

CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

POLS/ETHN 375 – University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Spring 2016 – Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45am – CBA 118

Instructor: Dr. Alice Kang

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Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30pm, Wednesday 1-2pm, and by appointment

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

This course seeks answers to two pressing questions. First, why are some countries in Africa wealthy, while others are not? For instance, Botswana's GDP per capita is higher than China's, but countries like Burundi, Central African Republic, and Niger are among the poorest in the world. Second, why does violent conflict arise in some places, and not in others? In sharp contrast to war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, ethnically diverse polities such as Benin and Ghana have yet to witness a single post-colonial war. How are we to make sense of such diversity within the continent? We examine different theories of the causes of wealth and poverty and peace and war. In particular, we consider the impact of geography, precolonial and colonial legacies, institutions, and foreign aid on contemporary conflict and development in Africa and critically use primary sources to evaluate these competing explanations.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, we fulfill two learning outcomes:

SLO 6 Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior.

SLO 9 Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of a global issue.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES

To use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives to understand and evaluate human behavior (SLO 6), students will

Write a **research paper**. The paper will identify a central research question, use theories from class to identify hypotheses and arrive at an argument using appropriate sources (e.g., academic articles and books, raw data). You have two options in terms of topics:

- (1) You may compare a pair of polities on a particular outcome (e.g., why was there genocide in Rwanda but not in Cote d'Ivoire?) (Comparative method)
- (2) You may write an essay that profiles a president of an African country (past or present). For this option, your major task is to make sense of specific policy decisions that the president made while in office. (Biographical and historical analysis)

Regardless of the option you choose, the paper should be 8-10 pages long, including references and tables. **A draft introduction and bibliography (10%) is due February 9. A polished, ready to grade version is due Thursday, March 17.** I will give a preliminary grade on the polished version. If you revise your paper, your preliminary grade can increase, up to 10 percentage points (e.g., from 80/100 to 90/100). Along with an explanatory memo and the polished version, **the revised, final version is due April 28 (25%).** For more, see the handout at the end of this syllabus.

Deliver an engaging **research presentation (5%)** at the end of the semester. Present the paper's central research question, argument, and methods. Seven minutes long.

To exercise exhibit global awareness and knowledge of human diversity (SLO 9), students will

Demonstrate an understanding of Africa's diverse political geography by taking a **map quiz (10%) on January 26.** Correctly identify 30 countries of your choosing on a blank map. Spelling counts. Pass or fail. Online quizzes may help:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/world/do-you-know-africa/>

<http://www.purposegames.com/game/countries-of-africa-quiz>

Demonstrate awareness and knowledge through a **midterm (20%) on February 25.**

Pass 4 out of 5 **reading quizzes (10%).**

Attend and participate in class (15%) and serve as a **country specialist (5%).**

Samples of student work will be collected to assess student learning in the course. The purpose of this assessment is to help faculty improve student learning, not to judge individual student work. Please let me know if you do not wish to have your work included in the ACE evaluation.

Summary of assignments

Research paper (Total 40%)

Draft introduction and bibliography (2/9) 10%

Polished version (3/17)

Revised, final version (4/28) 25%

Research presentation 5%

Exams and quizzes (Total 40%)

Map quiz (1/26) 10%

Midterm (2/25) 20%

Reading quizzes (after 2/25) 10%

Class participation (Total 20%)

Participation 15%

Country specialist 5%

Total 100%

READINGS

Our readings befit an upper-level course in the social sciences. Some of the reading will be quite technical, though rest assured that I do not assume prior coursework in political science, economics, or on Africa. The key is to be able to identify the author's main purpose (or research question), argument, key findings, and methods.

There are two required books for the course. You may buy them at the University Bookstore in the City Campus Union, through your favorite local bookstore, or online (where you might find good deals on used copies). I will also ask Love Library to put these books on three-hour reserve.

1. Leymah Gbowee. 2013. *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*. Beast Books. ISBN-10: 0984295194, ISBN-13: 978-0984295197

2. Nina Munk. 2013. *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty*. Anchor. ISBN-10: 076792942X, ISBN-13: 978-0767929424

Other readings are accessible by copying and pasting the links below or through Blackboard.

RECOMMENDED NEWS SOURCES

As Africa is a dynamic continent, new developments are likely to appear during our semester. I encourage students to follow the news and bring up current events in class. To keep up with what is happening on the continent, I recommend the following:

BBC News – Africa – <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/default.stm>

All Africa – <http://allafrica.com/>

New York Times – <http://nytimes.com>

Economist – <http://economist.com/>

Jeune Afrique (if you read French) – <http://jeuneafrique.com/>

Country-specific newspapers and diaspora-powered websites

Blogs, including chrisblattman.org, africaisacountry.com, and texasinafrica.blogspot.com

Twitter feeds of movers and shakers of your country (particularly English-speaking ones)

POLICIES

See the Q&A at the end of the syllabus for course policies. Most important, if anything minor or major prevents you from fully participating and benefiting from your hard work in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Let's have a great semester!

SCHEDULE

* Subject to change

Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Wk 1, 1/12	Course motivation	- Go through the syllabus in class.	Choose your country for the next assignment
I. Why Are Some Countries Rich While Others Are Poor?			
1/14	Defining development; patterns over time	What is GDP per capita? - http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD - http://www.bbc.com/news/business-13200758 Optional: Arturo Escobar. 1995. "The Problematization of Poverty" in <i>Encountering Development</i> . [B]	Country: Describe GDP per capita since independence 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010. [B] Or http://www.ggdc.net/maddison/maddison-project/data/mpd_2013-01.xlsx
Wk 2, 1/19	We will meet at the Colonial Room, Union Problematic ideas about Africa	<p>- Read the first seven pages only: Robert Kaplan. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy." <i>The Atlantic</i> [B] or http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/</p> <p>- Binyavana Wainaina. 2005. "How to Write About Africa." [B] or http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1</p> <p>- Megan Hershey and Michael Artime. 2014. "Narratives of Africa in a Digital World: <i>Kony 2012</i> and Student Perceptions of Conflict and Agency in Sub-Saharan Africa." <i>PS</i> 47 (3): 636-41. [B]</p> <p>Read one of the three:</p> <p>- Laura Seay. 2012. "How Not to Write About Africa." [B] or http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/25/how-not-to-write-about-africa/</p> <p>- Alexis Madrigal. 2011. "What's Wrong with #FirstWorldProblems." <i>The Atlantic</i> [B] or http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/11/whats-wrong-with-firstworldproblems/248829/</p> <p>- Rasna Warah. 2010. "Images of the 'Dying Africa' Border on Pornography." <i>Daily Nation</i> [B] or http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Images%20of%20the%20Dying%20African%20border%20on%20pornography/-/440808/952042/-/gcvyrqz/-/index.html</p>	

1/21	Geography and development: population growth debate	<p>For population control team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elisabeth Rosenthal. 2012. "Nigeria Tested by Rapid Rise in Population." <i>New York Times</i>. [B] or http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/15/world/africa/in-nigeria-a-preview-of-an-overcrowded-planet.html <p>Against population control team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mary Tiffen, Michael Mortimore, and Francis Gichuki. 1994. <i>More People, Less Erosion: Environmental Recovery in Kenya</i>. London: Overseas Development Institute. Chapter 16. [B] or http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4600.pdf - "In 2013 Facebook Used the Same Amount of Electricity as Burkina Faso," Snippets of Random blog, December 18, 2015, https://nsippets.wordpress.com/2015/12/18/in-2013-facebook-used-the-same-amount-of-electricity-as-burkina-faso/ 	Country: Google the following: total fertility rate [country name]. Sketch the figure in your notebook, noting year 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010
Wk 3, 1/26	Geography and development: other factors	<p>Read for main idea in THREE of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paul Collier. 2008. "The Natural Resource Trap," in <i>The Bottom Billion</i>. [B] - Paul Collier. 2008. "Landlocked with Bad Neighbors," in <i>The Bottom Billion</i>. [B] - Jared Diamond. 2002. "Evolution, Consequences, and Future of Plant and Animal Domestication." <i>Nature</i> 418: 700-7. [B] - Jeffrey Sachs and Pia Malaney. 2002. "The Economic and Social Burden of Malaria." <i>Nature</i> 415: 680-5. [B] 	Map quiz, start of class
1/28	History and development: slavery	<p>Skim for main idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nathan Nunn. 2008. "The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades." <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i>: 139-76. [B] 	Country: Consult Table II on p. 152 in Nunn.
Wk 4, 2/2	History and development: colonial rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mahmood Mamdani. 1996. <i>Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism</i>, pp. 3-8, 16-27. [B] - Robert Woodberry. 2008. "Reclaiming the M-Word: The Legacy of Missions in Non-Western Societies." <i>International Journal of Frontier Missiology</i> 25 (1): 17-23. [B] <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M. Semakula Kiwanuka. 1970. "Colonial Policies and Administrations in Africa: The Myths of the Contrasts." <i>African Historical Studies</i> 3 (2): 295-315. [B] 	
2/4	Institutions and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Claude Ake. 1996. Excerpt from <i>Democracy and Development in Africa</i>, pages TBD. - Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. 2012. Excerpt from <i>Why Nations Fail</i>, pages TBD. - Jared Diamond. 2012. "What Makes Countries Rich or Poor?" <i>The New York Review of Books</i>, June 7. Go to: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/jun/07/what-makes-countries-rich-or-poor/ 	

Wk 5, 2/9	Institutions and development (cont.)	No reading for today.	Draft introduction and bibliography due, start of class
2/11	Foreign aid and development: a primer	No reading for today. Start reading <i>The Idealist</i> .	Country: Reliance on foreign aid [B]
Wk 6, 2/16	Foreign aid and development	Group #1 discussion on <i>The Idealist</i> , in entirety.	
2/18	Foreign aid and development	Group #2 discussion on <i>The Idealist</i> , in entirety.	
Wk 7, 2/23	So many explanations!	In-class exercise	
2/25	Exam day		In-class midterm
II. Why Do Some Countries Experience Major Armed Conflict and Not Others?			
Wk 8, 3/1	Overview of conflict in Africa	- Scott Straus. 2012. "Wars Do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." <i>African Affairs</i> 111 (443): 179-201. [B] - Optional: Joshua Goldstein. 2011. "Think Again: War." <i>Foreign Policy</i> Sept/Oct. Go to: http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/08/15/think-again-war/	Country: Record of conflict between 1960 and the present
3/3	Geography and conflict: climate	- Skim for main idea behind: Solomon Hsiang, Kyle Meng, and Mark Cane. 2011. "Civil Conflicts are Associated with the Global Climate." <i>Nature</i> 476: 438-441. [B] - Steven Pinker. 2011. "Violence Vanquished." <i>Wall Street Journal</i> . [B] or http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904106704576583203589408180.html	
Wk 9, 3/8	Geography and conflict: resource curse	- David Leonard and Scott Straus. 2005. "The Causes of Civil Conflict in Africa," in <i>Africa's Stalled Development</i> . [B]	Country: Describe natural resource dependence
3/10	History and conflict	- Skim for main idea behind: Timothy Besley and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2014. "The Legacy of Historical Conflict: Evidence from Africa." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 108 (2): 319-36. [B] - Reading TBD on the 1994 genocide in Rwanda	Country: Record of conflict between 1400 and 1700
Wk 10, 3/15	Institutions and conflict	- Robert Bates. 2008. <i>When Things Fell Apart</i> , Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 [B] - Andrew Walker. 2012. "What is Boko Haram?" <i>USIP Special Report</i> 308. [B] or http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR308.pdf	
3/17	Liberian Civil War: a primer	- Amos Sawyer. 2004. "Violent Conflicts and Governance Challenges in West Africa: The Case of the Mano River Basin Area." <i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i> 42 (3): 437-63.	Polished draft due, start of class

Wk 11, 3/22, 24	Spring break	Start reading <i>Mighty Be Our Powers</i>	
Wk 12, 3/29	Case study: Liberian Civil War	Group #1 discussion on <i>Mighty Be Our Powers</i> , in entirety.	
3/31	Case study: Liberian Civil War	Group #2 discussion on <i>Mighty Be Our Powers</i> , in entirety.	
Wk 13, 4/5	Sum-up; Presentations prep	(Instructor will return polished drafts on this day.) - Review Bates, <i>When Things Fell Apart</i> - Miller, "The Ten Commandments of Presentations"	Country: Does Bates provide a convincing explanation?
4/7	Research day, no class	Individual meetings with the instructor to discuss revisions	
III. Presentations on Conflict and Development in Africa			
Wk 14, 4/12	Panel #1	Attendance and participation will be graded	
4/14	No class	(Instructor will be giving a presentation at UNC Chapel Hill)	
Wk 15, 4/19	Panel #2	Attendance and participation will be graded	
4/21	Panel #3	Attendance and participation will be graded	
Wk 16, 4/26	Panel #4	Attendance and participation will be graded	
4/28	Conclusion		Final paper due, start of class

Have a great summer!

Course Policies Q & A

Q: How do you grade participation?

A: You will earn an A on your participation if, by the end of the semester, you have attended class with few absences; voluntarily made thoughtful contributions to class by engaging with the readings; and acted in a respectful manner always (this includes not sending text messages).

Do not worry about trying to say something everyday; our class is too big for that. At the same time, hiding in a class of our size is not an option, so everyone will at some point or another participate. This is a good thing: getting used to speaking in a group is an important skill to develop.

Note that I will take attendance periodically. I do this to encourage attendance, for there is a strong and positive correlation between attendance and performance.

Please also note that if you arrive after attendance is taken or leave early, you are considered absent for the day.

Q: What is the format of the midterm?

A: The midterm will be in-class and consist of short identification and short essay questions.

Q: Is there a final?

A: No. This is because I want you to focus on revising your research paper.

Q: What if I miss a quiz or midterm?

A: I do not reschedule quizzes or paper deadlines. As for the midterm, if there is an emergency, you must provide a written excuse, contact name, and phone number for verification purposes.

Q: What if I wish to contest a grade?

A: If you wish to contest a grade, send me an email no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 2 weeks after receiving your grade. Note that when I re-evaluate a grade, I may take off points for other omissions, weaknesses, or errors.

Q: Can you tell me more about the research paper and presentation?

A: Yes, in the first week of class I will give out a handout, so be sure to come to class!

Q: What if I have a learning disability?

A: If you have a disability for which you require accommodations, please contact me by email or in person for a confidential discussion of your needs. It is the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's policy to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, (402) 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Q: What is your policy on cheating?

A: If you use another person's work without giving credit to that person, you will receive 0 points for the assignment and an "F" for the course.

Q: Can I record lectures?

A: Please do not record lectures or other meetings without the securing the instructor's permission first.