POLS 360 (390)
Africa & World Politics

COURSE OBJECTIVES

If you are like most Americans – or indeed most westerners – you know next to nothing about Africa. That’s OK! The first objective of this course is to remedy that. If you have taken other courses that deal with Africa, I hope to add to your understanding by focusing on a select few issues and problems that concern students of African politics. This class will focus largely on contemporary African politics, but no understanding of where Africa is now would be complete without an appreciation of where it’s been. Thus, throughout the course the weight of the past will be present in our deliberations on the current state of African politics, broadly understood.

The principal concerns we address are: the experience and legacy of colonialism and decolonization, the problem of political power (how it is constituted, how it gets exercised, its role in governance and regime change, etc.), and the dynamics of identity (culture, class and ethnicity). We will also explore the contemporary critical issues: development, violent conflict (its prevalence, its origins, and its management), and public health.

GRADES

There are three areas of graded performance.

Reflection papers: At three points in the semester you will be required to submit a 3-5 page essay outlining and commenting critically on the preceding section of reading. The papers will allow me to gauge the level of your comprehension of the reading material. Additionally, there will likely be much in the reading we will not have time to discuss in class. These will be your opportunities to engage with that material. Each paper is worth 10% of the final grade.

Tests: There will be two tests and one final examination. Tests 1 and 2 are worth 15% each. The final examination is worth 25% of the grade.

Participation: This is a requirement. I have no formal attendance policy, but I expect you to come to class, to come prepared to engage with the material (e.g., ask and answer questions related to assigned material). Participation accounts for 15% of the final grade.

Summary:
Reflection Papers 30%
Tests 55%
Participation 15%
READINGS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE

Much of the reading for this class is found posted on the Moodle site. There are, however, four books for you to purchase. They are available at the University Bookstore and, of course, online.

### Instructor: Brett R. O’Bannon

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**Phone:** x4157  

Office **Hours:** by appointment and  

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<th>Days</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 8-27  | Conceiving Africa: Representation and misrepresentation | No class | Achebe, “Africa’s Tarnished Name”  
Young, “A Half Century of Independence: Three Cycles of Hope and Disappointment” |
| 9/1   | Pre-colonial political economy; Colonial governance |         | Film in Class: *Africa, A Voyage of Discovery: The Magnificent Cake*  
I am attending the American Political Science Association Conference |
| 9/8-9/10 | Colonial Governance  
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Nationalism and the discrete impacts of decolonization | Van Allen, “‘Sitting on a Man’: Colonialism and Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women”  
Mamdani “Decentralized Despotism”  
Mamdani, “The Racialization of the Hutu/Tutsi Difference under Colonialism” |
| 9/15-9/17 | Decolonization  
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LeVine “Political Life and Institutions, 1944-1960” | Young, “Decolonization, The Independence Settlement, and Colonial Legacy” (87-121)  
Reflection Paper 1 due (Colonialism / Decolonization) |
| 9/22-9/24 | Politics and the African Novel  
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Test 1 |
| 9/29-10/1 | Seizing the “Political Kingdom” | Young, “The Road to Autocracy”  
Baynham, “Quis Custodiet Ipsos” |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Reading 2</th>
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<td>Joseph, “Class, State and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria”</td>
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<td>Chabal and Daloz, “Whither the State” and “The Illusions of Civil Society”</td>
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<td>10/27-10/29</td>
<td>Class and Ethnicity</td>
<td>Chabal and Daloz, “Recycled Elites” and Young, “Africanism, Nationalism and Ethnicity”</td>
<td>Chabal and Daloz, “Of Masks and Men, The Question of Identity”</td>
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<td>Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference”</td>
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<td>Reflection Paper 2 due (the problem of power)</td>
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<td>11/3-11/5</td>
<td>Political Culture(s) and Politics of the African Novel</td>
<td>Chabal and Daloz, “The Taming of the Irrational: Witchcraft &amp; Religion”</td>
<td>Achebe, A Man of the People</td>
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<td>Achebe, A Man of the People</td>
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<td>11/10-11/12</td>
<td>Critical Issues in Africa (Development)</td>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>Leonard and Strauss, chapters 1-3</td>
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| 11/24      | Conflict        | Leonard and Strauss, “The Causes of Civil Conflict” and “Civil Conflict and Humanitarian Intervention”  
             |                 | Chabal and Daloz, “The Profits of Violence”                                           | Thanksgiving                             |
| 12/1-12/3  | Intervention in African Conflict  
             | Power, “Bystanders to Genocide”  
             |                 | Kioko, “The right of intervention under the African Union’s Constitutive Act: From non-interference to non-intervention”  
             | Mabera and Dunne, “South Africa and the Responsibility to Protect”                     | Boone and Batsell, “Politics and AIDS in Africa”  
             |                 | Patterson, “Democratic Transitions: A New Opportunity to Fight AIDS?”  
             |                 | The Economist “The Hopeless Continent”  
             |                 | The Economist “Africa Rising”  
             |                 | Gordon and Wolpe, “The Other Africa: an End to Afro-Pessimism”  
             |                 | Rieff, “In Defense of Afro Pessimism”                                                 |

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

From the Student Handbook:

“Academic integrity refers to the ethical standards and policies that govern how people work and interact in the academic enterprise at a college or university. These standards and policies attempt to do more than define and condemn what is wrong or unethical; they also attempt to provide a foundation for the mutual trust and individual responsibility necessary in a healthy academic community.….  

Academic integrity is not solely the responsibility of students. Rather, faculty members and administrators have the responsibility of creating an environment in which honesty is encouraged, dishonesty discouraged and integrity is openly discussed.”

From Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College*:

Academic honesty boils down to three simple but powerful principles:
Office Hours: by appointment and
M W 1:00-2:30
T 1:00-2:30

* When you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it.
* When you rely on someone else’s work, you cite it. When you use their words, you quote them accurately, and you cite them, too.
* When you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That’s true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of other scholars.

Consistent with these remarks, please understand that I view academic integrity as the moral foundation of the university experience. In recent years the presumption of integrity has suffered some very serious blows. A professor at Mount Holyoke College admitted he falsified information in his lectures regarding service in the US Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. He was subsequently suspended from the college. More recently, noted historian Stephen Ambrose admitted to using without proper attribution sentences and phrases from others’ work in his book *The Wild Blue*. It would seem we have a problem of national scope.

We cannot be responsible for what others may do, but we can see to it that our own efforts are of the highest caliber. To pursue such a course, we must be familiar with the University’s policy regarding Academic Integrity. In this, as in all my courses, I apply the University’s policy fully. In short, no violation of the integrity policy will be excused.