

Political Science 391
African Political Systems
Prof. Griffiths
Spring 2016

Africa's recent economic gains and its booming population have focused attention on the continent's role in the world. Those factors, combined with Africa's growing strategic importance, have sharpened the focus on the continent's politics, security, and economy. This course examines the major issues facing sub-Saharan Africa including the political and economic legacy of colonialism, post-independence patterns of politics, conflict and humanitarian crises, the challenge of development and the implications of these problems for democratic reform and economic prosperity. The emphasis is on understanding the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa in the context of Africa's history, political culture, and its role in the world.

After completing the course, students will be able to do the following:

- understand the impact of colonialism on Africa
- discuss the consolidation of state power during the independence era and its implications
- identify the patterns of politics in the post-independence era
- analyze the connection between Africa's historical experience and current circumstances on the continent
- assess Africa's prospects for stability and democracy

Contact Information: My office is in 322 Curry. Office Hours- 10:00-11:00 TTh and by appointment. My office phone number is 256-0518 and my email address is rjgriffi@uncg.edu.

Class Format and Expectations: The class format will be a combination of lecture and discussion with an emphasis on discussion. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. The reading will consist of a basic text as well as fiction and non-fiction. There will also be additional readings posted on Canvas. Readings will be supplemented by films and video to gain a better understanding of contemporary Africa. Class attendance is **essential**. I expect you to arrive for class on time, stay awake, and to stay for the entire class. You should only leave class for emergencies; wandering in and out of class is distracting. Class discussion should be governed by civility and respect for different points of view.

Policy on electronic devices: The use of electronic devices is strictly prohibited in class. This includes laptop computers. All phones and computers must be turned off and put away before class. Using your phone or computer in class will cost you five points off your final grade for the first infraction, ten for the second. If you leave class to check your phone, don't bother coming back. If you cannot disconnect from your phone or computer for the duration of class, you should not take this class.

Texts- *An Introduction to African Politics*, 3rd Edition by Alex Thomson; *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe; *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Oligarchs, Smugglers, and the Theft of Africa's Wealth*, by Tom Burgis. There will also be some additional readings posted on Canvas. Students are also required to keep up with current events in Africa through internet sources, such as the BBC World Service Africa Page, Al Jazeera's Africa page and AllAfrica.com. Supplements to those sources could include reading *The Economist* or a national daily newspaper such as *The New York Times* on a regular basis.

Requirements- There will be several written assignments throughout the semester. Each student will be required to prepare a 15-page research paper on a **current** African topic of their choice. The topics should be cleared with me before beginning the research. This should take place no later than 1/26/2016. A 2-page proposal/draft introduction with a thesis and a preliminary annotated bibliography of at least 5 sources will be due 2/2/2016. A first draft of the paper will be due 3/3/2016. The final draft will be due 4/7/2016. There will also be shorter writing assignments such as a summary/analysis of the readings and videos. Details of these assignments will be posted on Canvas. Finally, there will also be a take-home final exam, due during the scheduled final exam period on 4/28 from 12-3 PM. Exams will not be accepted after that time. Late written assignments will be penalized 2 points per day and no assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. Electronic submissions of assignments will not be accepted except under extenuating circumstances. Class participation is encouraged and can help your final grade.

Grading- I grade on a ten-point scale. The weight of the assignments will be as follows:

Intro/Proposal- 10%

Paper- 30%

Summaries/Reviews/Critiques/Abstracts- 30%

Final Essay- 30%

Readings and Assignments- Dates are approximate.

- 1/14- Introduction. Thomson, chap. 1, pages 8-11; Achebe, part 1.
- 1/19-1/21- History and Colonialism. Achebe, part 2,3.
- 1/26- Review of *Things Fall Apart* due. Discussion of *Things Fall Apart*.
- 1/28-Decolonization and Independence. Thomson, chap. 1, pg. 12-28, chap. 8, pg. 155-165.
- 2/2- Film: Lumumba.
- 2/4- Review of Lumumba due. Class Discussion.
- 2/9-2/11 Ethnicity and Identity. Thomson, chap. 4.
- 2/16- Ideology and Class. Thomson, chap. 3, 5.
- 2/18-2/23- Patterns of Politics. Thomson, chap. 6.
- 2/25- The Military and Politics. Thomson, chap. 7.
- 3/1- Crisis of the State. Thomson, chap. 10.
- 3/3- Democratization. Thomson, chap. 11.
- 3/15- Film: South Africa. Review due 3/22.
- 3/17- The New South Africa. Readings to be posted
- 3/22-3/24- Conflict, Instability, & Security- Reading to be posted.

- 3/29- Political Economy. Thomson, chap. 9.
- 3/31- Africa's International Relations. Thomson, chap. 8, pages 165-183.
- 4/5- The Resource Curse. Burgis, Introduction, chap. 1-5.
- 4/7- Resource Curse-Part II. Burgis, chapters 6-10, Epilogue.
- 4/12- Africa's Development. Reading to be posted.
- 4/14- The Role of Women in Africa. Reading to be posted
- 4/19- Africa and the Environment. Reading to be posted.
- 4/21-Prospects for Africa's Future. Steven Radelet, "Challenges and Opportunities on the Road Ahead," posted on Canvas.