POLI 342 Politics of Africa  
Fall 2017  

Maybank Hall 111  
TR 9:25-10:40am  

Professor Christopher Day  
Office: 114 Wentworth St. Room 105  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1-3  
Email: dayc@cofc.edu  
Phone: 843-953-6617  

Course Syllabus  

Course Description  
Africa matters. On one hand it might seem this way for the worst reasons. Many see a homogenous and tragic Africa in perpetual crisis, where images of collapsed states, grinding poverty, epidemics, and deadly armed conflict draw in intervening outsiders – at best reluctant donors and naïve relief workers, and at worst rapacious arms dealers and terrorist cells. On the other hand Africa matters for the best of reasons. Here, others see a diverse and dynamic Africa in transition, where resources and economic growth, political reform, and a decline in conflict produce real changes on the ground and strategic importance to big global players. Either way, Africa is a distinct and compelling region that is invariably connected to the wider world. This course will examine a range of political issues in contemporary Africa, and will consider how these issues are interconnected at local, regional, and global levels.  

The course will situate the broader study of Africa more specifically within the discipline of Political Science. This means that we are not simply interested in learning historical facts about African politics and society. We are also interested in a range of academic theories designed to explain patterns of African politics, and the variations between and within African states that occur along a number of dimensions. The goal will be to understand this body of literature and to think about new research questions generated from a careful examination of empirical puzzles that appear at all levels of African politics.  

The course proceeds in four parts. Part One will examine the historical institutions of pre-colonial Africa, the colonial states of European conquest, and the emergence of modern African states. We will then look at a range of challenges these states face. Part Two will look more closely at the nature of political authority in African states. We will examine what factors shape political identities and state-society relations, and how African states interact with one another and on the global stage. Part Three will look at how African states have constructed their regimes, have ushered in transitions to democracy, their various political ideologies, and how they deal with the more pressing issues of economic development and poverty. Finally, we will look at the politics of protest and revolt in Africa, comparing and contrasting popular protest with armed conflict. We will conclude the class with an overview of the African Studies Program and a practical guide for those who wish to travel to or conduct their own research on Africa.
Course Objectives and Methodology
Students come away from the course able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of African political systems including their institutions, processes, laws and constitutions and the relations between and among nations
- Demonstrate knowledge of the reasons why people behave in diverse political roles and spaces, especially in African countries
- Distinguish their own views from those of others and can defend their own perspective
- Demonstrate mastery of the independent research process

The course is taught through readings, lectures, class discussions, and by following current events in Africa:

- **Readings.** This is an upper-level class, and students should expect to read 100 pages or more per week. Readings are drawn primarily from social science scholarship to show students this approach to the study of African politics. Students are expected to have completed the readings before the class sessions. Keeping up with these readings will be vital to your overall course performance, and it will be difficult to catch up if you fall behind. The knowledge acquired in the readings will be cumulative. That is, each week you will be introduced to new ideas that will become part of the "tool-box" you will use to analyze readings and lectures in subsequent weeks.

- **Lectures.** Each week will feature a specific topic and a corresponding lecture that will essentially serve as the “textbook” for the class, undergirding the readings and class discussions with key terms, concepts, cases, and historical context.

- **Discussions.** Class discussions will be fundamental to this class and students are expected to participate.

- **Current Events.** Each day, students are expected to independently follow current events and trends in African politics. In class, students should expect to discuss these events. Here are some good sources for African news:
  - You are strongly encouraged to sign up for the excellent weekly bulletin, “This Week in Africa,” curated by Jeffrey Paller. You can sign up here: [https://thisweekinafrica.tumblr.com/SignUp](https://thisweekinafrica.tumblr.com/SignUp)
  - Even better is to listen daily to the 23-minute BBC World Service Focus on Africa, found online at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2011/04/000000_focus_on_africa.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2011/04/000000_focus_on_africa.shtml)
  - The most comprehensive source of African news online posts up to 700 stories per day from various news sites from the continent: [http://allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)
Course Requirements
Evaluation will be based on the following exercises:

- **Map Quiz (5%).** Geographical literacy of Africa is the baseline of this course. Therefore students will have to know all of Africa’s countries plus their capitals. This quiz will be the easiest part of the entire semester.

- **Weekly Quizzes (20%).** Each week there will be an in-class quiz based on the course readings and current events in Africa. These will be multiple-choice and graded in class. There will be a total of eleven quizzes and I will drop the lowest score from the final grade.

- **Research Proposal (40%).** A Research Proposal will address a significant empirical puzzle in African politics. It will not be about simply describing a phenomenon. The exercise will ask a specific research question and argue why this question matters. The proposal will evaluate current approaches to addressing this question, will justify the need for additional research, and outline a research methodology. It will then develop a hypothesis to address this absence, but will stop short of conducting the empirical research. The exercise will give students a chance to focus on a particular country or set of countries, and on a particular topic in comparative politics that interests them, allowing students to explore what this topic looks like in Africa. Students will also learn and practice how to approach doing research in Political Science. It is hoped that students will use it as chance to develop a substantial writing sample for job or school applications. Students may also use this exercise as a vehicle to try out ideas for an Independent Study or a Bachelor’s Essay. Others may wish to use it as a way to develop an actual grant proposal to fund a research trip to Africa.

Research Proposals should be 10-12 pages, typed, double-spaced typed, with regular margins, 12 pt font, in Times New Roman, with page numbers, with a word count at the bottom, and stapled in the top left corner.

Below are the important due dates for each step of the project:

- **September 21:** Finding the Puzzle (10%)
- **October 19:** Literature Review (10%)
- **November 9:** First Draft (5%)
- **December 7:** FINAL DRAFT (15%)

More detailed guidance will be provided as the Fall Semester progresses.

- **Cumulative Take Home Exam (25%)** This take home exam will test students’ grasp of the larger concepts and basic vocabulary of African politics.

- **Class Participation (10%).** The quality of this class depends on the quality of discussion. Therefore students are expected to participate in class. Participation in the intellectual life of the campus is also part of this grade and students will receive credit for attending the key events that will be announced in advance.
Course Policies

Grading Scale
A 93-100  A- 90-92  B+ 88-89  B 83-87  B- 80-82
C+ 78-79  C 73-77  C- 70-72  D+ 68-69  D 63-67  D- 60-62  F: Below 60

Attendance Policy. Attendance is REQUIRED. Tardiness is not cool.

Submission of Work. Students are expected to submit their work on the day it is due in hard copy form. In the event that students cannot submit work on time because of Life Circumstances, they must inform the professor at least 24 hours beforehand, and provide a concrete date for submission. After this date, work will not be accepted. Also, please note that “My computer crashed” = “My dog ate my homework”.

Honor Code. All students are expected be familiar with the College of Charleston Honor Code, and to abide by it. Violations will not be tolerated and will be dealt with appropriately. More is found here: http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Learning Disabled. If you have a documented learning disability, please let me know as soon as possible so special arrangements can be made for certain class requirements.

Other Special Circumstances. I normally will do business with anyone who lets me know in advance of any special circumstances. But please note that the expression “it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission” was not invented by a College Professor.

Center for Student Learning. The Center for Student Learning’s (CSL) academic support services give assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and they are available to you at no additional cost. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at http://csl.cofc.edu or call (843) 953-5635.

Required Readings
The following books are available at the campus bookstore:


All other readings will be available on OAKS.
Course Outline and Readings

1. August 22-24: Introduction


Park Map, Busch Gardens, Tampa Bay

**Part I: Setting the Scene**

2. August 29-31: African Politics 101

*No class Thursday, August 31 for APSA Conference*

***MAP QUIZ TUESDAY AUGUST 29***

Herbst, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-31


3. September 5-7: Pre-Colonial Africa

Herbst Chapter 2, pp. 35-57


4. September 12-14: The Colonial State, Nationalism, and Independence

*Film: Mobutu King of Zaire Part I*

Herbst, Chapter 3, pp. 58-96


Part II: Authority, Identity, and African States

5. September 19-21: Political Authority

**Puzzle due in class Thursday, September 21**

Herbst, Chapters 4 & 6, pp. 96-136 and pp. 173-197

Clapham, Chapters 1-3, pp. 3-74


Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, pp. 45-76


7. October 3-5: Africa’s Regional and International Politics

Film: *Mobutu King of Zaire Part II*

Clapham, Chapters 4-6, pp. 77-159


Ian Taylor, *China’s New Role in Africa* (Lynne Rienner 2009), pp. 1-36, 161-185

Part III: Democracy and Development

8. October 10-12: Military Regimes and Democratic Transitions


9. October 17-19: Ideology and Development

*No class Tuesday, October 17 for Fall Break*

**Literature Review due in class Thursday, October 19**

Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa* (Yale 1982), Chapters 1 & 6, pp. 1-21, 297-326


10. October 24-26: Poverty and Economic Reform

Film: Mobutu King of Zaire Part III

Clapham, Chapters 7 and 8, pp. 163-207


Part IV: Political Protest and Revolt

11. October 31-November 2: Civil Wars in Africa

Clapham, Chapter 9, pp. 208-243
Paul Williams, “Counting Africa’s Conflicts” and “The Terrain of Struggle” in *War & Conflict in Africa*, pp. 15-52


**12. November 7-9: Solving Africa’s Conflicts**

**First Draft of Research Proposal due in class Thursday, November 9**


**13. November 14-16: Popular Protest in Africa**

Branch & Mampilly, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-85 plus case study of your choice.


*No Class Thursday, November 23 for Thanksgiving Break*

**Take Home Exam handed out November 21**

Members of the College of Charleston’s African Studies Program will visit our class.


***Take Home Exam due November 28***

Visit to the Avery Research Center.

*Final Draft of Research Proposal due December 7 at 11am at 114 Wentworth Room 105*

NOTE: Additional readings may be assigned and the course outline may be adjusted to serve the needs of the class.

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“Like” the African Studies Program on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/CollegeOfCharlestonAfricanStudiesProgram](https://www.facebook.com/CollegeOfCharlestonAfricanStudiesProgram)