

MIT DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLITICAL SCIENCE 17.571: AFRICAN POLITICS

Prof. Daniel Posner
E53-455
(617) 324-4823
posner@mit.edu

Fall 2012
Mon, Weds: 11am-12:30pm
E53-438
Office Hours: by appointment

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the major issues, themes and theories in the politics of contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa. The course begins by reviewing the nature and legacies of colonial rule and the politics of independence. From there, we move to the character of the contemporary African state, highlighting its personalism, clientelism and corruption, and the responses that these characteristics generate within African societies. Then, the course turns to the politics of ethnicity, addressing how communal ties serve as bases for political mobilization and social organization. From there, the course analyzes the causes and consequences of the wave of political and economic liberalization that began in the early 1990s. We explore the reasons for the region's economic stagnation, its current resurgence, and the domestic and international politics of economic reform. The course concludes with a look at two of the continent's most pressing current issues—China's growing role in Africa and civil war—and then discusses what the future may hold for the region.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is taught in two lectures each week, on Monday and Wednesday from 11:00am to 12:30pm in E53-438. Attendance at lectures is mandatory.

Students are required to take a mid-term and a final exam. In addition to the regular course readings listed on the syllabus, students will read Chinua Achebe's novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, and write a short (10-12 page) paper relating the novel to the themes of the course. In addition, students will be required to take a map test during the semester's second week. The relative weights accorded to these four requirements are as follows: midterm (30%), paper (25%), final (40%), map test (5%). [Note: to aid you in studying for the map test, I highly recommend any of the websites you will find if you Google "Africa map quiz."]

The course involves a heavy reading load, the completion of which is essential to understanding the issues and controversies addressed in the lectures. Copies of all the readings except the three books that we read in their entirety are posted on Stellar and may be downloaded and printed for your own use. The three required books—Chinua Achebe's novels *Anthills of the Savannah* and *No Longer at Ease* and Steven Radelet's *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries are Leading the Way*—have been ordered at the MIT COOP. Copies are also on reserve at the MIT library.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Sept 5: *Introduction*

Richard Dowden, "Africa is a Night Flight Away: Images and Realities," in *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles* (London: Portobello Books, 2008), ch. 1.

WEEK 2

Sept 10: *The "Scramble for Africa" and the Nature of Colonial Rule*

Thomas Pakenham, "Introduction," in *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. xxi-xxiii.

Jeffrey Herbst, "The Europeans and the African Problem," in *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), ch. 3.

Sept 12: *The Legacy of Colonialism*

Peter Ekeh, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (Jan 1975), pp. 91-112.

Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998), ch. 4.

WEEK 3

Sept 17: *National Independence Movements*

Peter J. Schraeder, "Nationalism and the Emergence of the Contemporary Independence Era," *African Politics and Society* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), ch. 6.

Martin Meredith, "L'Afrique Noir" and "Winds of Change" in *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), chs. 4 and 5.

Robert Bates, "The Commercialization of Agriculture and the Rise of Rural Political Protest," in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ch. 4.

Sept 19: *The Centralization of Authority and the Rise of Personal Rule*

Todd Moss, "Big Men, Personal Rule and Patronage Politics," in *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), ch. 3.

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, "W(h)ither the State?" and "Recycled Elites," in *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), chs. 1 and 3.

Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, "The Patrimonial State and Personal Rule," in *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), ch. 6.

WEEK 4

Sept 24: *The Social Origins of Clientelism*

James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), ch. 1.

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease* (London: Heinemann, 1960).

Sept 26: NO CLASS: YOM KIPPUR

WEEK 5

Oct 1: Movie: Mandabi

Oct 3: *State Capacity and State Decay*

Martin Meredith, "The Slippery Slope" in *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), ch. 16.

"The Road to Hell is Unpaved," *The Economist*, 21 December 2002.

"Africa's Storied Colleges, Jammed and Crumbling," *New York Times* 20 May 2007.

Uwem Akpan, "Baptizing the Gun," *The New Yorker* 4 January 2010.

WEEK 6

Oct 8: NO CLASS: COLUMBUS DAY

Oct 10: *The State in Africa: Agricultural Policy*

Robert Bates, "The Nature and Origins of Agricultural Policies in Africa," in *Essays on the Political Economy of Rural Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ch. 5.

WEEK 7

Oct 15: *Disengagement from the State*

Victor Azarya and Naomi Chazan, "Disengagement from the State in Africa: Reflections on the Experience of Ghana and Guinea," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987), pp. 106-31.

George Packer, "How Susie Bayer's T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama's Back," *New York Times Magazine*, 31 March 2002.

"Kenya Losing Needed MDs as Low Pay Causes Flight," *New York Times*, 7 October 2001.

"Africans Fill Churches that Celebrate Wealth," *New York Times*, 13 March 2002.

Oct 17: *Ethnicity in Africa*

Blaine Harden, "Battle for the Body," in *Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), ch. 3.

Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (November): 529-545.

WEEK 8

Oct 22: *Ethnic Voting*

Daniel Posner, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Politics in Zambia," *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 4.

Elizabeth Carlson, "Great Expectations: Explaining Ugandan Voters' Ethnic Preferences," unpublished paper (February 2012).

Oct 24: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 9

Oct 29: *Political Change in Africa in the 1990s*

Martin Meredith, "The Struggle for Democracy" in *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), ch. 23.

Robert Bates, "The Economic Bases of Democratization," in Richard Joseph, ed., *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), pp. 83-94.

Oct 31: "*Democracy*" in *Africa*

Larry Diamond, "The Rule of Law versus the Big Man," *Journal of Democracy* 19 (April 2008), pp. 138-149.

Daniel Posner and Daniel Young, "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 18 (July 2007), pp. 126-140.

WEEK 10

Nov 5: *Elections in Contemporary Africa*

Staffan Lindberg, "What Accountability Pressures do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, 1 (2010), pp. 117-142.

Eric Kramon, "Why Do Politicians Buy Votes When the Ballot is Secret? Theory and Experimental Evidence from Kenya," unpublished paper (February 2012).

Nov 7: *Explaining Slow Economic Growth in Africa*

Martin Meredith, "The Lost Decade" in *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), ch. 22.

Todd Moss, "Africa's Slow Growth Puzzle," in *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), ch. 6.

Paul Collier, "The Natural Resource Trap" and "Landlocked with Bad Neighbors," in *The Bottom Billion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chs. 3 and 4.

WEEK 11

Nov 12: NO CLASS: VETERANS DAY

Nov 14: *Why Did (Do?) African Leaders Choose Growth Killing Policies?*

Nicolas van de Walle, "Approaches to Africa's Permanent Crisis," in *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press), ch 1.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, "Economic Backwardness in Political Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 100 (February 2006), pp. 115-131.

WEEK 12

Nov 19: *The Domestic Politics of Economic Reform in Africa*

Todd Moss, "Economic Reform and the Politics of Adjustment," in *African Development: Making Sense of the Issues and Actors* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), ch. 7.

- Nicolas van de Walle, "Patterns of Reform Implementation, 1979-1999," in *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press), ch. 2.
Blaine Harden, "Eye of the Family," in *Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), ch. 2.

Nov 21: Film: *Our Friends at the Bank*

WEEK 13

- Nov 26: *The International Politics of Economic Reform in Africa: Aid*
William Easterly, "Can the West Save Africa?" *Journal of Economic Literature* 47 (June 2009), pp. 373-447.
- Nov 28: *Development Interventions in Africa*
Jean Ensminger, "Getting to the Bottom of Corruption: A Case Study in Community Driven Development (CDD)," unpublished manuscript, 2007.
Michael Kremer and Edward Miguel, "The Illusion of Sustainability," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112 (August 2007), pp. 1007-1065.

WEEK 14

- Dec 3: *China's Growing Role in Africa*
Dennis Tull, "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance, and Consequences," in John Harbeson and Donald Rothchild, eds. *Africa in World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), ch. 13.
Deborah Brautigam and Tang Xiaoyang, "African Shenzhen: China's Special Economic Zones in Africa," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 49, 1 (2011), pp. 27-54.
- Dec 5: *Civil Wars in Africa*
Martin Meredith, "Where Vultures Fly" and "Blood Diamonds" in *The Fate of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), chs 28 and 29.
Jon Lee Anderson, "Letter from Angola: Oil and Blood," *The New Yorker*, 14 August 2000, pp. 46-59.
Paul Collier, "The Conflict Trap" in *The Bottom Billion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), ch 2.

WEEK 15

- Dec 10: *What Does the Future Hold for Africa? I*
Edward Miguel, "Is it Africa's Turn?" and responses by Robert Bates, Ken Banks, David Weil, Jeremy Weinstein, Smita Singh, Paul Collier, and Rachel Glennerster, *Boston Review* (May-June 2008).
Richard Dowden, "Phones, Asians and the Professionals: The New Africa," in *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles* (London: Portobello Books, 2008), ch. 18.
- Dec 12: *What Does the Future Hold for Africa? II*
Steven Radelet, *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries are Leading the Way* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2010).



Map No. 4045 Rev. 7 UNITED NATIONS
November 2011

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section