POLI- 4911-WA: Contemporary African Conflicts
Course Outline

Winter 2017

Instructor: Zubairu Wai
Office: RB 2041
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30pm-2:30pm, or by appointment
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Days: Thursday, 11:30am-02:30pm, RB 1049

Course Description

Since the 1990s, a number of African countries have experienced incidents of armed conflicts, civil strife and political violence, which have led to problematic and stereotypical generalisations about the continent as a land of crisis and failure, as well as a moral and security challenge to the West. Various perspectives have emerged to interpret conflicts on the continent as has increasing international policy interventions aimed purportedly at resolving these conflicts. Organised as an advanced undergraduate seminar, the purpose of this course is to critical examine the realities of armed conflict, civil wars and political violence in Africa since the 1990s, and critically interrogate the dominant perspectives used to explain them and the politics that these perspective make possible in terms of international policy intervention in response to these conflicts. What are the dominant perspectives on contemporary African conflicts? Who produces them, how and why? What are the epistemological structures within which they are produced and what is their condition of possibility? How do these perspectives define Africa's position in the world, and what is their complicity the articulation of international policy toward Africa as a result of these conflicts? And finally, what alternative explanatory models may allow for the understanding the conflicts beyond problematic and stereotypical generalisations. These are some of the questions that this course will attempt to address.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students should:

- Have a critical understanding of the major issues relating to contemporary armed conflicts, civil wars and political violence in postcolonial Africa;
- Be conversant with the dominant theoretical perspectives on and about contemporary African conflicts, the discourses they produce, the politics they make possible and their limitations
- Have the conceptual and theoretical tools to critically analyse and research issues relating to armed conflicts and political violence in Africa;
- Have a grasp of the power-knowledge regimes and the discourses they fashion about conflicts, violence and civil wars in Africa
- Be able to conduct critical and policy relevant research relating to conflicts, civil wars and political violence
- Have knowledge of the range of theories and key questions explaining armed conflicts and civil wars in Africa, and how they are related to each other as well as international policy

Course Structure, Requirements and Evaluation

This course comprises 12 weekly seminars based on student-led presentations of the readings. Each class will begin with these student-led oral presentations on the assigned readings of the week, the order of which will be decided on the first day of class. We will meet on Thursdays from 11:30am to 2:30pm in RB-1049. Those registered on the course are required to regularly attend classes, do the assigned readings before coming to class, do at least one class presentation on the weekly assigned readings, and take part in class discussions. They are also required to complete a short critical review essay, and submit a final research paper.

The final grade will be calculated in the following manner:

Attendance:	20%
Presentation:	20%
Short critical Review Essay:	20%
Conflict Analysis and Policy Recommendations:	40%

1. Attendance & Participation: (20%)

As this is an advanced undergraduate seminar, its success will depend on attendance, preparedness, and participation. Students registered on this courses are required to regularly attend classes, do the assigned readings before coming to class and actively engage in class discussions and debates. A register of attendance will be kept throughout the duration of the course. As well, each student should submit at least one question each week based on the readings.

2. Seminar Presentation: (20%)

Each class will be organised around student-led presentations. Every student must do at least one oral presentation in class. The order of presentations will be decided on the first day of class. Typically, oral presentations should be between 15 and 30 minutes per presenter (depending on enrolment and the number of students presenting). The main focus of class discussions will be the assigned readings and related issues. The presentations will be evaluated based on grasp of the material/topic, quality of analysis, success in synthesising the readings and relating them to the themes of the week as well as the overall theme of the course.

3. Short Review Essay (20%):

The short critical review essay should critically analyse one full length feature film from the list provided below, focusing on the way it fictionalises and represents conflicts on the continent, and the image of Africa it portrays. **The review should be 5, and no more than 7 pages (double-spaced)**, excluding the title page and list of reference of cited work. Please select from the following feature films:

1. *Black Hawk Down* (Ridley Scott, Revolution Studios/Columbia Pictures, 2001)
2. *Tears of the Sun* (Antoine Fuqua, Revolution Studios/Sony Pictures, 2003)
3. *The Interpreter* (Sydney Pollack, Working Title Films/ Universal Pictures, 2005)
4. *Blood Diamond* (Edward Zwick, Virtual Studios/ Warner Bros. Pictures, 2006)
5. *Beast of No Nations* (Cary Joji Fukunaga, Red Crown Productions/ Netflix, 2015)

Any student interested in reviewing a movie that is not listed, must first clear it with the instructor

otherwise the assignment will not be accepted.

5. Conflict Analyses and Policy Recommendations (40%):
The final assignment comprises two parts: The first part presents an analysis of an African conflict of the student's choice. **It should be 12 and no more than 15 pages (double-spaced) long**, excluding the title page and list of reference of cited work. The second Part, presents, in light of the analyses, policy recommendations for resolving the conflict. The policy section, should **be no more than 5 pages (double-spaced).** As a research essay, the conflict analyses will be evaluated based on grasp of the issues, quality of argument, depth of analysis and originality of approach, as well as structure, organisation, grammar, referencing and formatting. The policy should be both innovative and practical, and must reflect the analyses.

Please Note:

- While it is the responsibility of all students to choose the specific conflict they want to analyse based on their individual interests, such conflicts should first be discussed with the instructor.
- All written work should have a cover page indicating the title of the paper, the name of student and his/her student number, as well as the name of the instructor, the department and course.
- In terms of formatting, all written work should be doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point fonts, 1-inch margin justified, and should be handed in on the due date in class. (Manipulating the margins or font size will be penalised).
- Barring any extenuating circumstance, all written assignments **must** be submitted on or before the due date, otherwise a 2 per cent per day penalty will apply each day the assignment is late for up to a week, after which, it will be rejected.
- Essays exceeding the maximum length will not be accepted.
- For citation and referencing, please refer to either the Harvard or Chicago manual of citation for all written work.
- **Failure to follow these instructions will cause you to lose 10% of the total points scored on the assignment.**

Required texts:

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012)

Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011)

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* ((Princeton; NJ & Oxford: Princeton University Press 2001)

Chris Coulter, *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives through War and Peace in Sierra Leone* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009)

Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resource in Sierra Leone*. (London and Oxford: The International African Institute & James Currey, 1996)

Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and New Wars: The Merging of Security and Development*. (London: Zed Books 2001)

Contemporary African Conflicts Course Kit

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs can request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Please endeavour, at the earliest opportunity, to advice the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of your special needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate such needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

Policy on Electronic Devices

Cell phones are distracting and therefore should be turned off and kept out of sight during lectures. A visible phone will be assumed to being used. In such a scenario, the instructor may ask the offending student to leave the class. Except where prior permission is sought from the instructor, no audio or video recording of lectures is allowed. Where permission is sought and granted, such recordings should be solely for private use.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 12): Introduction to the Course

• Introductions, aims and objectives of the course; Discussion of grading and allocation of presentations

Week 2 (Jan. 19): Framing of African Conflicts: The Knowledge Question

Required Readings

Achille Mbembe, 'Time on the Move.' Introduction in *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); pp. 1-23

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); Introduction and Chapter 1; pp. 1-58

Séverine Autesserre, 'Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and

their Unintended Consequences,' *African Affairs*, 111:442, (2012), pp. 202-222.

[Note: Remember Friday, 20 January, 2017 is the final date of registration]

Week 3 (Jan 26): The 'New Wars' Idea: New Barbarism & the Ethnic Hatred Thesis
Required Readings

Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, and Disease Are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet,' *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994), pp. 44-76.

Mary Kaldor, *New War, Old War: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, 2e (Cambridge: Polity, 2006); Intro, Chapters 1 & 4; pp. 1-30; 69-89.

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); pp. 113-122

Stathis N. Kalyvas, '"New" and "Old" Civil Wars, a Valid Distinction?' *World Politics*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2001), pp. 99-118.

Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone* (London & Oxford: International African Institute & James Currey, 1996). Introduction, pp. xiii-xxix

Week 4: (Feb 2): Regime Type as Explanation for Conflicts: Neopatrimonialism
Required Readings

Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (London: Polity 2011); Chapter 3: Neopatrimonialism, pp. 55-71

Patrick Chabal & Jean Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999). Chapters 6 and 7—pp. 77-109

Morten Bøås, 'Liberia and Sierra Leone: Dead Ringers? The Logic of Neopatrimonial Rule,' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (2001), pp. 697-723

Mats Utas, 'Introduction: Bigmanity and network governance in African conflicts'. In Mats Utas (ed.) *African Conflicts and Informal Power: Big Men and Networks* (London: Zed, 2012); pp. 1 - 31

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); pp. 122-155

Week 5 (Feb 9): Economic Explanations of Civil Wars: 'Greed or Grievance'?
Required Readings

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* Vol. 56, no. 4 (2004), pp. 563–95

Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); Chapter 4; pp. 86-113

David Keen, 'Organised Chaos: Not the New World Order We Ordered.' In: Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger, and Mathew Krain (eds.), *Globalisation and the Challenge of a New Century: A Reader*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 140–48.

Christopher Cramer, 'Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War,' *World Development* Vol. 30, no. 2 (2002), pp. 1845–1864.

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); pp. 155-170

Week 6 (Feb 16): The Discourse of State Failure & Warlord Politics

Required Readings

Robert I. Rotberg, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States' In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.) When States Fail: Causes and Consequences (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 1-49

Jean-Germain Gros, 'Towards a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: Decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Haiti' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Sep., 1996), pp. 455-471

William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 1998); introduction & Chapter 1—pp.1-44

Charles T. Call, 'The Fallacy of the "Failed State"', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 8 (2008), pp. 1491-1507.

Zubairu Wai, 'On the Limits of Africanist Knowledge: International Relations and the Poverty of the Discourse of 'State Failure' in Africa.' In Zubairu Wai & Marta Iniguez de Heredia (eds.), *International Relations and Discourses of Africa's Nonfulfillment* (London & New York: Routledge, 2017; forthcoming), pp. 16-39

Week 7 (Feb 23): No Class [Study Break 20 - 24 February]

Week 8 (March 2): Identity and Violence: Ethnicity and Religion

Required Readings

Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (London: Polity 2011); Chapters 6 & 7: Ethnicity and Religion, pp. 113-146

Edith R. Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, no. 4 (1969), pp. 521-532

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* ((Princeton; NJ & Oxford: Princeton University Press 2001), Chapters 1, 3, 6 & 7; pp. 3-39; 76-106; & 159-232

Mahmood Mamdani, 'The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency' *London Review of Books,* Vol. 29, No. 5 (8 March 2007) accessed at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mahmood-mamdani/the-politics-of-naming-genocide-civil-war-insurgency

[Remember: Critical Review Essay due]

Week 9 (March 9): Case Study: The Sierra Leonean Civil War (1991-2001)
Required Readings

Zubairu Wai, *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); Chapters 3 and 5; pp. 93-112 & 171-226

Ibrahim Abdullah, 'Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front/Sierra Leone', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jun., 1998), pp. 203-235

Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF-SL), *Footpath to Democracy: Towards a New Sierra Leone*. (Camp Zogoda, Sierra Leone, 1995).

Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resource in Sierra Leone*. (London and Oxford: The International African Institute & James Currey, 1996); 34-60

[Note: Remember, Friday 10 March, 2017 is the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty]

Week 10 (March 16): African Conflicts and the Question of Gender
Required Readings

Chris Coulter, *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives through War and Peace in Sierra Leone* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009); Chapters 3, 4 & 5; pp. 95-180

Paul Kirby & Marsha Henry, 'Rethinking Masculinity and Practices of Violence in Conflict Settings,' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vo. 14, no.4 (2012), pp. 445-449

Paul Higate, 'Peacekeepers, Masculinities, and Sexual Exploitation,' *Men and Masculinities* Vol. 10, no. 1 (2007), pp. 99-119

Week 11 (March 23): African Conflicts and Global Terrorism: Mali, Nigeria & Somalia
Required Readings

Aliyu Odamah Musa, 'Socio-economic incentives, new media and the Boko Haram campaign of violence in Northern Nigeria,' *Journal of African Media Studies* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2012), pp. 111–124

Debora Valentina Malito, 'Building terror while fighting enemies: how the Global War on Terror deepened the crisis in Somalia,' *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 10 (2015); pp. 1866–1886

Susanna D. Wing, 'French intervention in Mali: strategic alliances, long-term regional presence?, Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 27, no. 1 (2016), pp. 59-80

Baz Lecocq et al. 'One hippopotamus and eight blind analysts: a multivocal analysis of the 2012 political crisis in the divided Republic of Mali,' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 40, no. 137(2013), pp. 343-357

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, 'The 'War on Terror' frame and Washington Post's linking of the Sierra Leone Civil War to 9/11 and al-Qaeda: Implications for US foreign policy in Africa." *Journal of African Media Studies* Vol. 4, No 1 (2012), pp. 27-44.

Week 12 (March 30): Responding to African Conflicts: Liberal Peace

Required Readings

Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and New Wars: The Merging of Security and Development*. (London: Zed Books 2001), Chapters 1–3; pp. 1-73.

Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, 'Global Governance, Liberal Peace and Complex Emergency.' *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* Vol. 25, no. 1 (2002), pp. 117-143

Bruno Charbonneau & Jonathan M. Sears, 'Fighting for Liberal Peace in Mali? The Limits of International Military Intervention,' *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 8, no. 2-3 (2014), pp. 192-213

Mahmood Mamdani, 'Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish*? Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2010), pp. 53-67

Zubairu Wai, 'Empire's New Clothes: Africa, Liberal Interventionism and Contemporary World Order', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 41, no 142 (2014), pp. 483-499

Week 13 (April 6): Towards an Alternative Framing: History, the State, the International and the Question of Violence in Africa

Required Readings

Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton; NJ: Princeton University Press 1996); Chapter 1: Introduction

Achille Mbembe, 'Of Commandement'; Chapter I in *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); pp. 25-65

Zubairu Wai, 'On the Banality of Violence: State, Power and the Everyday in Africa.' In Grant Farred, Leonhard Praeg and Kaseraka Kavwahirehi (eds.), *Violence in/and the Great*

Lakes: The Thought of V.Y. Mudimbe and Beyond, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014), pp. 128-160.

[Note: Final research paper due at the end of class on 6 April]
April 10 – 23 is the Examination Period. There will be no exam for this course