Political Economy of Africa

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Course description: Political and economic developments in Africa since the end of the Cold War have both vindicated and belied Robert Kaplan’s famous prediction of a “coming anarchy” in the region. Drawing on the rich social science literature on the political economy of contemporary Africa, the course will address a set of critical questions that will have important implications for the well-being of the people of the continent and the world in the twenty-first century. The central questions we will address are: What were the sources of the political and economic crisis that gripped Africa in the 1980s and 1990s? What has been the net impact of the massive international intervention in the continent that ensued in the wake of the crises? What explains the recent revival of democracy and growth in some parts of the continent? Will the revival of democracy and economic growth last?

Textbook:

Please note: Copies of this textbook (henceforth Thomson) are available for purchase from the university bookstore. All other reading materials will be available electronically through Blackboard. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, but you will be notified of any changes well in advance.

The requirements for this course include two mid-semester examinations, one end-semester examination, and active and informed class participation based on thoughtful examination of the required readings prior to coming to class. You also have the option of writing an original essay of 8-10 pages applying the concepts learned in the course. If you do choose to write the essay, you must submit a draft proposal of 2-3 pages before the second mid-semester exam. The essay will be due the last day of class. LATE ESSAYS WILL BE GIVEN A LOWER GRADE: one/third letter grade per day late. Example: An “A” paper two days late will drop to a “B+”. Incompletes are not allowed.
Please note, given the emphasis on class participation, regular attendance is expected. More than 2 unexcused absences might affect your class participation grade by half a letter grade. More than 5 accumulated absences will result in 0% for the class participation portion of your overall grade. **Excused absences** require documentation such as a note from your advisor or the clinic.

**Academic Honesty:** A plagiarized paper will not receive any points. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and sanctions determined by the University’s Academic Honesty board.

**Grading:**
Participation – 10%
First Midterm Exam – 25%
Second Midterm Exam – 25%
Final Exam – 40%

For students who take the essay option, the final grade will be calculated as follows:
Participation 10%, First Mid-Semester Exam 20%, Second Mid-Semester Exam 20%, Essay 15 %, End-Semester Exam 35%.

**Classroom Etiquette:** You deserve a Professor who does not read his newspaper, listen to his I-pod, answer his cell-phone, use his laptop to access Facebook or otherwise demonstrate a lack of respect for you during class discussion and lectures. Your Professor deserves students who demonstrate the same level of respect.

**Course Calendar:**

**January 19:** Introduction

**Pre-colonial and colonial inheritance**

**January 24:**
Read:
*Thomson*, Ch. 2.
Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2004, Introduction, Ch. 3 & Ch. 5. [E-link available through Voyager]

**January 26:**
Read:
Ideology

January 31:
Read: Thomson, Ch. 3.

Feb 2:

Feb 7: Ethnicity and Religion I
Read: Thomson, Ch. 4.

Feb 9:

Ethnicity and Religion II

Feb 14:

Feb 16:

Social Class

February 21:
Read: Thomson, Ch. 5.

**Legitimacy**

**February 23:**
Read:
Thomson, Ch. 6.

**February 28:** Review

**March 2:** Mid-Semester Exam

**Coercion**

**March 7:**
Read:
Thomson, Ch. 7.
Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, University of California Press, 1985, Ch. 11.

**March 9:**
Read:

**March 14:** Spring Break

**March 16:** Spring Break

**Sovereignty I**

**March 21:**
Read:
Thomson, Ch. 8.

**March 23:**
Read:
Sovereignty II

March 28:
Read:
*Thomson*, Ch. 9

March 30:
Watch:
*Bamako*
Read:

Authority I

April 3:
Read:
*Thomson*, Ch. 10.

April 5:
Read:

April 10: Review

April 12: Second Mid-term

Authority II

April 17:
Read:
April 19:
Read:

Democracy and Economic Growth

April 24:
Read:
*Thomson*, Ch. 11.

April 26:
Watch:
*Africa Paradis*
Read:

May 1: Review