The political economy of African development Syllabus

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Course overview
This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to introduce contemporary development issues in Africa. Drawing on literatures from political sciences, economics, sociology and history, it explores the challenges of development in the continent since independence, as well as investigates the influences of governance, institutions, conflicts and external forces in Africa’s development trajectories. This is an applied course that would utilize both theoretical and policy analytical approaches to examine the political and socioeconomic dynamism in contemporary Africa.

This course is guided by questions, such as: Why have most African countries remained underdeveloped, poor and susceptible to conflicts (many of which seem intractable)? What are the past and current roles of the global ‘West’ in Africa? What are the implications of current democratisation and growth trends in Africa? To answer these questions we will explore various political, economic and sociological theories, as well as show historical evidences of such theories, using them as tools to study individual countries as cases for the course. The aim is to present African socio-political and economy experiences through cross-country variations so that students will be equipped with a set of theoretical and analytical tools that will enable them understand development trajectories in Africa.

This course is structured in three parts. In the first part we will take a quick tour of Africa’s colonial structures, as well as the impact of colonialism on the post-colonial development process. Secondly, we will explore the influences of external and internal factors during the post-independence era, focusing on social, political, and economic changes engendered through state-building efforts and their consolidation. Thirdly, as the 21st century has been widely touted as the time for Africa to make the push, we will explore some contemporary development trends and discourse in Africa, which would affirm, or challenge such a position.

Course Requirements
This is a lecture course designed to be accessible to all, but requires students to spend time in reading core literatures and follow current events in Africa to broaden their knowledge and motivate contribution in the class discussion. The class is expected to be interactive and
involves small group presentations. Each student will turn in a total of three different short essays and one term paper by the end of the semester.

**Evaluation and Course Requirements**

**Course Expectations:** Regular attendance, active participation, and critical engagement of the readings are all necessary in order for students to complete this course. Thus, each student is expected to dutifully prepare for each class, attend all classes, and actively participate in class discussions.

**Response Papers:** Students will submit three-page double spaced critical response papers that engage the readings, and demonstrates the student’s understanding of the issues and ideas discussed in the course.

**Mid-Term take Home Examination:** Each student will complete a take-home mid-term essay examination of six to eight pages on the assigned date. The mid-term examination will cover the material engaged in the course up to the point of the examination and is designed to assess each student’s knowledge and understanding of the readings, and course discussion.

**Group Presentation:** Students will participate in a group presentation to be delivered in class on a selected topic and theme of the course designated by the instructor. The presentation along with a collaboratively authored three to five page document will form the assessment criteria for this assignment.

**Final Essay:** Students are required to complete and turn in twelve to fifteen pages essay. Student will take a country of interest and critical examines its contemporary political economy trajectories. The paper should reflect the student’s ability to clearly articulate and logically develop a thesis and reference relevant scholarly literature to support the thesis of the essay.

These are exams and deadlines will be enforced. Late papers will only be accepted under extraordinary circumstances. All essays are double spaced and take-home

**Course Evaluation Criteria:**
- Class attendant and participation 10%
- Periodic Response Papers 20%
- Mid-Term Examination 20%
- Group Presentation 20%
- Final Research Essay 30%
Course Schedule, Topics and Some Associated Reading

Cumulative time for the class is two hours 40 mns divided into two classes per week. Each class will last for 80 minutes. The schedule below specifies lecture topics and readings for each week of the semester. Time will also be set aside at the end for reflection.

Part 1: Background: Understanding African political economy

Week 1: Introduction:
A - Readings


B - Readings


Week 2: Colonialism and its legacy in African development:
A - Readings


B - Readings


Week 3: Development theories and application in Africa
A - Readings


**B - Readings**


**Week 4: Politics of independence in Africa**

**A - Readings**


**B - Readings**


**Part two: post-colonial Africa, state consolidation and nation-building**

**Week 5: State consolidation**

**A - Readings**


**B - Readings**

Week 6: State failure and economic crisis: The boom and burst

A - Readings


B - Readings

- Herbst, J. (2012). Responding to state failure in Africa. Pp. 120-144

Week 7: The decade of diseases, war and conflicts

A - Readings


B - Readings

- Stefan Elbe ‘HIV/AIDS and the Changing Landscape of War in Africa’ *International Security, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Fall 2002), pp. 159–177*

Week 8: The burden of Aid, Loan, and the World Bank in Africa

A - Readings


B - Readings


**Week 9: Globalisation and development in Africa: The transitional era**

**A - Readings**


**B - Readings**


**Part 3: 21st Century; an Africa renaissance?**

**Week 10: The spread of democracy and economic growth**

**A - Readings**


**B - Readings**


Week 11: The era of pro-poor and homegrown development initiatives; a new paradigm shift?

A - Readings


B. Reading


Week 12: African development success stories

A - Readings


B - Readings


Week 13: political and economic challenges: Institutions and economic diversification

A - Readings


**B - Readings**

- Michael Bleaney and David Greenaway The impact of terms of trade and real exchange rate volatility on investment and growth in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Development Economics* Volume 65, Issue 2, August 2001, Pages 491–500

**Week 14: Reflections**