

University of Toronto,
Faculty of Arts and Science,
Department of Political Science,

Academic Year 2022-2023

Contemporary African Politics: Dynamics and Challenges **POL 309H1 S, LEC0101**

Instructor: Prof. Ato Kwamena Onoma

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Class time: Wednesday 2-4pm

Classroom: RW 140

Office Hours: Wednesday 12-1pm (or by appointment through email)

This course explores the main drivers of political organization and change in contemporary Africa, focusing on how national, regional, and international factors shape institutions, patterns of participation and political change. It considers major scholarly debates in the study of African politics and political economy and develops analytical skills for comparative study of this diverse continent.

FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS: This is a lecture with a significant discussion segment. This course will be in-person.

PREREQUISITES: 1.0 credit in POL/ JPA/ JPF/ JPI/ JPR/ JPS/ JRA courses

ASSESSMENT

- *Class participation (15%):* Informed and sustained participation informed by course readings during the semester will earn you a further 10% of the final grade.
- *Africa map quiz (10%):* A closed-book Africa map quiz administered in class on week 4 will count for 5% of the final grade.
- *Analysis of work by an African writer (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. 2003. Purple*

Hibiscus. Harper Collins) (20%): Carefully read the novel and analyze it with one or more of the lessons of this course in mind. Be explicit in relating the novel to the political economic issues treated in class. This is not supposed to just be a summary or general review of the novel, but an effort to show the ways in which it engages various facets of contemporary African political economy. The paper should be 3 pages long (New Times Roman, Font 12, double-spaced). Submit online papers by class time on **March 15, 2023** through **Original**. This is a hard deadline. A 2% (of 20% of the total grade for this course) penalty will be assessed each day, including weekends on all unauthorized late submissions. Keep a copy of your paper until the corrected assignment is returned to you.

- *Mid-term take home, open book test (25%):* You will have one week to submit your response (4 double-spaced pages each, Times New Roman, font 12: around 1400 words) to one out of three questions posed by the instructor. All papers must be submitted online by 5pm on **February 15, 2023** through **Original**. This is a hard deadline. A 2% (of 30% of the total grade for this course) penalty will be assessed each day, including weekends on all unauthorized late submissions. Keep a copy of your exams until the corrected assignment is returned to you.
- *Final take home, open book test (30%):* You will have two weeks to submit your response (4 double-spaced pages each, Times New Roman, font 12: around 1500 words) to one out of three questions posed by the instructor. You will receive the questions no later than March 22, 2023. All papers must be submitted online by 5pm on **April 11, 2023** through **Original**. This is a hard deadline. A 2% (of 30% of the total grade for this course) penalty will be assessed each day, including weekends on all unauthorized late submissions. Keep a copy of your exams until the corrected assignment is returned to you. Submit late responses to the instructor by email.

ABSENCE: Students who absent themselves from class should complete the Absence Declaration form available to them directly on ACORN. Students should also inform the instructor of their absence.

EXTENSIONS: The deadlines for submission of assignments are hard deadlines. Extensions will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances. To discuss an extension, come to office hours at least one week before the assignment is due. I do not discuss extensions by email. *Any late submissions that have not been granted an extension by the instructor will incur the penalty indicated for each assessment.*

PLAGIARISM and submission of examination papers: “Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>”.

“Normally, 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>).”

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> as soon as possible.

COURSE MATERIALS: The materials below are required readings that must be completed before class. Almost all are available electronically through the University of Toronto library website. Those not available through the library website can be found in electronic format on the Quercus site for this class. Readings that are not available electronically can be found on short term loan – Course Reserve at Roberts Library.

Week 1: Decolonization and self-determination

- Adom Getachew. 2019. *Worldmaking after empire: The rise and fall of self-determination* Princeton: Princeton University Press (Ch: 1, 3, 4) [Online]

Week 2: Economic reform and democratic governance

- Mkandawire, Thandika. 2001. Thinking about Developmental States in Africa. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25 (3): 289–313.
- Thandika Mkandawire. 1999. Crisis management and the making of “choiceless democracies”, in Richard Joseph ed. *State, conflict, and democracy in Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner)
- Adebayor Olukoshi. 2003. The Elusive Prince of Denmark: Structural Adjustment and the Crisis of Governance in Africa, in Thandika Mkandawire and Charles Soludo eds. *African voices on structural adjustment* (Dakar: CODESRIA).

Week 3: Aid and development

- Adia Benton. 2015. *HIV exceptionalism: Development through disease in Sierra Leone*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Ch: 1, 2, 5) [Online]

Week 4: Institutions: Property rights

- Hernando de Soto. 2000. *The mystery of capital: Why capitalism triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere else*. New York: Basic Books (Ch: 1, 2, 3)

Week 5: Politics and health

- Simukai Chigudu. 2020. *The political life of an epidemic: Cholera, crisis and citizenship in Zimbabwe*. New York: Cambridge University Press (Ch: Introduction, 1, 2, 3) [Online]

Week 6: Youth in Africa's political economy

- Alcinda Honwana. 2012. *The time of youth: Work, social change, and politics in Africa*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press. (Ch: 1, 2, 3, 4) [Excerpts]

Week 7: Social policy in Africa

- Katja Hujo. 2021. Rethinking social policy in Africa- A transformative approach, in Jimi Adesina ed. *Social policy in the African context* (Dakar: CODESRIA)
- Ndangwa Noyoo and Emmanuel Boon. 2021. Nation-building and the nationalist discourse: Revisiting social policy in Ghana and Zambia in the first decade of Independence, in Jimi Adesina ed. *Social policy in the African context* (Dakar: CODESRIA)
- Jimi Adesina. 2021. Social policy in the African context: An introduction, in Jimi Adesina ed. *Social policy in the African context* (Dakar: CODESRIA)

Week 8: Migration

- Caroline Melly. 2011. Titanic tales of missing men: Reconfigurations of national identity and gendered presence in Dakar, Senegal, *American Ethnologist* 38 (2): 361-76.
- Ato Onoma. 2021. The allure of scapegoating return migrants during a pandemic, *Medical Anthropology* 40 (7): 653-66.

Week 9: Citizenship: Gender and sexuality

- Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí. 1997. *The invention of women: making an African sense of western gender discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Ch: 1, 2) [Online]
- Awino Okech. 2021. Gender and state-building conversations: the discursive production of gender identity in Kenya and Rwanda, *Conflict, Security & Development* 21 (4): 501-515
- Aminata Mbaye. 2018. Queer political subjectivities in Senegal: Gaining a voice within new religious landscapes of belonging. *Critical African Studies* 10 (3): 301-14.

Week 10: Citizenship: ethnicity

- Peter Ekeh. 1975. Colonialism and the two publics in Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1): 91-112.
- Kimuli Kasara. 2007. Tax Me If You Can: Ethnic Geography, Democracy, and the Taxation of Agriculture in Africa. *The American Political Science Review* 101 (1): 159–72.
- Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh. 2000. Capitalism and autochthony: The seesaw of mobility and belonging. *Public Culture* 12 (2): 423-452.

Week 11: Wars and violence

- Zubairu Wai. 2012. *Epistemologies of African conflicts : Violence, evolutionism and the war in Sierra Leone*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan (Ch: 1, 2, 4) [Online]
- Thandika Mkandawire. 2002. The terrible toll of post-colonial rebel movements in Africa. *Journal of modern African studies* 40 (2): 181-215.

Week 12: Radicalization and terrorism

- Roland Marchal and Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem. 2018. What is the concept of “radicalization” good for?, *Politique africaine*, 149 (1): 5-20.
- Rahmane Idrissa. 2021. The Sahel: A cognitive mapping. *New Left Review* 132 (Nov/Dec): 5-39