70(2): 249-251 and 273-274 (skim pp. 251-273, paying close attention to the main claims within subheadings).

Arriola, Leonardo and Martha Johnson. 2014. “Ethnic Politics and Women’s Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 58 (2): 495-499 and 507-508 (skim pp. 499-507).

Class 9: African militaries, coups d'état, and political instability

Nugent, Paul. 2012. Chapter 6 ("Khaki Fatigue: Military Rule in Africa, 1960-1995") in *Africa Since Independence*. London: Palgrave, pp. 207-263 (skim pp. 213-261).

Decalo, Samuel. 1973. "Military Coups and Regimes in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11(1): 105-106 and 108-124 (skim other pages).

Class 10: Political violence in Africa

Langer, Arnim. 2005. "Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Group Mobilisation in Côte d'Ivoire," *Oxford Development Studies* 33(1): 25-29 and 42-44 (skim pp. 29-42).

Ross, Michael L. 2004. "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58(1): 35-39, 56-57, 61-64 (skim other pages).

Class 11: Economic development in Africa (*research essay due*)

Collier, Paul and Willem Jan Gunning. 1999. "Why Has Africa Grown Slowly?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13: 31, pp. 3-22.

Robert Bates, 1981. Introduction and Chapters 2 ("The Food Sector"), 5 ("The Market as Political Arena and the Limits of Voluntarism"), 6 ("Rental Havens and Protective Shelters"), 7 ("The Origins of Political Marginalism"), and 8 ("Commonalities and Variations") in *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-6, 43-44, 81-82, 96-97, 103-113, 120-121 (skim pp. 82-90).

Class 12: Democratization and African politics since the 1990s

Cheeseman, Nic. 2019. "A Divided Continent — BTI 2018 Regional Report." Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

Albaugh, Erika. 2011. "An Autocrat's Toolkit: Adaptation and Manipulation in 'Democratic' Cameroon." *Democratization* 18 (2): 388-391 and 405-406 (skim pp. 391-405, paying close attention to the main claims within subheadings).