

This syllabus contains important information. Read it carefully and keep it. When there are changes in readings, they will be announced in both lectures and MyUB.



Political Science 370: African Politics
Spring 2013, Tuesday-Thursday 2-3:20, Talbert 115

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This course introduces politics in the continent of Africa as a whole, with primary but not exclusive attention on tropical Africa. The cultural, economic and historic contexts will be examined, to determine their impact on political attitudes and change. No prior knowledge of Africa is necessary for success in this course. However, without attending lectures regularly and careful reading of the assigned readings, a good grade will be nearly impossible to achieve. So the recipe is plain: come, participate, read carefully, and be certain your writing is up to speed.

Learning objectives and expected outcomes

1. Identify important linkages about civilizations from 1000 CE to the present	Written exam and oral participation
2. Describe key transformations in Africa in these areas: a. Technology b. Communications c. Food stuffs d. Medicine e. Core belief systems f. Global commerce and Africa, from pre-slavery to the present	Written exam
3. Describe common perceptions in Africa of transformations as they occurred	Written exam and class discussion
4. Compare and contrast the benefits and consequences of change	Written exam and class discussion
5. Evaluate the impact of these transformations on a) individual African societies; b) ethnic, regional and linguistic blocs; and c) the formation of "global society"	Written exam and class discussion

In addition, this course will promote your ability to

• Research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting	Term report and biweekly media
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details	reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proficiency in oral discourse 	Class discussion and responses to questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate an oral presentation according to established criteria 	Class discussion and responses to questions

Readings

Required texts (available in the University Bookstore):

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* and *A Man of the People* (novels)
- Peter J. Schraeder, *African Politics and Society* (**second** edition; textbook; paperback available)

Articles on reserve (either via the UB libraries system or on the website – see below for details.

Grading policy

General grading policy:

All examinations and reports will be graded numerically, with the numbers then used for APPROXIMATE letter grades. The cut-off points on exams will be announced, and are intended to give you a sense of where you stand. These cut-off points will be determined for each examination. However, the **final** determination of grades rests with the instructor, including division points between (say) B- and C+. Presuming full attention, attendance, appropriate participation and regular study on your part, you should be able to get a good grade.

Exam policy: Two hour exams and the final will be given at roughly equal points during the semester. See dates below. Each *hour exam* will count **20 percent** of the final grade, and will cover material emphasized since the start of the course or the previous test. The *final exam* will be given in two parts, an in-class section and a take-home section, due approximately one week later. **It is worth 30 points.**

Periodic reports: Approximately every **three** weeks, starting on **Tuesday, January 29**, you must submit a one-page double-spaced summary and commentary on a significant issue in contemporary Africa, mention of which has appeared in a major news source (e.g. the BBC, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*). The specific due dates are **1/29, 2/12, 3/05** and **4/16**. Detailed guidelines will be placed in course documents. **These assignments must be submitted via UBLearn, using the SafeAssign option.** A separate folder will be provided for each report. They will be graded as Honors, Pass, or Needs Improvement. **These reports count for 15% of your final grade.**

Term report: You are also required to prepare a four-page report on an African country or topic especially appropriate for Africa *not* covered in the course. The paper must be submitted via SafeAssign **no later than midnight April 2nd**. A random draw of states and/or issues will be held in class the week before spring break, so that you can get started on your paper. **This report counts 15% of your final grade. It must be submitted via UBLearn, using the SafeAssign option.** Additional information about the report can be found on the course website.

Extra credit: Persons who wish to do so may complete additional work *as approved by the instructor* or *answer questions posed in question class specifically for additional points*. More details will be discussed in class and posted on UBLearn.

General expectations

Academic integrity: Central to this course—and indeed to all University-level education—is the expectation of academic integrity. You are expected to submit *only* written work you have completed by yourself. Yes, it's OK (and even advisable) to study with others, but when you write, it must be your own product. All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's academic integrity policies, available in the Undergraduate Catalog <http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml>.

Plagiarism detection software will be used by me or the institution to aid in determining the originality of student work.

Disabilities: Any student with a diagnosed physical, learning or psychological disability which impedes his or her carrying out required course work, or which requires accommodations such as readers or extended time on examinations and/or assignments, MUST register with the Office of Accessibility Services and advise me *during the first two weeks of the course* so we can review possible reasonable arrangements. Such discussions are totally confidential.

E-mail policy: Every semester, especially at the beginning, end, and around test or paper time, a large number of students try to get in touch with me. Here are some important considerations, to ensure that any e-mail message you might need to have answered is actually read AND responded to.

- I get ~100 messages per day, including large amounts of spam. Hence, I almost automatically delete notes coming from persons I don't know or can't identify from the *user name* or *subject line*. Therefore, use your UB address if possible and ensure that the *subject line* clearly mentions *PSC370* and your *purpose of writing*. Send a copy to the TA as well for all matters *except* those of a deeply personal nature. (In such cases, please don't mention them in an e-mail that might mistakenly become public.) Also, if you have an address with a commercial server such as Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo, be sure to set up automatic forwarding from your UB address to it.
- Don't expect immediate responses—or indeed any at all. I may answer in class or via My UB, especially if several students raise essentially similar questions. Because of other responsibilities, I cannot respond to e-mail every day, including weekends.
- If you have a problem, it's often best to suggest alternative solutions in the message. For example, if you need to see me or the TA outside our regular office hours, indicate specifically when you are available.
- Come to office hours if you have problems—that's why the TA and I have scheduled them. Do NOT expect we will be readily available at other times, because we have many duties as well, unless you've made different arrangements (see above).
- Telephone or face-to-face contact is often better, in terms of speed and setting an appointment with me outside office hours, than a (relatively) anonymous electronic note.

Personal responsibilities

Out of courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones, instant messengers and pagers *before* class; ditto for taking care of personal hygiene and nutrition needs.

Lectures: PowerPoint presentations will be used for most classes. Be sure to take notes on not only the *main* points, but also the supportive material.

Approximate schedule of lectures (dates and topics subject to change)

Dates	Lecture topics	Required readings
1/15-1/17	General background; geography, pre-colonial social structures	Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> ; Cohen; Herbst [library reserve]; Schraeder, Chaps 1 & 2
1/22	Colonialism	Herbst, 58-96 [UBLearns]; Schraeder, Chap 3
1/24	African nationalism	Schraeder, Chap 4
1/29	Ethnicity and class	Schraeder, Chap 5
1/31-2/05	Northeast Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia)	Thomson, 'Somalia' [UBLearns]; other reading TBA.
2/01	Film, 'Tsotsi'	<i>This film is an excellent depiction of urban life in South Africa, made in 2005. Try to attend if possible. 17</i>

2/07-2/12 East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) **Norton, 5-7:30 p.m. Discussion will be encouraged.** Kelsall; *Economist*, 'Kibaki vs. Odinga' [library reserve]; Thomson, 'Tanzania' and 'Uganda' [UBLearns]; other readings may be assigned.

2/14 Hour exam #1
 2/19-2/28- Southern Africa (South Africa, ex-Portuguese); Zimbabwe **Readings:** Hunter-Gault, 'Violated Hopes' [library reserve]; others will be assigned.

3/05-3/07 Central Africa (DRC, Great Lakes area) DesForges, 'Ideology of Genocide'; Thomson, 'DRC' [UBLearns]; other readings may be assigned.

*****Random draw for extended term report March 5th*****

3/12-3/26 West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, others) Achebe, *A Man of the People*; MacLean, "Mediating Ethnic Conflict at the Grassroots" [library reserve]; Thomson, 'Ghana,' 'Ivory Coast' and 'Nigeria' [UBLearns]; other readings will be assigned

→Spring break, 3/11-3/17←

3/29 Hour exam #2

→Extended term report due 4/02←

4/02-4/04 North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco) <http://blogs.cfr.org/coleman/2012/10/04/meeting-salafists-in-tunisia/>; Masoud, 'Egypt' [UBLearns; multiple parts].

4/09 and 4/11 Problems of democracy Schraeder Chaps 8-10.
 4/11 or 4/16 African novels and cinema Schraeder Chap. 7; 'Nollywood Dreams' [library reserve]

4/16? Environmental issues -- **tentative** DeWaal and Whiteside [library reserve] – *note: in the interests of time, this may be combined with other lectures*

4/16 or 4/18 Human rights in Africa Singer; Welch, 'Protecting human rights in Africa'
 4/23 Foreign policy and Africa in the world Schraeder Chaps 11 and 12

4/25 Final examination, Part I **Note: the in-class part will be supplemented by a take-home section, due a few days later**

Personal reflections

Above all, I hope you finish this course with knowledge and understanding about Africa that you can use for many years to come. PSC 370 is intended to kindle interest and build a basis for further understanding.

Many of you are seniors, thinking about the next stage in life. Among the best opportunities you have are Fulbright grants (many of which are available for Africa) or the Peace Corps (ditto). Announcements about the Fulbright program will be made available on the course website. I urge you to search the Peace Corps website (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>) for details.

Everyone is required to consult a major international newspaper on a daily basis. (Obviously, this will help you in preparing your media reports.) Examples include the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Times of London*, *The Independent*, or *The Guardian* (these last three are British), *The Times of India*, *The Globalist*, or *The Economist*. An excellent portal can be found at <http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/>. I also recommend (for readers of other languages) *Le Monde*, or *El País* on a daily basis; questions may be posed from these publications, as parts of the scheduled tests. You should be able to find their websites easily. An excellent source for overseas publications is www.watchingamerica.com. For TV newscasts, check www.worldfocus.org.] I also strongly urge you to listen to the BBC news <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>) or to NPR (WBFO, 88.7 FM; www.wbfo.org) on your drives to and from campus. **Note:** Each examination will include current events questions, *not* answerable simply by watching the ‘Daily Show.’

And, finally, there are several opportunities to help our global community and become engaging citizens of the world. Below is a list of suggested organizations, those at the **right** at no cost to you and those at the **left** with lots of information and the chance to make minimal monetary donations, which are available online. Keep in mind, local Western NY charities, foundations and organizations are also eager for young, brilliant members of our community to be involved. **These suggestions are entirely up to one’s own discretion and have no influence on the course grade.**

<p>Looking for contributions http://hrw.org (Human Rights Watch) http://amnesty.org (Amnesty International) www.doctorswithoutborders.org www.redcross.org (International Red Cross) www.oxfam.org</p>	<p>No cost for giving www.thebreastcancersite.com www.thehungersite.com www.freerice.org www.thechildhealthsite.com <i>Your ideas and suggestions?</i></p>
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I look forward to learning together with you during the semester. Welcome aboard! And, finally, remember that **“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies.”** – [Groucho] Marx