Human, Social and Political Sciences Tripos  
History and Politics Tripos  
Part IIB 2021-22  

**Paper 15: The Politics of Africa**  

**Paper Guide**

**Organiser:**  Dr Sharath Srinivasan  
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**Office hours:**  
Wednesdays  
4.00-4.30pm: Room 131, Alison Richard Building  
4.30-5.00pm: Zoom  
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87089307841?pwd=M0Q3NVhJe0Z6MFZ4TXdWRzRXVDA2QT09  
Meeting ID: 870 8930 7841  
Passcode: 841841  
Waiting Room activated (wait for admission)  

**Lecturers:**  Dr Srinivasan  

**Supervisors:**  Rachel Sittoni  
Ola Osman  
Sakae Gustafson  
Emmah Wabuke  

**Lectures:**  
M&L, Wednesday, 11am  
and Tuesday Week 1, 9am  
Location: Alison Richard Building, Room SG2  

**Seminars:**  
M: Thursday, 1:30-3:30pm, SG2, Weeks 4, 6 and 8  
L: Thursday, 12-2pm, SG2, Weeks 4, 6 and 8  

**Aims and Objectives**  
- To provide a broad overview of major themes in African politics and economic development, including their international dimensions.  
- To provide opportunities for linking theoretical and conceptual arguments with in-depth analysis of case studies and close readings of official reports.  
- To encourage multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of empirical politics.  
- To encourage critical reflection on popular and academic representations of ‘Africa’.  

**Brief Description**  
The politics of Africa compels students to reckon with the weight of a tumultuous past and the rapidly changing politics of the present to make sense of a crucially important future in world politics. Colonial legacies are as important to today’s questions of climate justice and contemporary neo-imperial threats as they are to understanding state formation, configurations of state-society relations and how African states interact with international order. Equally, in a continent with the
world’s fastest population growth and rapidly growing economies and urban societies, nothing is
determined by the past alone and new political imaginaries are taking flight in ways that require
fresh attempts at understanding.

This paper explores the interaction of local and international factors that have influenced the
social, political and economic trajectories of communities, states and regional organisations in
Africa. Students are encouraged to consider how the study of Africa – and indeed all of the
formerly colonised world – can challenge ways of thinking about politics that have been grounded
primarily in the western experience, as well as how discourses on ‘Africa’ or ‘the global south’
relate to the economic, strategic and ideological projects of those who shape and deploy them.

The course is taught thematically, however students develop case-based knowledge of a diverse
range of African experiences through country-specific readings, seminars and essay work. Students
are encouraged to give due consideration to the agency of African people and political actors
alongside the powerful external pressures on the continent from colonialism until the present day.

The course, in common with much of the literature, has the ambition to talk about themes that are
continental but this is no easy task. Literature dealing with ‘African’ politics and history by
necessity involves a large degree of generalisation that sits awkwardly with diverse and plural
histories and societies. Studying the politics of African countries involves weighing the validity and
usefulness of generalisations against their limitations. For reasons relating to history and language,
a majority of the literature on Africa in English is about former British colonies. This bias is
reflected in the reading list for this course. Students should feel free to be curious well beyond the
paper guide in building their understanding of the continent.

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to discuss the applicability and limits of
competing theories in light of particular cases in supervision essays and in the examination.
To this end, it is essential that students pursue interests in particular country case studies, and
choose at least two to study in depth. Over Michaelmas and Lent terms, four seminars will be
offered in which students have the opportunity to discuss readings about a particular country or
region under the guidance of an area specialist. However, if you have a particular interest in a
country other than those featured in seminars, you are encouraged to read about it as much as you
can: not only in the academic literature, but follow relevant news sources, blogs and social media
accounts to keep up to date with contemporary events and debates.

Structure of the Paper

The paper is divided into six parts, three in each of the first two terms. Michaelmas Term focuses
on Africa’s global and historical politics. In Lent Term, the focus shifts to contemporary politics,
society and economy and African political futures. It will be helpful to keep the following
introduction to the structure of the paper front of mind as the year progresses.

Part I: Africa & the world: The past of the present

The paper begins in Lectures 1-3 by reflecting on African politics as a field of study and on
knowledge production about Africa. More than simply questions about how we study African
politics today, questions of how Africa has been encountered, imagined and ‘produced’, and why –
for what purposes, and to what and whose ends? – are central to understanding pre-colonial African
political systems, the nature and impact of colonial rule, the ideologies and strategies of anti-
colonial struggle, and their legacies in the post-colonial independence era. Part I also introduces
students to different socio-historical frameworks, and how they compare in evaluating the
significance of the period of European colonial presence for modern African politics.
Part II: Global economic order & African development

In Part II, Lectures 4-6, we examine Africa’s place in global economic structures and those structures’ repercussions for African politics. The first lecture explores the debate around development and underdevelopment in the late colonial and post-independence period; the second turns to the era of Structural Adjustment Programmes and so-called democratic transitions in the late 1980s and early 1990s; and the third examines contemporary transformations in African economies by the rise of China and the other “BRICS”, including the renewed importance of African natural resources, the return of ‘developmental states’ and the lauding of ‘emerging markets’.

Part III: International intervention: democracy, human rights, security

Lectures 7 and 8, the final two lectures in Michaelmas Term, look at international intervention in African politics. The first lecture critically assesses Western interventions claiming to promote liberal democratic institutional orders, whether through electoral democracy promotion, civil society development and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or human rights. The second lecture turns to the politics of humanitarian intervention into African conflicts, broadly conceived to include relief aid, peacebuilding, and military intervention, all in the name of upholding Africans’ human rights.

Part IV: State and society (i): rule, mobilization and identity

Lent Term begins, in Part IV, with a closer examination of how politics – at national and sub-national scales - in Africa is imagined, conditioned and practiced through comparative, interdisciplinary and thematic lenses. Lectures examine the nature of political authority and mobilization, and the relationships between the state and citizens and between violence and politics in Africa. This Part also considers the advantages and drawbacks of analyzing African political experience through ethno-linguistic, religious and class lenses.

Part V: State and society (ii): coercion and contestation

Part V takes the state and society inquiry to the nature of, and reasons for, political violence and non-violent struggle across the continent. This begins with the historical experience and contemporary character of warfare and armed struggle. The second lecture examines collective action and popular protest, past, present, and future.

Part VI: Futures of African politics

The final part of the course asks about possible futures of African politics, drawing upon the debates explored in earlier lectures. The continent is changing rapidly, its trajectories and tendencies many and varied. The specific angles on these questions are: politics in Africa in a digital age; youth, students and social reproduction, at a time of rapid demographic and social change; and new or renewed political imaginaries that are remaking Africa in the world.

Mode of teaching

Teaching comprises of 16 one-hour lectures, 4 two-hour classes and 6 supervisions (3 in each of Michaelmas and Lent Terms). In Easter Term, there will be two one-hour revision lectures. Films may be shown during the course as ancillary to lectures and supervisions. All students are expected to attend all classes, to read one core text and some of the supplementary texts in preparation for each, and to participate in discussions. Every member of the group will also be required to lead
class discussions once per term, through a brief presentation about the relevance of another reading to the debates raised in the core text. This will be organised at the first lecture each term.

**Mode of assessment**

Students will be assessed through a written examination in the Easter Term.

The examination paper will consist of at least twelve questions, which will address topics covered in both Terms’ lectures. Students must answer three questions in three hours (subject to assessment format changes during the pandemic).
Outline of Lectures and Classes

Michaelmas Term

Part I: Africa & the World: The Past of the Present
1. Africa in World Politics: Exception or Comparator? Victim or Agent? Self or Other?
2. Pre-colonial and Colonial Africa
3. Independence and the Politics of the ‘Third World’

Class: African political thought around independence (Thursday, 1:30-3:30pm, Week 4, SG2)

Part II: Global economic order & African development (Dr Srinivasan)
4. Underdevelopment, Developmental States, Neo-Colonialism
5. Debt and Development: From Structural Adjustment to Good Governance

Class: Zambia and the political economy of development (Thursday, 1:30-3:30pm, Week 6, SG2)

Part III: International intervention: democracy, human rights, security
7. Debating Democratization, Civil Society, and Human Rights
8. Intervening in Political Violence: Humanitarianism, Peacebuilding, and Security

Class: When Peace Kills Politics: Sudan, Darfur and South Sudan (Thursday, 1:30-3:30pm, Week 8, SG2)

Lent Term

Part IV: State and society (i): rule, mobilization and identity
9. Political Mobilization, Control and the State
10. Identity, Ethnicity and Political Competition
11. Class and Politics: Peasants and Workers, Rulers and Capitalists

Class: Kenya – Patrimonialism, ethnicity and party politics (Thursday 12-2pm, Week 4, SG2)

Part V: State and society (ii): coercion and contestation
12. Conflict, Society and the State
13. Social Movements and Popular Protest

Class: Contemporary African Social Movements and Uprisings (Thursday 12-2pm, Week 6, SG2)

Part VI: Futures of African Politics
15. Youth, Students and Struggle
16. Reimagining and Remaking Africa in the World

Class: Debating African futures (Thursday 12-2pm, Week 8, SG2)

Easter Term - Revision Lectures
17. Explaining African politics in historical perspective
18. Rethinking African politics in the 21st century
Resources

The following are basic introductory texts that come at the issues from rather different perspectives, and may be read before term starts. The series of Basil Davidson films on YouTube are very watchable (see link in week 2 reading list).


An excellent foundational book, covering important history of African politics and with a strong line of argument is:

* Cooper, Frederick. *Africa since 1940: the past of the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019 (new edition)

The **key texts** below are relevant across the paper’s topics. Students should be aware that many texts speak to different lecture topics, and so cherry-picking individual lecture reading lists alone is often not sufficient. This list may be used as a check-list later in the year, to ensure that you have read relevant foundational texts for the course.


8. Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin Classics, 1961: ‘Concerning Violence’ and
‘Pitfalls of National Consciousness’


   Mamdani, Mahmood, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror*, Pantheon, 2010, Ch. 2, conclusion


The *Oxford Encyclopaedia of African Politics*, while not used directly during the year, is comprehensive and up to date with some strong contributions from recognized leading thinkers. See: https://oxfordre.com/politics/page/african-politics/the-oxford-encyclopedia-of-african-politics

**Reference material**

The reading list divides material into two categories. Under each of the lecture descriptions you will find lists of *Core* and *Supplementary* readings. Students are expected to read the *Core* readings prior to lectures, and to prepare for exams, and these are all *starred in this document. The *Supplementary* reading lists offer alternative takes on the issues, delve into particular aspects of the issues, and offer further case-studies. Note that many of the readings are relevant for more than one lecture or section of the course – the best student work in supervision essays and exams tends to see the links between issues and to draw these out.

All of the starred books should be available at either the Seeley Library (Faculty of History) or the Centre of African Studies Library, ARB 3rd Floor. The library website is: www.african.cam.ac.uk/library/
Many of the other texts can be found in the Seeley2) Library or the Centre of African Studies Library or are accessible through the University Library electronic resources portal. Chapters or Articles available on-line via either via Camtools or the Library portal are marked OL.

Discussion of African politics is vibrant and diverse, with rich crossover between scholarly debates and policy research and practice. Those wanting to follow the debates, from a variety of different perspectives, should explore the following specialist publications and academic journals (those in italics are particularly prominent; most or all are available either on-line, at the Seeley library or at the Centre of African Studies library):

*Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*
* African Affairs,*
* Africa Confidential,*
* Africa Today,*
* African Studies Review,*
* African Studies Quarterly,*
* Commonwealth and Comparative Politics,*
* Development and Change,*
* Journal of African and Asian Studies,*
* Journal of Modern African Studies,*
* Journal of East African Studies,*
* Journal of Southern African Studies,*
* Journal of African Economies,*
* New African,*
* Review of African Political Economy,*
* Round Table,*
* Third World Quarterly*
* Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*
* Feminist Africa*

The following internet sites are good for news and research about Africa:

The on-line resources on the Centre of African Studies are at (www.african.cam.ac.uk/library/), including links to the NIPAD database (http://biblioline.nisc.com/scripts/login.dll). A large number of articles and speeches by radical African leaders of the independence era on nationalism and anti-imperialism are available at: www.marxists.org/subject/africa/index.htm

More contemporary material
* African Arguments https://africanarguments.org/*
* Africa is a Country https://africasacountry.com/*
* Pambazuka.org http://www.pambazuka.org/en/*
* AllAfrica.com http://allafrica.com/*
* Africa news online www.africanews.org/index.html*
* BBC news http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/default.stm / http://allafrica.com/partners/bbc/focus_on_africa.ram*
* Political resources.net www.politicalresources.net/africa.htm*
* Stanford Africa guide www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html*
* Afrobarometer www.afrobarometer.org*
* UN IRIN news http://www.irinnews.org*
A note on dealing with primary materials

Documents written by or for African Governments, donor agencies, activist groups, think tanks and NGOs are sometimes referenced in the reading list. Students should also search the web for relevant, up to date, publicly available policy material about particular cases and places. This so-called ‘grey literature’ often presents data and analysis in a non-contestable form, generating what sound like anodyne and technocratic policy proposals designed to appeal to ‘common sense’. That’s no reason to take it at face value - as with the scholarly literature, students should be alert to the questions of who is making an argument and why, whose interest and ideologies it reflects and serves.

Nonetheless, it is not always wise to critique policy literature in quite the same terms as academic studies. Political actors tend to be self-aggrandizing and not to respect standards of evidence that would be considered appropriate in the academy. Explaining why they are doing what they are doing rhetorically can be interesting, and critiquing an NGO campaign can be done insightfully, but beware knocking over straw men – of criticizing a TV advert for a lack of nuance, for example. Similarly, essays that efface differences within those writing from similar institutional backgrounds, comparing the positions of ‘donors’, ‘African Governments’, ‘NGOs’ and ‘critics’, as if those labels explain everything we need to know about an argument, are rarely interesting.
Part I: Africa & the world: The past of the present

Lecture 1. Africa in world politics: Exception or comparator? Victim or agent? Self or Other?

Sample questions

- Is the study of African politics trapped in its past?
- What explains the continuities in Africa’s portrayal in the West?
- How is Africa being re-invented?

Core readings


Supplementary readings

* Popular representations of Africa


The Politics of Studying Africa

Mudimbe, V.Y., The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge, Indiana University Press, 1988, Introduction, Ch. 1, conclusion


Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe, The Study of Africa: Volume I: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Encounters, Codesria, 2006, Introduction, Ch. 6, 7, 8, 10


James, C. L. R., ‘Black Studies and the Contemporary Student’, in *At the Rendezvous of Victory—Selected Writings*, Allison & Busby, 1984


*Rhodes Must Fall*


Lecture 2. Pre-colonial and colonial Africa

Sample questions

- Did Colonial rule simply reproduce European ideas of the state in Africa?
- In what ways and why did Colonial elites ‘invent’ tradition in Africa?

Core readings


Supplementary readings


Davidson, Basil, ‘*Africa: A Voyage of Discovery*, youtube.com/watch?v=bPTUnzLojvU&list=PL1_tlxt9F8tQxTwCZ7-sMy276Z2OqA8wAY


Cases

Caplan, Gerald L. ‘Barotseland’s Scramble for Protection’ *J of African History*, 1969, 10


Lecture 3. Independence and the politics of the ‘Third World’

Sample questions

- Did African nationalism fail independent Africa?
- What role did ideology play in the politics of independent Africa?
- Did the superpowers call the shots in Africa during the Cold War?

Core readings

* Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin Classics, 1961, ‘Concerning Violence’ and ‘Pitfalls of National Consciousness’ (and preface by Jean-Paul Sartre)


Supplementary readings

Andersen, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso, 2006 – Chapter 6


Cases

Kenya


**Zambia:**


**Ghana**

Allman, Jean, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante nationalism in an emergent Ghana*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993


**French West Africa**


Chafer, T. *The end of empire in French West Africa* (2002)


**On the Cold War in Africa**


**On Ethiopia and Somalia in the Cold War**


Ottaway, Marina. *Soviet and American influence in the Horn of Africa* (New York, 1982)


Thompson, Alex, ‘Case study: Somalia’s International Relations’, *An Introduction to African Politics*, Routledge, 2016, Ch. 8.


**On Southern Africa in the Cold War**


Part II: Global economic order & African development

Lecture 4. Underdevelopment, Developmental States, Neo-Colonialism

Sample questions

- To what extent did colonialism determine post-colonial economic possibilities in Africa?
- What has been the relationship between the global economy and economic growth in Africa?

Core reading

* Cooper, Frederick, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, Ch. 1, 5

Supplementary readings


Rodney, Walter, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Ch. 6


Shivji, Issa, *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, Heinemann, 1976, Ch. 1, 2


Lecture 5. Debt and Development: From Structural Adjustment to Good Governance

Sample questions

- Has development in Africa been a political or economic project?

- Good governance has been characterized as a disciplinary project – is this accurate? If so, who is being disciplined and to what effect?

Core reading


Supplementary readings

* Structural Adjustment and Foreign Aid*


Mkandawire, Thandika and Adebayo O. Olukoshi (eds.), *Between Liberalisation and Oppression: The
Politics of Structural Adjustment in Africa, CODESRIA, 1995


Easterly, William, The White Man’s Burden, Penguin, 2006, Ch. 8, 9


Good Governance


Young, Tom, and David Williams, ‘Governance, the World Bank and Liberal Theory’, Political Studies 42, no. 1 (1994)


World Bank, Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?, World Bank, 1996


_The Development Discourse_


Hickey, Sam, ‘The return of politics in development studies: getting lost within the poverty agenda?’, *Progress in Development Studies* 8, no. 4 (2008): 349-358


Sample questions

- Does the rise of “emerging powers” in “emerging markets” mark a new phase in Africa’s relations with the world?

- Is there anything different about today’s developmental states in Africa compared to state-led development in the past?

Core Reading

* Carmody, Pádraig, *The New Scramble for Africa*, Polity, 2011, Introduction, Ch. 1, 5, 6, 7


* “Africa Rising,” and “The Sun Shines Bright,” *The Economist*, 1 December 2011

Supplementary readings

  **Natural Resource Economics**


  Harvey, David, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford University Press, 2003, Ch. 4

  Radelet, Steven, *Emerging Africa: How Seventeen Countries are Leading the Way*, Center for Global Development, 2010


Carrier, Neil, and Gernot Klantschnig, *Africa and the War on Drugs*, Zed Books, 2012, Ch. 3-4

Rising Global Powers


French, Howard, *China’s Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*, 2015


*Neo-Developmental States, New Opportunities*


Mann, Laura, and Marie Berry, ‘Understanding the political motivations that shape Rwanda’s emergent developmental state.’ *New Political Economy* 21, no. 1 (2016): 119-144.


*Shifting Western Engagements*

Blanchard, Olivier, Giovanni Dell’Ariccia and Paolo Mauro, ‘Rethinking Macroeconomic Policy’, IMF Staff Position Note, SPN/10/03, 12 February 2012, Washington, D.C.


Ernst and Young, *Ernst & Young’s attractiveness survey, Africa 2013: Getting down to business*, www.ey.com/attractiveness


Chang, Ha-Joon, *Kicking away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Anthem, 2002, Ch. 4
Moyo, Dambisa, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, 2009, Ch. 1, 3

Part III: International intervention: democracy, human rights, security

Lecture 7. Debating Democratization, Civil Society, and Human Rights

Sample questions

- Is ‘democratisation’ a useful lens for understanding Africa’s political history?
- Are NGOs in Africa agents of political emancipation or political control?

Core reading

* Ake, Claude, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, CODESRIA, 2000, Ch. 1, 2

Supplementary readings

Democratization

Lumumba-Kasongo, T. (ed.), *Liberal Democracy and Its Critics in Africa: Political Dysfunction and the Struggle for Social Progress*, CODESRIA, 2005, Ch. 1, 2, 7, 9
Cheeseman, Nic, *Democracy in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, Ch. 3, 4
Harrison, Graham, *Issues in the Contemporary Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa: The Dynamics of Struggle and Resistance*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, Ch. 4
Young, Crawford, *The Postcolonial State in Africa*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, Ch. 5, 6

LeBas, Adrienne, From Protest to Parties: Party-Building and Democratization in Africa, Oxford University Press, 2011, Ch. 1, 2


Young, Tom, ‘Democracy in Africa?’ Africa 72, no. 3 (2002): 484–496


Huntington, Samuel, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991

Lindberg, Staffan, Democracy and elections in Africa, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006


Branch, Adam and Zachariah Mampilly, Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change, Zed Books, 2015, Ch. 3

Civil Society in Africa

Young, Crawford, The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective, Yale University Press, 1997, Ch. 7


Ferguson, James, Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order, Duke University Press, 2006, Introduction and Ch. 4


Monga, Célestin, *The Anthropology of Anger*, Lynne Rienner, 1996, Ch. 6

Jean L. Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa*, University of Chicago Press, 1999


Hickey, Samuel, and Giles Mohan (eds.), *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation?*, Zed Books, 2005


*Human Rights*

Mutua, Makau (ed.), *Human Rights NGOs in East Africa: Political and Normative Tensions*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009

Welch, Claude E., ‘Human rights NGOs and the rule of law in Africa’, *Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 3 (2003): 315–327

Lecture 8. Intervening in Political Violence: Humanitarianism, Peacebuilding, and Security

Sample questions

- Will humanitarian and peace interventions in Africa always be counterproductive?
- To what extent do African states collaborate with Western intervention?

Core reading

* Branch, Adam, Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda, Oxford University Press, 2011 Ch. 1, 3
* de Waal, Alex, Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa, James Currey, 1997, Ch. 3, 4, 7-11
* Mamdani, Mahmood, Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror, Pantheon, 2010, Ch. 2, conclusion

Supplementary readings

Humanitarianism

Terry, Fiona, Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action, Cornell University Press, 2002


Marriage, Zoe, Not Breaking the Rules, Not Playing the Game: International Assistance to Countries at War, Hurst & Company, 2006


Fassin, Didier, ‘Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life’, *Public Culture* 19, no. 3 (2007): 499–520


*Peacebuilding*


Duffield, Mark, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples*, Polity, 2007, Ch. 1


*R2P and Humanitarian Military Intervention*


Securitization and Counterterrorism


Schmidt, Elizabeth, Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror, Cambridge University Press, 2013, Ch. 8

Bachmann, Jan, “Kick Down the Door, Clean up the Mess, and Rebuild the House”— The Africa Command and Transformation of the US Military, Geopolitics 15, no. 3 (2010): 564–85


Branch, Adam, Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda, 2011, Ch. 7


Lent Term

Part IV: State and society (i): rule, mobilization and identity

Lecture 9. Political Mobilization, Control and the State

Sample questions

- Why do some argue that African politics is ‘neopatrimonial’?
- What does clientalism explain and what does it overlook in the study of African politics?

Core reading


Supplementary readings


*The Future of Electoral Democracy*

Cooper, Frederick, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present*, 2019, Ch. 7, 8

Lindberg, Staffan, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*, 2006, Ch. 1, 3, 7


Cheeseman, Nic, *Democracy in Africa*, Cambridge UP, Ch. 5


**Cases**


Lecture 10. Identity, Ethnicity and Political Competition

Sample questions

- What can identity and belonging help to explain regarding African politics?
- Is ethnic politics simply the response of rational actors to weak states and poor societies in Africa?

Core reading


Supplementary readings


Berman et al., *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey, 2004. Essays by Berman, Eyoh, Kymlicka (ch 1); Lonsdale (ch 5); Falola (ch. 9); and conclusion (18)


Thompson, Alex, *An Introduction to African Politics*, Oxford: Routledge, Ch. 4.


**Cases**


Lecture 11. Class and Politics: Peasants and workers, rulers and capitalists

Sample questions

- Are African peasants neglected, or exploited, or both?
- What are the constraints facing political protest by Africa’s urban underclass?

Core reading


Supplementary readings


Harrison, Graham, ‘Peasants, the agrarian question and lenses of development’, *Progress in Development Studies*, 1 (3), 2001: 187-203


Tandon, Yash, Ed. (1982), *The University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State, and Imperialism*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, particularly: Ch7: Tandon ‘Who Is the Ruling Class in the Semi-Colony’ (pp.50-54); Ch8: Nabudere ‘Imperialism, State, Class and Race’ (pp.55-67); Ch16, Shivji The State in the Dominated Social Formations of Africa: Some Theoretical Issues (pp.172-181); Ch30, Omwony-Ojwok ‘Review of the Debate on Imperialism, State, Class, and the National Question’ (pp.283-299).


Tandon, Yash, Ed. (1982), *The University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State, and Imperialism*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, particularly: Ch7: Tandon ‘Who Is the Ruling Class in the Semi-Colony’ (pp.50-54); Ch8: Nabudere ‘Imperialism, State, Class and Race’ (pp.55-67); Ch16, Shivji The State in the Dominated Social Formations of Africa: Some Theoretical Issues (pp.172-181); Ch30, Omwony-Ojwok ‘Review of the Debate on Imperialism, State, Class, and the National Question’ (pp.283-299).


Thompson, Alex, ‘Social class: the search for social class in Africa’, *An Introduction to African Politics*, Routledge, 2016, Ch. 5.


http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/81/324/433.full.pdf and David McMullen, originally 1993 in “Red Politics”. Available online at http://www.lastsuperpower.net/docs/warren


Cases


Part V: State and society (ii): coercion and contestation

Lecture 12. Conflict, Society and the State

Sample questions

- Is violent conflict in Africa an unavoidable feature of economic and political development?
- To what extent is violence politically motivated in contemporary Africa?

Core reading

* Cramer, Christopher (2006) Civil War is not a Stupid Thing, Hurst, London (concentrate on chapter 3 for this lecture)

(Alternatively, the following two articles by Cramer set out some of the arguments in the book)


* Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, Penguin Classics, 1961, ‘Concerning Violence’


Supplementary readings (those marked * are particularly recommended)

(The edited books include some useful case studies)


Zachariah Mampilly (2011), Rebel Rulers: Insurgent governance and civilian life during war (Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY)

Reno, W. *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, Ch. 3 (Liberia), Ch. 4 (Sierra Leone), Ch. 5 (DR Congo), Ch. 6 (Nigeria).

Richards, P. *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*, James Currey, 1996.


Further reading on “greed” /resources and conflict


(The above is a “plain language”, non-technical exposition of Collier and Hoeffler’s ideas: a good introduction to their approach if you are unfamiliar with econometric method)


New Armed Movements


Case studies

For those interested in pursuing individual case studies, here are some suggestions to get started. Please speak to Dr Srinivasan for more recommendations on these or other case studies that interest you.

Sierra Leone

Reno, W (1998). Warlord Politics and African States. Lynne Riener, Boulder CO. (also good on Liberia and how the two conflicts are interrelated)

Richards, Paul (1996). Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone. (James Curry, Oxford.)

Keen, D., (2005) Conflict and collusion in Sierra Leone (James Currey, Oxford)

Mozambique


Robert Gersoni, Summary of Mozambican Refugee Accounts of Principally Conflict-Related Experience in Mozambique (Department of State Bureau for Refugees) 1998.


Zimbabwe


Angola


Chabal, Patrick and Vidal, Nuno (eds) 2007. Angola: The Weight of History. Hurst, London. (Chapter by Newitt is good for historical context, Hodges for wartime and post-war political economy, Messiant on the continuities between wartime and post-war politics.)


* Messiant, Christine 1997. “Angola: The challenge of statehood” in Birmingham, David and


Lecture 13. Social movements and popular protest

Sample questions

- What galvanizes African Social Movements?

- How can we account for the increase in public protest in African cities over the last decade?

Core Reading


* Branch, Adam and Zachariah Mampilly, Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change, Zed Books, 2015, Introduction, Ch. 1, 4, 6, Conclusion


Supplementary readings

Anti-Colonial Movements


Young, Robert J. C., ‘Fanon and the turn to armed struggle in Africa’, Wasafiri 20, no. 44 (2005): 33–41


*Debating Social Movements*


Ellis, Stephen and Ineke van Kessel, *Movers and Shakers: Social Movements in Africa*, Brill, 2009, Ch. 1, 3


Tripp, Aili Marie, Isabel Casimiro, Joy Kwesiga, and Alice Mungwa, *African Women’s Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes*, 2009, Ch. 3-4


*Popular Protest*


Bond, Patrick, ‘South African people’s power since the mid-1980s: two steps forward, one back’, *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2012)


*Transnational Movements*


Part VI: African political futures


Sample questions

- Is digital communication technology changing who has power over whom in Africa?
- Have digital technologies strengthened protest and/or political change movements in Africa?

Core Reading


Supplementary readings

Publics, politics and technological mediation


*Surveillance and security*


*Digital and development*


Lecture 15. Youth, Students, and Struggle

Sample questions

- Do urban youth matter to African political futures?
- What roles do students play in African politics?

Core Reading


* Abbink, Jan and Ineke van Kessel, Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa, Brill, 2005, Ch. 1, 4, 5


Supplementary reading

African Student Movements

https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2017.1392155


Zeilig, Leo, Revolt and Protest: Student Politics and Activism in Sub-Saharan Africa, I.B. Tauris, 2012, Ch. 1, 2


Heffernan, Anne and Noor Nieftagodien, eds. (2016). Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto ’76. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. See particularly Ch16: Naidoo’s Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa


Social Reproduction Theory, Education, and Intergenerational Politics


See also shorter articles:


See Interview: Aaron Jaffe - Social Reproduction Theory and the Socialist Horizon - with Sara Farris. Available Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CWIw-JD8GE


Youth Politics: Organised and Everyday


Lecture 16. Reimagining and Remaking Africa in the World

Sample questions

- Is Africa no longer post-colonial?
- Have imaginaries of African political futures changed from the colonial period to the present?

Readings

* General Overviews


* Africa and COVID-19


* Review of African Political Economy Discussions:

  
  - Fighting Africa's Social Pandemics (18 May 2020). Available at: http://roape.net/2020/05/18/fighting-africas-social-pandemics/

Reimagining the World, Remaking Africa


Fanon, Frantz (c.1960 [1967]) “This Africa To Come”. In: Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays. Trans. Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press p177-190

Pan-Africanism reprised


Decolonisation and Decoloniality


Francis B. Nyamnjoh, 2019. ‘Decolonizing the University in Africa’ in Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Available Online:


*African Feminisms*


Ch1 (Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects),
Ch4 (Decolonizing Feminism),
Ch11 (Gender Biases in African Historiography),
Ch16 (Definitions of Women and Development: An African Perspective),
Ch21 (African Gender Research and Postcoloniality: Legacies and Challenges)


*Afrocentrism, Negritude & Afrofuturism*


_African Socialisms in the 21st Century_

  Or see shorter article: It is imperative to reconstruct the Internationale of workers and peoples (3 July 2018). Available online: http://www.networkideas.org/featured-articles/2018/07/it-is-imperative-to-reconstruct-the-internationale-of-workers-and-peoples/


Sample examination paper

Answer three of the following questions:

1. Did colonial rule simply reproduce European ideas of the state in Africa?
2. Was African nationalism a failure?
3. Is armed violence in Africa best understood as a social phenomenon?
4. Have African polities been ‘disciplined’ by the global economic order?
5. Does engaging the world economy provide the best route out of poverty for African states?
6. Is good governance and civil society development a precondition for democracy in Africa or its antithesis?
7. What political mobilisation strategies by elites are the most successful in Africa?
8. Are political elites responsible for the ethnicization of politics in Africa?
9. Do African social movements marginalise women?
11. Are digital communications politically emancipatory in Africa?
12. Which actors in Africa stand to gain and lose the most over the 21st century?

Pol 15 Examination Paper 2020-21 (online, open-book, 6 hour window, 4500 max words)

Answer three of the following questions:

1. How might the study of African politics reduce its reliance on Western political thought?
2. In what ways are debates about Africa’s colonial history politically significant today?
3. Why was decolonization in Africa mostly peaceful and what were the effects of this?
4. What does dependency theory illuminate and what does it obscure about the challenges facing post-colonial African economies?
5. Were the failures of Structural Adjustment Programmes in Africa due more to their diagnosis of the problem of African development than their prescription of a solution?
6. Given the growing importance of non-Western trading partners and political allies, why are there not more developmental states in Africa?
7. Does foreign support to develop African civil society enhance African democracy more than undermine it?
8. What is the most important change needed in international interventions in African conflicts in order to advance peace?
9. What is the most persuasive critique of ‘neopatrimonialism’ as an explanation of political authority and the African state?
10. To what extent should identity be relied upon to explain political mobilization and control in Africa?
11. Is a class analysis essential to understand the differences between rural and urban politics in Africa?
12. In what ways do different explanations of violent conflict in Africa disagree on explanations of African politics generally?
13. Have African protests merely changed the faces of power but not the structures of power?
14. Which types of African governments benefit more from digital technology than others?
15. Are students the vanguard of political change in Africa?
16. What distinctive role can Africa play in remaking world politics in the 21st century?

Pol 15 Examination Paper 2019-20 (online, open-book, 3.5 hour window)

Answer three of the following questions:
1. In what way is the study of politics in Africa political?
2. What was the biggest challenge facing newly independent African states?
3. How has the global economic order shaped economic development in Africa?
4. Is the good governance agenda helpful to the political aspirations of citizens of African countries?
5. Is Africa ‘rising’ a story of China ‘rising’?
6. Who are the major beneficiaries of Western peace and humanitarian interventions in African conflicts and crises?
7. In what ways does neopatrimonialism help with an understanding of political authority and behaviour in Africa?
8. Are unfulfilled expectations for democracy in Africa due to the politics of identity?
9. What does a class perspective explain about African politics?
10. Are violent conflicts in Africa more wars of economic accumulation than of political revolution?
11. Do urban protests in Africa influence political change?
12. Who stands to gain the most from Africa’s digital transformations?

Pol 15 Examination Paper 2016-17

Answer three of the following questions:
1. Does the history of colonialism in Africa remain politically contentious today?
2. Have independent states in Africa failed to live up to the promise of nationalism?
3. Is clientelism a symptom or a cause of the problems of political legitimacy in African states?
4. To what extent are elites responsible for the importance of ethnic identity in African politics?
5. Should more attention be paid to class dynamics in the study of African politics?
6. Is violent conflict in Africa best viewed as a cause or a consequence of political crisis?
7. Who has benefited from development in Africa?
8. Has the international economic order hurt the independent African state more than helped it?
9. To what extent have new rising global powers brought new possibilities for development in African states?
10. Do human rights non-governmental organisations in Africa benefit those they claim to serve?
11. Is electoral democracy in crisis in African states?
12. Are patterns of foreign intervention in Africa changing for the better?

Pol 15 Examination Paper 2015-16

Answer three of the following questions:

1. What was colonialism’s most important legacy for politics in post-independence Africa?
2. What was the significance of violence in nationalist struggles in Africa?
3. Are African states strong in their weakness, or weak in their strength, or neither?
4. Do variations in political institutions best explain the role of ethnicity in national politics in African countries?
5. What particular features of African politics require a class analysis to be best understood?
6. Why does most conflict in Africa occur within states and not between them?
7. Has development been a discourse of political control or of political struggle?
8. What has been the impact of the international order upon African states’ development trajectories?
9. To what extent does the “Africa Rising” narrative reflect a fundamental change in Africa’s status internationally?
10. Does violence or non-violence most predominantly characterize contemporary political struggles in Africa?
11. Do we see a push-back against liberal ideas of good governance and human rights from African states today?
12. Are elections a necessary part of democracy in Africa?

Pol 9 Examination Paper 2014-15

Answer three of the following questions:

1. Are the legacies of European colonialism in Africa overstated?
2. In what ways was the anti-colonial struggle in Africa a struggle over history?
3. What does an analysis of the relationship between state and society illuminate about political authority in African states?
4. Is there any trust to the assumption that African politics is all about ethnicity?
5. How useful is the notion of class struggle in understanding African politics?
6. Has the international state system increased or decreased the risk of war in Africa?
7. What best explains Africa’s ‘lost development decade’ in the 1980s?
8. What is new about the good governance agenda in Africa?
9. Are externally supported processes of democratisation in Africa a waste of time and money?
10. Do contemporary social movements in Africa hold promise for political progress emerging from within the continent?
11. Has security and stability in Africa replaced development as the primary concern of Western donor governments?
12. Do Western societies need Africa more than African countries need the West?

Pol 9 Examination Paper 2013-14

Answer three of the following questions:

1. What effects have environmental factors had on the types of political authority that have been common in Africa?
2. Did the nationalism of African anti-colonial movements kill hopes for democracy at independence?
3. Can African ethnicity be a source of progressive political ideas?
4. Is the idea that a social contract underpins African polities fanciful?
5. How much autonomy do African states have to make their own security decisions?
6. How useful is the concept of the labour aristocracy to understanding African politics?
7. Is the conscious planning of African industrialisation inevitably self-defeating?
8. Under what conditions might African states be able to negotiate trade regimes that enable them to flourish?
9. Why has donor thinking about the political management of economic reform in Africa changed over time?
10. Is democracy the only game in town in Africa?
11. What does Africa’s experience of the global economic crisis tell us about contemporary opportunities and challenges for development?
12. Does celebrity advocacy for African development matter?

Pol 9 Examination Paper 2012-13

Answer three of the following questions:

1. What was unique about the way European colonialists projected authority in their African territories?
2. To what extent was the motivating force for African nationalism the question of race?
3. Was the Cold War best understood as a resource or a threat for African rulers? Discuss with reference to one or more cases.
4. How have African politicians responded to the difficulty of mobilising popular political support?
5. Does the political engagement of ethnic identities inevitably generate violence in Africa?
6. Is the poverty of African peasants a result of being neglected or exploited?
7. Why has the idea of African industrialisation fallen out of fashion?
8. What sustains African economic dependence on Western countries?
9. Why did democratisation in Africa stall?
10. Does the idea of “the liberal project” provide the best standpoint for criticising governance or security interventions in Africa?
11. What difference has the rise of China made to Africa?
12. Does the development industry depend on cultivating a sense of moral superiority over Africans?