

Colonial Legacies and Post-Independence African Politics POL301-H1F (Summer Term)

Syllabus

Instructor: Alex Dyzenhaus

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Tuesday 12.00-14.00

Thursday 12.00-14.00

Room: RW124 (Ramsey Wright Laboratories,

Office hours by appointment: [Sign up](#) (10 minute time slots, email if you need more time)

Virtual: Monday 14.10-15.10

In Person: Thursday 14.10-15.10 (Sid Smith, Room 3007)

Overview

This course highlights the critical roles of pre-colonial and colonial histories in shaping contemporary political and economic developments in Africa. It covers the emergence of colonial states, the central legacies of colonial rule, and the impact of colonialism in shaping process of state and nation building from independence to the present.

In this course, we will critically examine trends within African politics as their own phenomena while placing them in conversations within the broader subfield of comparative politics. We begin with a review of the history of colonialism on the continent. In this class, we will discuss how the colonial state interacted with existing political formations in Africa and how the legacies of that interaction continue to shape African politics though the independence and contemporary eras.

Then, we will move into specific issue areas and institutions. In the second section of the class, we will discuss how colonialism has impacted the development of various institutions and processes, from traditional rule, land rights, development, resources, conflict and electoral competition.

Assignment Overview

Assignment	Total Grade	Number	Assigned	Due
Participation	15%	N/A	Continuous	<i>Continuous</i>
Reading Reflections	10%	10	May 9 th	<i>Before Class 10.00am</i>
Response 1	15%	1	May 16 th	<i>May 23rd</i>
Country Case Study	20%	1	May 11 th	<i>May 30th</i>
Response 2	15%	1	May 30 th	<i>June 6th</i>
Final Paper	25%	1	May 11 th	<i>June 19th</i>

Format

This class is in person and attendance (see below) is mandatory.

Course Tools

We will use Quercus as the central course portal (found at <http://q.utoronto.ca>). Over the course of the term we may occasionally make use of Cahoots, a software platform that will allow me to include polls, quizzes and other interactive activities into our classes. I will provide registration information for this.

Readings

The required reading for the course will, ideally, be available through online resources provided by the library, and available via Quercus. They will be found under the “Modules” tab on Quercus. This class will be heavily based on thinking through the theoretical and empirical contributions of the assigned readings. It is expected that you do the readings before the class. You will be required to demonstrate knowledge of the readings in all graded parts of the course.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

All written assignments will be submitted and graded over Quercus under the assignments tab. You will receive more in-depth prompts for each of these assignments

Participation: 15%

Students are expected to attend class and participate regularly. 15% of your grade will be made up through attendance and participation in your discussion sections. Given how few classes we have, students who miss more than one class without an excuse or do not participate actively in discussions will have their participation grades lowered significantly. Between class 3.2 and 4.1 I encourage you to meet with me during office hours to know you might be able to improve this grade.

Given the size of the class, I will make space in each lecture for substantive discussion time. Further, I expect students to meet with me a minimum of twice during office hours during the semester: once to discuss the country case study and once to discuss the final paper. These meetings can contribute to the final participation grade.

Reading Reflections: 10% (10 reflections worth 1% each)

You will write one short reading reflection (max 50-150 words) for each class between weeks 2-6. These are due at 10.00am on Quercus before each class. In these, you will talk about the concepts in the readings that interested you and pose a question about the readings or the topic. These will be marked on a complete/incomplete basis, with one point awarded to a complete and on time reading reflection, half a point for a late reading reflection and no points for an incomplete reading reflection 48 hours after the due date.

Your thoughts in these can overlap with your Response Papers, but be mindful to change the wording so that you do not just copy sections of one into the other. Further, you can feel free to bring your thoughts and questions into the discussion for participation (and I might do the same).

Response Papers (30%: 2 Responses worth 15% each)

For two short topics, you will be required to write a short 500-750 word response linking the material to the themes and concepts we are discussing in class. Largely, these case studies will be based on mixed media sources (provided by the instructor in the prompt). In these response papers, you will link the themes raised in a mix of journalistic, podcast or video sources to the themes discussed in class.

You will receive a prompt to guide your response at least one week before the paper is due. You can link the material to readings from any week in the course and you can additionally make connections to your term paper itself. Keep in mind that the week around which the response paper is assigned will be especially pertinent to the topic.

- *Traditional Authorities and Land: due Class 3.1*

- *Corruption and the Contemporary State: due Class 5.1*

Country Case Study (20%)

Each student will choose a country by the end of Week 2 and will work to produce a 750-1000 word report on that country. This report will give a brief history of the country, summarize its current political regime, any past regime transitions, its economic basis and cover any major political issues or advances made in the country. This report will be due in Class 4.1.

Finally, you will identify a certain Afrobarometer survey and a set of questions that will be of interest for your argument for the final paper. This does not entail analyzing the data, but just learning how to identify it.

Final Paper (25%)

The final paper will be a self-guided research paper written about the evolution and development of a set of institutions in relation to one (or two) countries within the African continent. Please meet with me to sort this out well before the end of Week 3. I expect your paper to ask a question about *why* a country (or set of countries) has a set of contemporary outcomes or explain *how* certain they developed certain institutions. For this, you need to make an argument and refrain from summarizing. You can feel free to incorporate some material from your Country Case Study into the final paper, however the final paper will involve argumentation and is a very different project than the Country Case Study. The final paper will be 2000-2500 words.

Absences and Extensions

Missing any assignment or test will require acceptable justification, and that absences be registered through U of Ts online absence declaration.

There are only in general three forms of acceptable documentation, and no extensions will be granted without appropriate documentation, without exceptions, as per the policy of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Any documentation related to illness or injury must be provided within one week of the absence or due date. In the case of covid-19 related restrictions we will be guided by University policy around acceptable documentation for absences.

- 1) Absence Declaration: Those who are absent owing to illness or family emergency are required to declare their absence through the form available on ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu, and to inform me directly.
- 2) A College Registrar's Letter: This is a letter that only senior College Registrarial staff are authorized to write. It should identify itself as a "College Registrar's Letter." Such a letter is likely when the student has extensive personal difficulties or when a situation or condition affects a number of courses. No additional details are required.
- 3) Accessibility Services Letter: This sort of letter may address needed accommodations or document on-going disability issues that have made absence or lateness unavoidable, and requires registration with accessibility services.

As an in-class policy, more than one unexcused absence will count against your participation grade. Please email me in advance if you will be absent in this way.

Notes on Assignments

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a crime. If you are unsure what plagiarism is or don't know how to avoid it, please see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>. Plagiarism is not the only academic offence; forgery and falsification of documents, submission of work for which credit has already been obtained or is being obtained, citing or referring to a concocted source, and others are also academic offences. As stated in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, I am required to discuss any suspected academic offence with the student suspected and, if the suspicion remains, report the offence to the department chair. Do not put us or yourself in this position; I am ethically and legally required to follow the university's procedures. For more information, please see the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

Plagiarism Detection

Students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

AI Writing Tools

- The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, is prohibited.
- The knowing use of generative artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants, for the completion of, or to support the completion of, an examination, term test, assignment, or any other form of academic assessment, may be considered an academic offense in this course.
- Representing as one's own idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated may be considered an academic offense in this course.
- This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

Late Penalties

Deadlines are firm and fixed. Without a medical note issued by U of T's Health Services, every late assignment (excluding the reading reflections, which have their own late policy) will have 3% of the grade deducted for each 24 hours that the assignment is late (which begins the minute the assignment is due).

Accessibility

If you are concerned about an on-going health issue, please contact Accessibility Services so that they and we may work together to address any accommodations you might need. You can speak to them at their office in suite 400 on the fourth floor of 455 Spadina Avenue or check their website: <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. You can also email them at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or call them at 416-978-8060.

Resources

Mental Health

- [Health and Wellness \(St George\)](#)
- [Health and Counselling Centre \(UTM\)](#)
- [Health and Wellness Centre \(UTSC\)](#)
- [U of T My Student Support Program](#)

- You can access U of T My Student Support Program (U of T My SSP) 24/7 by calling 1-844-451-9700. Outside of North America, call 001-416-380-6578.
- U of T My SSP provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost to you. You can call or chat with a counsellor directly from your phone whenever, wherever you are.
- Ongoing support is available over the phone in 146 languages. Immediate support is available over the phone in 35 languages and over chat in simplified Chinese, English, French and Spanish.

Writing Resources

- [St. George Academic Success Centre](#)
- [UTM Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre:](#)
- [UTSC Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)
- [U of T Writing Centers](#) (There's one for each UTSG college [here](#))

Other Resources

- [U of T Equity Offices](#)

Other Matters

Email Policy

I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 48 hours. Please note that I will not, however, be checking our e-mails on weekends or after hours so do not leave your requests or queries to the last minute. Complex and substantive questions – including discussions of grading – should be raised in office hours, not over email. As a rule, I ask that you wait 24 hours before emailing me about a grade that you received for an assignment.

All UofT students are required to have a valid UofT email address and to check it as well as the course page on Quercus regularly to access relevant information about the course, and any updates. You are responsible for ensuring that your UofT email address is set up AND properly entered in the ROSI system.

Discussion

I want to make this class and its discussions inclusive of all identities and experiences, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability and nationality. While I can't cover them all here, I would gladly discuss in class or in office hours ways to make the sections more productive and fun spaces for everyone. If you ever have a concern about discussions, tone, participation, preferred pronouns or anything else feel free to bring it up in section, send me an email or chat with me in office hours. Personally, I use he/his/him pronouns. I ask that we all listen to each other in a respectful, generous and considerate manner and consider each other's points and positions when having a discussion. Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

I ask that you only use laptops and tablets for the purposes of consulting class material and for taking notes. I also ask that you do not use phones during class. If I see your phone out I will ask you to put it away.

Schedule

Class 1.1: Introduction

May 9

- Táíwò, Olúfẹmi. 2022. “It Never Existed”. Aeon. <https://aeon.co/essays/the-idea-of-precolonial-africa-is-vacuous-and-wrong>
- Òní, Oláolúwa. 2023. “In Defense of Precolonial Africa”. Africa is a Country. <https://www.africasacountry.com/2023/04/in-defense-of-precolonial-africa>

Class 1.2: The Colonial State and Modes of Rule

May 11

- Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton University Press. **Chapter 2**.
- Berry, Sara. 1992. “Hegemony on a Shoestring: Indirect Rule and Access to Agricultural Land.” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 62 (3): 327–55.
- Müller-Crepon, Carl. 2020. “Continuity or Change? (In)Direct Rule in British and French Colonial Africa.” *International Organization* 74 (4). **Pages 707–717 and 735–736**.

Class 2.1: Power and Control

May 16

- Herbst, Jeffrey Ira. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.
- Hassan, Mai. 2020. *Regime Threats and State Solutions: Bureaucratic Loyalty and Embeddedness in Kenya*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.
- Optional: Bratton, Michael. 1979. “Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia.” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 9 (1/2): 56–62. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1166943>.

Class 2.2: Traditional Authority

May 18

- Boone, Catherine. 2018. “Property and Land Institutions: Origins, Variations and Political Effects.” In *Institutions and Democracy in Africa: How the Rules of the Game Shape Political Developments*, edited by Nic Cheeseman, 61–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Read pages 61-77 (optional to read the rest)**.
- Ntsebeza, Lungisile. 2005. *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of the Land in South Africa*. Brill. Conclusion. **Pages 295-299**.
- Mnisi, Sindiso, and Aninka Claassens. 2009. “Rural Women Redefining Land Rights in the Context of Living Customary Law.” *South African Journal on Human Rights* 25 (3). **Read pages 491–502**.

Class 3.1: “Neo-Patrimonialism” as a Concept

May 23

- Cheeseman, Nic. 2018. “Understanding African Politics: Bringing the State Back In.” In *Institutions and Democracy in Africa: How the Rules of the Game Shape Political Developments*, Edited by Nic Cheeseman, 1–38.

- Mkandawire, Thandika. 2015. "Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections." *World Politics* 67 (3): 563–612.
- Optional: Wai, Zubairu. 2012. "Neo-Patrimonialism and the Discourse of State Failure in Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 39 (131): 27–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2012.658719>.

Class 3.2: Institutions and Development

May 25

- Ricart-Huguet, Joan. 2021. "Colonial Education, Political Elites, and Regional Political Inequality in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies*.
- Mkandawire, Thandika. 2010. "On Tax Efforts and Colonial Heritage in Africa." *The Journal of Development Studies* 46 (10): 1647–69.

Class 4.1: Resources and Extraction in Post-Independence Africa

***Class is from 12.00-13.00**

May 30

- Jensen, Nathan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2004. "Resource Wealth and Political Regimes in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 37 (7): 816–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414004266867>. **Read Pages 816-822.**
- Hillbom, Ellen. 2012. "Botswana: A Development-Oriented Gate-Keeping State." *African Affairs* 111 (442): 67–89.
- Handley, Antoinette. 2008. *Business and the State in Africa: Economic Policy-Making in the Neo-Liberal Era*. Cambridge University Press. **Read Pages 207-222.**

Class 4.2: Development

***Class is from 13.00-14.00**

June 1st

- Mustapha, Abdul Raufu. 2011. "Zimbabwean Farmers in Nigeria: Exceptional Farmers or Spectacular Support?" *African Affairs* 110 (441): 535–61.
- Oliveira, Ricardo Soares de. 2007. "Business Success, Angola-Style: Postcolonial Politics and the Rise and Rise of Sonangol." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (4): 595–619.

Class 5.1: The Roots of Conflict

June 6th

- Ajulu, Rok. 2002. "Politicised Ethnicity, Competitive Politics and Conflict in Kenya: A Historical Perspective." *African Studies* 61 (2): 251–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0002018022000032947>.
- Cheeseman, Nic, and Miles Tendi. 2011. "The Internal Dynamics of Power-Sharing in Africa." *Democratization* 18 (2): 336–65.

Class 5.2: Managing Diversity in the Post-Colonial State

Jun 8th

- Suberu, Rotimi T. 1993. "The Challenge of Ethnic Conflict: The Travails of Federalism in Nigeria." *Journal of Democracy* 4 (4): 39–53.
- Archibong, Belinda. 2019. "Explaining Divergence in the Long-Term Effects of Precolonial Centralization on Access to Public Infrastructure Services in Nigeria."

World Development 121 (September). **Read pages 123–30.**
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.04.014>.

Class 6.1: Democracy and Elections

June 13th

- Opalo, Ken Ochieng'. 2022. "Colonialism and Institutional Persistence: Mixed Legislative Legacies in Ghana and Kenya." *Journal of Historical Political Economy* 2 (1): 29–64. <https://doi.org/10.1561/115.000000023>.
- Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas Van de Walle. 1994. "Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa." *World Politics* 46 (4): 453–89. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950715>.
- Optional: Bleck, Jaimie, and Nicolas van de Walle. 2018. *Electoral Politics in Africa since 1990: Continuity in Change*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.

Class 6.2: Democratization

June 15th

- Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda. 2019. "Sudan's Uprising: The Fall of a Dictator." *Journal of Democracy* 30 (4): 89–103.
- Hassan, Mai, and Ahmed Kodouda. 2023. "Sudan's Generals Are Dragging the Country Toward Disaster". *Foreign Affairs*
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/sudan/sudans-generals-are-dragging-country-toward-disaster>