This course has two purposes: to introduce students to some of the major arguments, hypotheses and debates in the literature on African politics and development, and to help students develop the skills to become both more intelligent consumers and more effective producers of this literature. To accomplish these goals, intense discussions of an extensive set of readings will be combined with a series of written assignments designed to help students develop research strategies to evaluate the hypotheses they encounter in the literature and that their reading of the literature, and general immersion in the politics and society of the region, generates in their own minds. Throughout these exercises, and in our seminar discussions, we will pay special attention to the particular difficulties—and opportunities—of doing research in a developing country setting such as Africa.

The readings for the seminar take up a set of key issues in African politics, economy, and society. The topics covered are not intended to be exhaustive but to emphasize either key foundational issues (e.g., colonialism and its impact; the weakness of political institutions and the implications of this weakness for policymaking and growth outcomes; the role of ethnicity; the nature of African “democracy”) or areas of particularly interesting current research. To this end, the readings are a mix of “classic” articles and very recent work that exemplifies the “cutting edge.”

The course is designed principally for UCLA Political Science Ph.D. students who focus their research on Africa and/or other parts of the developing world. Ph.D. and M.A. students from other social science departments are also welcome if space permits. Non-social science M.A. students should consult with the instructor before enrolling in the course.

REQUIREMENTS

There are three requirements for the course. First, students are required to attend all class meetings, come to seminar having read and thought about the assigned materials for the week, and participate actively in class discussions.

Second, all students are required to prepare three 1-2 page research design memos (one during weeks 2-4; one during weeks 5-7; and one during weeks 8-10). The memos will take a theory or hypothesis introduced in (or related to) the week’s readings and describe how one might go about collecting the appropriate evidence to test it, or one of its central observable implications. A detailed set of instructions for the research design memos will be distributed and discussed during the first seminar meeting. The memos will be due at noon each Wednesday (the day before the seminar), with copies posted to the class website. All students are expected come to class having read the memos of their colleagues, as well as the assigned readings.
The third requirement is a 15-20 page research paper that identifies variation in an important outcome of interest in Africa (not necessarily one that we have focused on in the course, although it may be), proposes a hypothesis/argument to account for that variation, and outlines a research strategy that would provide an empirical test of that hypothesis/argument. The paper is due at 5pm on December 15. This assignment should be thought of as a substantive research proposal rather than a data collection and analysis project, although proposals must include a data analytic component in demonstrating the variation they wish to explain. All students will meet with the instructor at some point before week 7 to discuss their paper topics.

The weight accorded these three assignments will be as follows: participation in seminar discussions (25%), research memos (45%), and finished research paper (30%).

READINGS

The readings for each week are extensive. They were selected because they are considered classic, because they develop useful analytical concepts or engage in important theoretical debates, or because they represent particularly good examples of recent social science research on the topic in question. Taken together, they constitute a useful, though far from complete or comprehensive, introduction to some of the theories and issues that make up the “canonical” literature on African political and economic development, and some of the approaches that scholars have adopted in recent years to study them.

Copies of all seminar readings have been posted to the course website with the exception of Robert Bates’ *Markets and States in Tropical Africa* (which we read in its entirety), James Ferguson’s *The Anti-Politics Machine*, and Nicolas van de Walle’s *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis* (both of which we read more than half of). All three of these books are readily available from Amazon.com and other online and local booksellers.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

If this is your first Africa course, you might want to read Martin Meredith’s book, *The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005) as a way of bringing yourself up to speed. The book offers an excellent introductory overview of Africa and its history and provides a useful contextual background for the more theoretically-and methodologically- oriented readings that we will engage in the seminar.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**October 2: Logistics and Overview of the Course; the Biogeographic and Historical Context**


**October 9: Colonialism and its Legacy**


**October 16: The State in Africa: Personalism and Patrimonialism**

October 23: Why Did (Do?) African Leaders Choose Growth-Killing Policies?


October 30: Elections, Legislaturess, and “Democracy” in Africa


November 6: Ethnic Voting in Africa


November 13: Ethnic Diversity in Africa


November 20: Distributive Politics in Kenya


November 27: THANKSGIVING; NO CLASS

December 3: What Have We Learned from the Afrobarometer? [NOTE SPECIAL WEDNESDAY MEETING]


Afrobarometer, Round 6 Survey Manual (May 2014). [read “Section 5: Sampling”; skim the rest]

Afrobarometer, Round 5 Questionnaire for Zambia (2013). [for reference]


**December 11: Development Assistance in Africa**

Ferguson, James. 1984. *The Anti-Politics Machine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): chs 1-3, 6, 9 (pp. 251-256 only) and Epilogue.