

Government 94PI: Politics of Development in Africa Fall 2017, CGIS Knafel 401, Wednesday, 2-4 pm

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Office Hours: (Tentative) Monday, 11 am – 12 pm and Wednesday, 4-5 pm

Course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/31118>

Introductory session: August 30, 11 am-12 pm, CGIS K262

Preliminary syllabus – contents may change (September 3, 2017)

Course description

This seminar is an introduction to the politics and political economy of development in modern Africa. Topics include the legacies of colonial rule, state formation, state failure and conflict, democratization and democratic erosion, corruption and political accountability, and the role of foreign aid. Readings draw from comparative politics, political economy, history, geography, and development economics. The course puts an emphasis on research design and evaluating causal claims.

Course Aims and Objectives

In this course, we will tackle the big questions of political development, using different examples from Sub-Saharan Africa as our case studies. Particular emphasis is put on governance challenges in modern Africa. We will read a mix of classic theories on African politics, cutting edge research articles, and journalistic accounts.

The goal is to learn about specific cases, develop a nuanced understanding of political development in Africa as well as the promises and pitfalls of proposed solutions, learn practical tools for assessing the effectiveness of different interventions, and to walk away with an appreciation for the complexities of development.

Performance will be evaluated on the basis of comprehension of and critical engagement with the reading materials, active participation in class, and writing.

Course Policies and Expectations

You are expected to have read all required readings before class and to actively engage in classroom discussions. You should come prepared to defend or question arguments presented in the readings. Take notes as you read and bring any questions you have on the readings to class. Clarifying questions as well as well-documented counterarguments – from other classes or readings you have done outside of class – are welcome and encouraged. This being an advanced seminar, regular attendance is non-negotiable. If you have a valid reason to miss a class (with prior excuse) you need to submit a response essay about the material covered in the missed class,

due by the beginning of the following class. This essay will count toward your total submissions of response essays.

Materials and Access

We will read most or all of two books, so you should purchase them:

- Moss, Todd, 2007. *African Development. Making Sense of the Issues and Actors.*
- Wrong, Michela, 2009. *It's Our Turn to Eat. The Story of a Kenyan Whistleblower.*

Articles can be accessed through the links on this syllabus from campus and book chapters will be available on Canvas.

Assignments and Grading Procedures

This is a writing intensive class. Grades will be composed of:

- Participation and map quiz: 20%
- Response essays: 20%
- Book report: 25%
- Final paper: 35%

Participation: You are expected to attend all classes and to actively participate in the discussion of the readings.

Map quiz: You will be asked to identify ten countries on a blank map of Africa. [Here](#) is a good study tool.

Response essays: The purpose of these essays is to synthesize the week's readings succinctly and to use them to respond to the question posed each week on the syllabus. Synthesizing large quantities of information and writing concisely is one of the most important skills you can learn in college. Response essays should be no longer than two pages (1 inch margins, 12 point font, double-spaced). Bibliographies can be included on a third page. You can write up to three response essays, the best two will be considered for your grade. Response essays are due by Tuesday night of the relevant week since I may refer to them in class.

Book report: You will write a book report on Michela Wrong's "It's Our Turn to Eat". Book reports should be no longer than 4 pages (1 inch margins, 12 point font, double-spaced). Bibliographies can be included on a fifth page. The report must have an argumentative thesis, which is supported by evidence from the book and secondary sources. Questions for the book report will be posted in advance on the course website.

Final paper: You will write one long research paper, due at the end of the semester. The paper is due in two parts, a two-page outline summarizing your argument and the evidence you plan to present (due November 1), and the final paper (20 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins; due in early December, exact date TBA). You will be given a choice between three different paper topics.

All written assignments should be submitted through the course website. Late submissions will be reflected in the grade. Response essays will not be accepted after the beginning of class.

Collaboration and academic integrity policy

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. After all, one key objective of the course is for you to develop your own arguments and practice your writing and critical thinking. You must adhere to the standard citation practices in Political Science and clearly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, speeches etc. that have helped you with your work. If you receive help with your writing, such as for example feedback on drafts, you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Technology policy

Given mounting evidence of the [benefits of taking notes by hand](#) and the distraction laptops tend to offer, I encourage you to use pen and paper. I do not forbid the use of laptops, but they should be strictly used for note taking and referencing reading material. Internet should be switched off during class. If laptops prove too much of a distraction I reserve the right to change this policy. Please put your phones on silent and keep them out of reach during class.

Special accommodations

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to make these arrangements by this date may negatively affect our ability to implement the arrangements on time.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: September 6. Initial conditions

How did pre-colonial political institutions and geography shape today's political and economic development?

Binyavanga Wainaina, 2005. [How to Write About Africa](#). *Granta* 92.

Herbst, Jeffrey, 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. (Chapter 2, Power and Space in Precolonial Africa) (see link on Canvas Syllabus page)

[The Road to Hell is Unpaved](#). *The Economist*, 21 December 2002.

Sachs, Jeffrey D., Andrew D. Mellinger, and John L. Gallup, 2001. [The geography of poverty and wealth](#). *Scientific American*, 284(3), pp. 70-5.

Collier, Paul, 2007. *The Bottom Billion*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. (Chapter 3, The Natural Resource Trap) (see link on Canvas Syllabus page)

Further material:

Adichie, Chimamanda, 2009. [The Danger of a Single Story](#). TED Talk

Michalopoulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou, 2013. [Pre-colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development](#). *Econometrica*.

Week 2: September 13. Legacies of slave trade and colonialism

You can begin submitting response essays.

Through which channels did colonialism and the slave trade weaken modern African states?

Moss, Todd, 2007. *African Development*. (History and the Legacy of Colonialism, Chapter 2)

Herbst, Jeffrey, 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (National Design and the Broadcasting of Power, Chapter 5)

Nunn, Nathan, 2008. [The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades](#). *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Mamdani, Mahmood, 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton University Press. (Decentralized Despotism, Chapter 2)

Week 3: September 20. Ethnicity

Brief map quiz in class

Through which mechanisms does ethnicity shape modern politics and public goods provision? What are the origins of ethnic cleavages?

Posner, Daniel, 2004. [The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi](#). *American Political Science Review*.

Miguel, Edward, 2004. [Tribe or Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods Provision in Kenya versus Tanzania](#). *World Politics*, 56, pp. 327-62.

Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner and Jeremy Weinstein, 2007. [Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?](#) *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), pp. 709-725

Ichino, Nahomi and Noah Nathan, 2013. [Crossing the Line: Local Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana](#). *American Political Science Review*, 107(2), pp. 344-361.

Further reading:

Kasara, Kimuli, 2017. [Does Local Ethnic Segregation Lead to Violence? Evidence from Kenya](#). *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

Robinson, A.L., 2014. [National versus Ethnic Identification in Africa: Modernization, Colonial Legacy, and the Origins of Territorial Nationalism](#). *World Politics*, 66(4), pp.709-746.

Week 4: September 27. State building, taxation, and accountability

Why are many African states weak? What conditions hampered the formation of social contracts between the rulers and the ruled?

Herbst, Jeffrey, 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (The Challenge of State-Building in Africa, Chapter 1)

Robinson, James A, 2002. [States and Power in Africa by Jeffrey I. Herbst: A Review Essay](#). *Journal of Economic Literature*, 40(2), pp. 510-519.

Herbst, Jeffrey. 1990. [War and the State in Africa](#). *International Security*.

North, Douglass C. and Barry R. Weingast, 1989. [Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England](#). *Journal of Economic History*, 49(4), pp. 803-832.

Week 5: October 4. Democracy vs. dictatorship

Moss, Todd, 2007. *African Development*. (Political Change and Democratization, Chapter 5)

Documentary: [Once Upon a Coup](#), 2009.

Bates, Robert H., John H. Coatsworth, and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 2007. [Lost Decades: Post-independence Performance in Latin America and Africa](#). *The Journal of Economic History*.

Posner, Daniel and Daniel Young. [Term Limits and the Transfer of Power](#). Forthcoming in Nicholas Cheeseman, Ed. *Politics in Africa: The Importance of Institutions*. Cambridge University Press.

Further reading:

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, 2002. An African Success Story: Botswana. In: *In Search of Prosperity: Analytic Narratives on Economic Growth*, ed. D. Rodrik. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 6: October 11. Democratization and institutional development

Under what conditions do elections promote political accountability?

Tripp, Aili Mari, 2010. *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of power in a hybrid regime*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Harding, Robin and David Stasavage, 2013 [What Democracy Does \(and Doesn't Do\) for Basic Services: School Fees, School Inputs, and African Elections](#). *Journal of Politics*, 76(1), pp. 229–245.

Bratton, Michael and Eric C. C. Chang, 2006. [State Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?](#) *Comparative Political Studies* 39, p. 1059.

[Africa: A shrinking space for autocrats](#). Financial Times, January 23, 2017

[Can Burkina Faso — Africa's most coup-prone state — become a stable democracy?](#) Washington Post, September 21, 2015

Week 7: October 18. Patronage and corruption: The Case of Kenya

Book reports due before class

Wrong, Michela, 2009. *It's Our Turn to Eat. The Story of a Kenyan Whistleblower*.

Week 8: October 25. Conflict

Bates, Robert H, 2008. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2)

Roessler, Philip, 2016. *Coup-Civil War Trap*. Cambridge University Press (Introduction, Chapter 1)

Annan, Jeannie and Christopher Blattman, 2016. [Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state](#). *American Political Science Review*, 110(1), pp. 1–17.

Blattman, Christopher and Edward Miguel, 2010. [Civil War](#). *Journal of Economic Literature* 48(1), pp. 3-57 (particularly Section 4: Economic legacies of civil conflict)

Further reading:

Blattman, Christopher, 2009. [From Violence to Voting: War and political participation in Uganda](#). *American Political Science Review*, 103(2), pp. 231-247.

Week 9: November 1. Foreign Aid

Outline for final paper due

What are the main arguments of these critics of foreign aid?

Moss, Todd, 2007. *African Development* (The International Aid System, Chapter 8)

Podcast with Binyavanga Wainaina. [The Ethics of Aid: One Kenyan's Perspective](#) (or see transcript)

Moss, Todd, Gunilla Pettersson, and Nicolas Van de Walle, 2006. [An aid-institutions paradox? A review essay on aid dependency and state building in sub-Saharan Africa](#). *Center for Global Development Working Paper 74*.

Moyo, Dambisa, 2009. *Dead Aid*. Chapter 1: The Myth of Aid, Chapter 2: A Brief History of Aid.

Week 10: November 8. Research Design: How do we know what works?

What are the main arguments in favor and against using field experiments to study development interventions?

Angrist, J.D. and Pischke, J.S., 2008. *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion*. Princeton University Press (Chapter 1)

Dunning, Thad, 2016. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge University Press (Chapter 1)

Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo, 2011. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs (Foreword, Chapters 1-3)

Deaton, Angus, 2010. [Instruments of development: Randomization in the tropics, and the search for the elusive keys to economic development](#). *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48, pp. 424–455.

Further reading:

Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein, 2009. [Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development](#). *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, pp. 367-378.

Fearon, James D., Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy M. Weinstein, 2009. [Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion After Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia](#). *American Economic Review*, 99(2), pp. 287-291.

Week 11: November 15. (How) can governance be improved?

What do Olken and Pande mean by a nested principal-agent relationship? What kinds of interventions have been tested to improve different accountability links? What are their potentials and pitfalls?

Olken, Benjamin A., and Rohini Pande, 2012. [Corruption in Developing Countries](#). *Annual Review of Economics*, 4(1), pp. 479–509.

Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo, 2011. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs. (Policies, Politics, Chapter 10)

Raffler, Pia, 2016. [Does Political Oversight of the Bureaucracy Increase Accountability? Field Experimental Evidence from an Electoral Autocracy](#). Working paper.

Further reading:

Pande, Rohini, 2011. [Can informed voters enforce better governance? Experiments in Low Income Democracies](#). *Annual Review of Economics*, 3(1), pp. 215-237.

Björkman, Martina and Jakob Svensson, 2009. [Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment of Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda](#). *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

November 22: Thanksgiving recess begins

Week 12: November 29. Democracy promotion

Under what conditions, if any, can democracy promotion work?

In-class debate: Should Western countries engage in democracy promotion in Africa?

Migdal, Joel S. 1988. *Strong societies and weak states: State-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton University Press (Chapters 2 and 8)

Carothers, Thomas, 2006. [The backlash against democracy promotion](#). *Foreign Affairs*

Brown, S., 2005. [Foreign aid and democracy promotion: Lessons from Africa](#). *The European Journal of Development Research*, 17(2), pp.179-198.

[How can America really promote democracy abroad?](#) Boston Globe, April 27, 2014

December 2: Reading period begins

Final papers due