



SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
MADRID

POLS 2550 M01: Political Systems of the Sub-Sahara
Spring 2018

Class Days and Time: TR, 16:00-17:15

Classroom: Padre Rubio Hall 2 (subject to change; confirm location prior to start of term)

Prerequisite(s): None

Credit(s): 3

Instructor: Dr. Mary Prendergast

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Office: San Ignacio Hall 319

Office Hours: TR, 10:45-12:15

Course Description:

Africa is not a country (though you will find *africasacountry.com* to be useful for our class). Africa is home to 1.2 billion people, divided over 54 states, each with their own geographic, historical, political, economic, and social conditions. For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo occupies 12% of all African land area, while the tiny nation of Seychelles is spread across 115 islands in the Indian Ocean. While 78% of Sierra Leoneans are Muslim, 86% of Liberians, their direct neighbors, are Christian; meanwhile Nigeria is divided 50/50, with religion frequently mobilized for political aims. Images of Africa in today's media are dominated by poverty and strife, but this paints the continent with too broad a brush. Yes, out of the world's 20 poorest countries (by GDP/capita), 18 are African. However, GDP per capita in Gabon or Botswana is nearly on par with that of China or Mexico, and in the case of Gabon, with less income inequality. Zimbabwe – currently dominating the political news with Mugabe's fall from power – went from being one of Africa's greatest success stories to a dictatorial failed state, while neighboring South Africa is a thriving democracy with a vibrant economy, albeit still grappling with legacies of apartheid.

Despite this evident diversity, there are also many commonalities that make a comparative study of African politics particularly enlightening. With few exceptions – Ethiopia being the most notable – modern African states are products of both precolonial and colonial economic, social, and political dynamics. Legacies of European colonialism are never far from the surface in discussions of African politics today, and we thus begin the semester with a brief exploration of the continent's history. African nationalism and independence drives – for all their diversity – shared certain traits and influences, being shaped by both internal and international forces. These movements will be best understood in comparison to one another. Today, globally debated issues surrounding civil conflicts, refugee movements, climate change, foreign aid, and human rights have tremendous salience in Africa.

It is impossible cover the entirety of Sub-Saharan Africa in one semester. Therefore, we will select case studies that highlight aspects of the topic under discussion. For example, while the colonial era could be studied nearly anywhere on the continent, we shall focus on the Congo and Kenya. While independence movements took unique forms in many countries, Julius Nyerere's *ujumaa* (familyhood) model of socialism in Tanzania is particularly informative. To understand the personalized power of dictatorial states during the later part of the Cold War, we look to Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire. For more recent decades, we will focus on a few relatively well-known issues: economic and social legacies of apartheid in South Africa; "ethnic" conflict ultimately leading to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; and religious influence on politics, particularly impacting LGBTQ rights, in Uganda today.

You will influence some of our topics of discussion, by selecting current events that are of interest to you, in a country for which you will develop expertise over the course of the semester. The African news sections of major media outlets, such as the BBC, are often overlooked by non-African readers, because those readers do not have the tools to contextualize these stories. You will spend some time each week reading news media, so that by the end of the semester, African headlines will look less foreign to you. My goal is to give you the tools to engage with African current events, and to situate these stories in their proper geographic, historical, economic, social, and political contexts, well beyond the term of this course.

Course Goals: At the end of the course, students will:

- Have a solid grasp of Sub-Saharan African geography and a general outline of pre-20th C history.
- Be able to articulate specific economic, social, and political legacies of the era of European colonialism.
- Compare and contrast differing approaches to 20th C African nationalism and independence movements.
- Be able to explain why certain features of political systems – including military rule and personal authority – were pervasive in early postcolonial states, and why these features persist in some African states today.
- Describe trajectories of progress toward multi-party democratic political systems in recent decades.
- Have a nuanced understanding of ethnicity and religion, and their mobilization for political aims.
- Understand the influence of outside countries and institutions (e.g., China, World Bank) in Africa today.
- Engage with current debates over how to best solve deep-rooted economic, political, and social problems.
- Have developed expertise on the political system and relevant current events in a country of choice.
- Be well-versed in current events in that country, and lead a class discussion of a specific set of events.
- Thoughtfully critique images of Africa as seen today in news media, films, and other popular culture.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students should possess:

1. Basic knowledge of geography and recent history and politics of Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, with deeper knowledge of salient historical and political conditions in selected case study countries.
2. Specialized knowledge of a chosen Sub-Saharan African country, its political system and current affairs.
3. Understanding of modern-day political legacies of the European colonial and nationalist/independence eras.
4. Ability to define key features of postcolonial states, including diverse approaches to nationalism; sources of legitimacy and authority; democratization; and influences of non-African countries and institutions.
5. Ability to express in writing the above ideas, and to thoughtfully critique media portrayals of Africa.

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, the Campus regularly assesses its teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs is kept on file, such as assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of student work for this course, including written assignments, in-class exercises, and exams may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If students prefer that Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus does not keep their work on file, they need to communicate their decision in writing to the professor.

Required Texts and Materials:

The primary textbook for this course is:

- *An Introduction to African Politics*, 3rd edition, Alex Thomson

It is available at the campus bookstore. There will be additional required readings posted on [Blackboard](#).

Attendance Policy:

Students who arrive at class more than 15 minutes late will be marked tardy. Two tardies equals one absence. The participation component of your grade will be decreased by one full letter for every three unjustified absences beyond the add/drop date. A student with 10 or more unjustified absences will automatically fail the course regardless of exam grades.

Examples of absences that will not be excused:

- An email to your prof stating that you are sick and cannot attend class
- Taking off an extra day for a long traveling weekend

Examples of absences that will be excused:

- Signed/stamped justification that you visited a doctor
- A print-out of documents showing that your flight back from Paris was cancelled
- An email from a professor or Student Life indicating that you are on a required class field trip

Missed work and exams:

There are multiple quizzes in this class. Please check the syllabus and ensure you can be present on the days they are given. Please see “Geography Quizzes” below for missed quiz policy. Midterm and final exams and student-led

class discussions may only be missed in the event of a medical or family emergency, adequately documented; otherwise, a failing grade will be given (in the case of team student-led presentations, only to the absent student).

Course Requirements:

Class participation and attendance: The subjects covered in this course require careful thought and debate; although the readings will provide essential background, I do not teach exclusively from texts. In addition to doing the reading prior to class, your attendance and thoughtful participation in class discussions and activities is necessary to do well in this course. Active, meaningful class participation is: 1) attending class regularly; 2) participating by offering comments that are not superfluous, i.e. that demonstrate having done the reading and engaging with course content; 3) asking questions (and/or answering classmates'/professor's questions) in a way that demonstrates engagement with the material; and 4) being a kind and considerate classmate, which means: not interrupting others; taking your fair share of discussion time; and reacting to your classmates' comments in a respectful way.

As a very general guideline, students that regularly attend and actively and meaningfully participate in class receive a participation grade of A. Some active participation, with excellent attendance, may merit a B. Students who are frequently absent, who rarely or never participate, or do so only in superfluous ways, and/or who repeatedly demonstrate inconsiderate behavior, can expect to be assigned a C, D, or F according to the circumstances.

Geography Quizzes: You will take four geography quizzes over the course of the semester, on the physical geography, colonial territories, contemporary states, and urban areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. In each case, you will be asked to place either 10 or 20 geographic locales on a map; this should generally take no longer than about five minutes. If you miss a quiz, you must make it up either *during the first five minutes of the next class meeting (be on time!)*, or during my office hours of that same week. If you fail to do so, a grade of 0 will be given. The quizzes add up to a total of 100 points (Quiz 1 = 20 points; Quiz 2 = 20 points; Quiz 3 = 40 points; Quiz 4 = 20 points).

Midterm and final exams: The exams will be worth 100 points each, and will feature a combination of closed questions (e.g., multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false) and open questions (short answers or longer responses or essays). The exams will test your knowledge and integrated understanding of content from readings, class lectures/discussions, and films. Study guides will be provided in advance of the exams.

Films as texts and film commentary essay: We will view parts of several films in this course; due to time constraints of each class meeting, we will not view any film in its entirety. I treat films as texts, meaning that I expect you to "read" them as you would any other assigned text. I will prepare you to do so, by assigning readings and/or writing handouts for you to read prior to viewing films. These are designed to help you with note-taking during the films.

As a take-home component of the final exam, you will provide a written commentary on one of the films that we view this semester. This essay will ask you to establish the film's relevance to course themes, by making explicit ties to readings and class discussions, with appropriate citations of readings. I will also ask you to consider representations of Africa on film, and how your chosen film fits into our discussions of this topic. This take-home essay will be turned in on the day that you take the remainder of the final exam in class (see course calendar).

Country expertise: During this semester, you will become an expert on one Sub-Saharan African country. At the beginning of term, I will ask you to provide a ranked list of countries that are of interest to you. I will then assign a specific country to either individual students or teams, depending on final class size. Throughout the term, you will keep track of current events related to your country (I will suggest some news resources), and you should seek out ties between these events and the topics covered in this course. In mid-February (see course calendar), you will give a 5-10 minute presentation of your country, highlighting key political and human geographic features, and outlining some current topics that may be of particular interest to our class. This is a good opportunity to explore links to course themes. In early March, you will work with your professor to choose one or a short set of current events readings for your classmates. In mid to late March (see course calendar), you will lead a discussion of these events, in which we will attempt to articulate the events' relationships to course themes.

Grading Components:

Class Participation & Attendance: 18%

Geography Quizzes: 4 short quizzes (add up to a total of 100 possible points) = 14%

Midterm exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

(Including take-home component, the film commentary essay, worth 30 out of 100 points total)

Country Expertise: 18% total

(Initial presentation of country = 5%; Choose readings for and lead discussion of current events = 13%)

The grading scale for exams and for the combined four quizzes (out of 100 points) is as follows:

93 and above = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B

80-82 = B-

77-80 = C+

73-76 = C

70-72 = C-

60-69 = D

0-59 = F

Electronic device policy:

Use of laptops, tablets, mobile phones or other electronic devices is not allowed during class. An exception will be made on film days, so that you can take notes for your film commentary essay.

E-mail: Campus and course announcements will often be handled by e-mail. Students should check their "@slu.edu" e-mail regularly. Students can expect a response to emails within 24h during *non-holiday weekdays*.

University Statement on Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be accessed on the Provost's Office [website](#). Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online: <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics>. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

University Title IX Statement: Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 (mmaruri@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multiplettherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-

1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

Students with Special Needs: In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <https://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/student-resources>.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see "Student Resources" on the SLU-Madrid webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Spring 2018 Tentative Course Schedule:

*****Topics & readings are subject to change; changes will be announced in class and via email*****

Italics signify important Registrar dates

Date	Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignment due that day Thomson available at bookstore & on library reserve; all others on Blackboard (BB)
Thursday, January 11	Introduction to the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read & discuss in class: Wainaina, “How to write about Africa” (posted on BB)
Tuesday, January 16	Africa is not a country: myths, realities, and popular media representations Why do we need history in a politics course? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapters 1 & 2 (at bookstore & library reserve) • Alagiah, “New light on the dark continent” (<i>The Guardian</i>, May 1999)
Thursday, January 18	Africa’s centrality in the human story: landscapes, history, traditional lifeways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch online: <i>Africa’s Great Civilizations</i>, Chapter 1 (link posted on BB)
<i>Sunday, January 21</i>	<i>Last Day to Drop a Class Without a Grade of W and /or Add a Class, choose Audit (AU) or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) Options</i>
Tuesday, January 23	Geography Quiz 1: Physical Geography Precolonial dynamics: caravans, cities, and slavery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBA
Thursday, January 25	European incursions and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hochschild, <i>King Leopold’s Ghost</i>, selected pages TBA (on BB)
Tuesday, January 30	Film segments: <i>Africa’s Great Civilizations: Empires of Gold/The Atlantic Age</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read film handout in advance Deadline to submit your top three preferences for country expertise project
Thursday, February 1	Geography Quiz 2: Colonial Territories The Scramble for Africa and the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hochschild, <i>King Leopold’s Ghost</i>, selected pages TBA (on BB)
Tuesday, February 6	African nationalism and independence movements I; Tanzania case study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 3
Thursday, February 8	African nationalism and independence movements II; Kenya case study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elkins, “Britain’s Gulag,” selected pages TBA (on BB)
Tuesday, February 13	Legacies of colonialism in African politics today; Kenya case study continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-read/review Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 2 • Gettleman, “Loss of Fertile Land Fuels ‘Looming Crisis’ Across Africa” (<i>The New York Times</i>, July 2017) (on BB)
Thursday, February 15	MIDTERM EXAM
Tuesday, February 20	Student-led short introductions to countries of expertise (approx. 5-10 min each)
Thursday, February 22	NO CLASS (winter break)

Tuesday, February 27	<p>Geography Quiz 3: Contemporary States Postcolonial states: Legitimacy and coercion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapters 6 and 7
Thursday, March 1	<p>Postcolonial states: Sovereignty and authority; Zaire case study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 8, pp. 155-165 only Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 10
Tuesday, March 6	<p>Film segments: <i>Mobutu, King of Zaire (Mobutu, Roi du Zaïre)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read film handout in advance
Thursday, March 8	<p>Geography Quiz 4: Urban areas Africa's second liberation: the new democratization; Zimbabwe case study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 11 Onishi & Cowell, "With Mugabe's Era ending in Zimbabwe, a Warning Echoes in Africa" (on BB)
Friday March 9	<i>Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive the Grade of W.</i>
Tuesday, March 13	<p>Student-led discussions of current events in countries of expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings to be chosen by students in consultation with professor
Thursday, March 15	<p>Student-led discussions of current events in countries of expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings to be chosen by students in consultation with professor
Tuesday, March 20	<p>South Africa case study: apartheid, truth & reconciliation, enduring legacies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings TBA
Thursday, March 22	<p>Film segments: <i>Tsotsi</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read film handout in advance
	SPRING BREAK
Tuesday, April 3	<p>Ethnicity and religion in African politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 4 Eller, <i>From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict</i>, pp. 1-28 & 47-48 (on BB)
Thursday, April 5	<p>Ethnicity in African politics; Rwanda case study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eller, <i>From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict</i>, pp. 192-241 (on BB)
Wednesday, April 4	<i>Spring Registration Opens</i>
Tuesday, April 10	<p>Film segments: <i>Hotel Rwanda and As We Forgive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read guide to Rwandan genocide and film handouts in advance Uvin, "The Gacaca Trials in Rwanda" (on BB)
Thursday, April 12	<p>Religion in African politics; Uganda case study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-read/review Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 4 Additional reading TBA
Tuesday, April 17	<p>Film segments: <i>Call Me Kuchu</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read film handout in advance

Thursday, April 19	<p>Neo-colonialism I: international aid, structural adjustments, and the Chinese alternative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 8, pp. 165-187 only • Thomson, <i>Intro African Politics</i>, Chapter 9 • “The new scramble for Africa: how China became the partner of choice” (<i>The Guardian</i>, December 2016) (on BB)
Tuesday, April 24	<p>Neo-colonialism II: the debate over foreign aid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sachs, “Can Extreme Poverty be Eliminated?” (on BB) • Moyo, “Why Foreign Aid is Hurting Africa” (on BB) • Easterly, “The Ideology of Development” (on BB)
Thursday, April 26	<p><i>Film: Our friends at the bank (Nos amis de la banque)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read film handout in advance
Tuesday, May 1	NO CLASS – PUBLIC HOLIDAY
Thursday, May 3	Course wrapup & review for final exam
Wednesday, May 9	15:30-17:30: FINAL EXAM + FILM COMMENTARY ESSAY DUE