



POLI-3313 FA: Third World Area Studies: African Politics (Fall 2012)  
Time: Tues. & Thurs.: 10:00-11:30am; Place: RB 1042

Instructor: Zubairu Wai  
Office: RB 2041  
Hours: Tues. & Thurs 1:00-2:00pm (or by appointment)  
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### **Course Description: Content and Objectives**

In mainstream discourses, “Africa” is a disaster story; a homogenised and an undifferentiated state inhabited by primitive tribes where a tragic human history stands revealed. A land of crisis and failure, this “Africa” is constantly depicted as a moral challenge to the international community, and a basket-case needing the redemptive power of Western modernist intervention. Do these broadstroke stereotypical generalisations represent the African reality, or do they obscure the historical realities of political and social life on the continent? What kind of place is Africa? How do we understand its social and political formations? The aim of this course is to move beyond these problematic stereotypical representations and crass journalistic accounts by providing a broad and critical introduction to African political life. It seeks to explore African politics from a broader socio-historical perspective focusing on the processes out of which the continent’s present day reality emerged. Seeking to understand “Africa” differently away from the problematic discourses which tend to obscure the epistemological, power/political and material processes that have historically defined the continent’s experience in a world characterised by unequal power relations, this course interrogates the dominant ways we have come to understand “Africa” and raises important questions about power and politics, war and violence, epistemology and ethics, identity and subjectivities from a postcolonial and critical political economy perspective. At the heart of the course is a simple but fundamental question: What is Africa and what is its place in the world?

### **Required Texts:**

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; a novel (London: Heinemann, 1958)

Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

PS-3313 Course Kit

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

The method of instruction will be lectures and class discussions. Students are required to regularly attend classes; do the assigned readings before coming to class; take part in class discussions; write a country report, review an African novel (from a list provided by

the instructor) in relation to politics, and submit a final essay on any issue of political relevance in Africa.

The final grade will be weighted as follows:

Attendance & Participation:	20%
Country Report:	20%
Book Review:	25%
Final Essay:	35%

**I. Country Report:** is intended to test the knowledge of students on Africa's political geography. The report should provide a brief critical overview of any of the 54 states in Africa in terms of history, geography, demography, political economy and culture; demonstrating familiarity with the chosen state's socio-historical experience and its implications for its present-day reality. It should be 5 (double-spaced) pages long.

**II. Book Review:** is a critical review of any of the following African fiction, bringing out its political significance and how it helps us in understanding contemporary African political life. It is an opportunity for linking the fictionalised rendition of African political life with contemporary African politics. The review should be 5 (double-spaced) pages long:

1. Aminatta Forna, *The Devil that Danced on Water: A Daughter's Memoir* (London: Flamingo 2003)
2. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat* (London: Heinemann, 1967)
3. Mongo Beti, *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (London: Heinemann, 1971)
4. Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (London: Heinemann, 1987)
5. Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (London: Harper Perennial, 2007)
6. Uzodinma Iweala, *Beasts of No Nation* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005)
7. Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People* (London: Heinemann, 1966)
8. Mariam Ba, *So Long a Letter* (London: Heinemann, 1989)
9. Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* (London: Heinemann, 1968)
10. Mongo Beti, *Mission to Kala* (London: Heinemann, 1982)

**III. Final Assignment:** a research essay, intended to test students' knowledge on African politics. It can be on any topic in African politics. It provides an opportunity for students to research an issue in African politics that is important to them. The essay should be between 10 and 12 double-spaced pages (not including the title page and bibliography of works cited). It should be handed in class on Thursday November 29, that is, the last day of lectures for the course.

All essays should have a title page indicating name, student and course numbers, the name of the instructor, the department and the university. As well, the essays should be doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point fonts, 1 inch margin and should be handed in on the due date in class. **Barring any extenuating circumstance, all written assignments must be submitted on time.**

### **Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs can request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Such students should at the earliest opportunity advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the course instructor of such 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 course instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

### **Lakehead Policy on Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university policy on Academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. Violation of this policy is a serious offence and can lead to very serious consequences.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (Sept. 11 & 13):**

***Introduction to the course: How do we begin to think and talk about “Africa” and “African Politics”?***

#### **Readings:**

Jack Parson, “Tarzan, Tim Russert and Me: Teaching about Africa in the United States.” Southeastern Regional Seminar in African Studies (SERSAS), 26-27 March, 2004.  
<http://www.ecu.edu/african/sersas/Papers/ParsonSpring2004.htm>

Mahmood Mamdani, “Is African Studies to be turned into a New Home for Bantu Education at UCT?” Remarks at the Seminar on Teaching Africa in Post-Apartheid South Africa, University of Cape Town, April 22, 1998.

<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/30/136.html>

Binyavanga Wainaina, “How to Write about Africa,” Granta 92, (2005):

<http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: “The Danger of a Single Story” (TED Video):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

#### **Week 2 (Sept. 18 & 20):**

***Nature of African Political Economy in the Age of Globalisation***

#### **Required Readings:**

Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, “Introduction”; pp. 1 – 20

James Ferguson, "Introduction" in his *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 1 – 23.

Liisa Laakso and Adebayo O. Olukoshi, "The Crisis of the Post-Colonial Nation-State Projects in Africa," In *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa*, Adebayo O. Olukoshi and Liisa Laakso edited. (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute, 1996), pp. 7 – 39

Samir Amin, "Africa: Living on the Fringe," *Monthly Review* 53, no. 10 (2002), pp. 41–50

Paul T. Zeleza, "Chiefs and Commoners in the Global Village," in his *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA 1997), pp. 275 – 327

### Recommended

Patrick Bond, "Global Crisis, African Oppression" in his *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance* 2e. (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2001), pp. 3 – 30

Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa – Origins and Contemporary Forms," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10, no. 4 (1972), pp. 503–24

John Saul, "Globalisation, Imperialism, Development: False Binaries and Radical Resolutions," *Socialist Register* 40, (2004), 220 – 244

**[Note: 21 September 2012 is the Final Date of Registration]**

### **Week 3 (Sept. 25 & 27):**

#### ***Africanism and the Knowledge Question***

##### Readings:

Achille Mbembe, "Introduction: Time on the Move." In his *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 1 – 23

V.Y. Mudimbe, "Introduction" & "Discourse of Power and Knowledge of Otherness." In his *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. ix – 23

Mahmood Mamdani, "Introduction: Thinking through Africa's Impasse" Chapter 1 in his *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3 – 34

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

### Recommended

Mahmood Mamdani, "The Lessons of Zimbabwe" [and the debate that followed] *London Review of Books* 30, no. 23 (4 December 2008)

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v30/n23/mahmood-mamdani/lessons-of-zimbabwe>

### **Week 4 (Oct. 2 & 4):**

#### ***The Colonial Question***

##### Required Readings:

"Africa and the Colonial Challenge" and "European Partition and Conquest of Africa: an Overview" in *General History of Africa: Vol. VII Africa under Colonial Domination 1880 – 1935* [Abridged edition] A. Adu Boahen edited. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, for UNESCO, 1990), pp. 1 – 24.

Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, pp. 1 – 5

Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, Chapters 2, 3 and 4

Mahmood Mamdani, Introduction and "Decentralized Despotism" Chapter 2 in his *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 37 – 61

Walter Rodney, "Colonialism as a System for Underdeveloping Africa," chapter 6 in his *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press 1972)

### **Week 5 (Oct. 9 & 11): *The Nature of the States in Africa***

##### Required Readings:

Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, Chapters 7

Kevin R. Cox & Rohit Negi, "The State and the Question of Development in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no. 123 (2010), pp. 71-85

Zubairu Wai, "Neo-Patrimonialism and the Discourse of State Failure in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 131 (2012), pp. 27–43

Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Note on the Postcolony," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 62, no. 1, (1992), pp. 3-37

Mahmood Mamdani, Introduction and "Decentralized Despotism" Chapter 2 in his *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 37 – 61

**[Note: Country Report due in class on Thursday 11 October]**

## **Week 6 (Oct. 16 & 18): Development and Developmentalism**

### Required Readings:

Cooper, *Africa since 1940*, Chapter 5

Paul T. Zeleza, "Colonial Developmentalism" in his *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises* (Dakar: CODESRIA 1997), pp. 218 – 240.

Zubairu Wai, "Whither African Development? A Preparatory for an African Alternative Reformulation of the Concept of Development," *Africa Development* 32, no. 4, (2007), pp.71–98

Thandika Mkandawire, "Thinking about Developmental States in Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25, no. 3 (2001), pp. 289 - 313

John Saul, "Globalisation, Imperialism, Development: False Binaries and Radical Resolutions," *Socialist Register* 40, (2004), 220 – 244

## **Week 7 (Oct. 23 & 25): Democracy and Democratisation**

### Readings:

Richard Joseph, "Democratisation in Africa, After 1989: Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 4 (1997), pp. 363 – 82

John S. Saul, "'For Fear of Being Condemned as Old Fashioned': Liberal Democracy vs. Popular Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 24, no. 73 (1997), pp. 339-353

Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, "The Problematics of Liberal Democracy and Democratic Process: Lessons for Deconstructing and Building African Democracies." In *Liberal Democracy and its Critics in Africa*, Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo edited. (London & Dakar: Zed Books & CODESRIA, 2005), pp. 1 – 25

Issa Shivji, "Democracy and Democratisation in Africa: Interrogating paradigms and practices," *Pambazuka, Issue 560*, (November 30, 2011);  
<http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/78361>

Zubairu Wai, "Elections as a Strategy for democratisation and Conflict Transformation? Liberal Peace and the 1996 Elections in Sierra Leone," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 5, no. 4, (2011) pp. 112 - 129;

**[Note: Book Review due in class on Thursday November 1. Also note that November 2 is the Final Date for Withdrawal (Without Academic Penalty)]**

## **Week 8 (October 30 & Nov. 1): Interrogating Gender**

### Required Readings:

Chandra T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (1988), pp. 61 – 88

Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects" in her *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997)

Oyèrónké Oyewùní, "Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies," *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* vol. 2, no. 1 (2002)

Amina Mama: "Challenging Subjects: Gender Power in African Subjects," *African Sociological Review* 5, no. 2 (2001)

Amina Mire, "In/through the bodies of women: rethinking gender in African politics," *Polis*, Vol. 8, *Numéro Spécial*, (2001), pp. 65-85

### **Week 9 (Nov. 6 & 8): The Politics of Ethnicity**

#### Required Readings:

Chris Lowe, with Tunde Brimah, Pearl-Alice Marsh, William Minter, Monde Muyangwa, "Talking about 'Tribe': Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis," Africa Policy Information Center, Washington, DC, November 1997

[http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-153D-84-Background\\_Paper\\_010\\_opt.pdf](http://kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/50/304/32-130-153D-84-Background_Paper_010_opt.pdf)

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "The Myth of *Tribe* in African Politics," *Transition* 101, (2009), pp. 16-23

Archie Mafeje, "The Ideology of Tribalism", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 2, (1971), pp. 253-261

Carola Lentz, "Tribalism' and Ethnicity in Africa: A Review of Four Decades of Anglophone Research," *Cahiers des Sciences Humaines* 31, no. 2 (1995), pp. 303-28

Aidan Southall, "The Ethnic Heart of Anthropology," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 100 (1985), pp. 567-572

### **Week 10 (Nov. 13 & 15):**

#### ***Discourse of Violence, Armed Conflicts and Civil Wars***

#### Readings:

Paul Richards, "New War: An Ethnographic Approach" Chapter 1 in *No Peace No War: Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*, Paul Richards edited. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press); 1 – 21.

Zubairu Wai, Introduction and "The Conflict of Interpretations" Chapter 4 in his *Epistemologies of African Conflicts: Violence, Evolutionism and the War in Sierra Leone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 113 – 170

Neil Cooper, "Picking the Pieces of the Liberal Peaces: Representations of Conflict Economies and the Implication for Policy." *Security and Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (2005); 463–478.

### **Week 11 (Nov. 20 & 22): Social Movements and Political Change**

#### Readings:

Miles Larmer, "Social Movement Struggles in Africa," *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no.125 (2010), pp. 251-262

Bénédicte Maccatory, Makama Bawa Oumarou & Marc Poncelet, "West African Social Movements 'Against the High Cost of Living': From the Economic to the Political, from the Global to the National," *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no.125, (2010), pp. 345-359

Marion Dixon, "An Arab Spring," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no.128 (2011), pp. 309-316

Elleni Centime Zeleke, "The Problem with Africans and Arabs," Pambazuka, Issue 521 (March 16, 2011); <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/71735>

Habib Ayeb, "Social and Political Geography of the Tunisian Revolution: the Alfa Grass Revolution," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (2011), pp. 467-479

Angela Joya, "The Egyptian Revolution: Crisis of Neoliberalism and the Potential for Democratic Politics," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (2011), pp. 367-386

#### Recommended

Joseph Massad, "The 'Arab Spring' and Other American Seasons," Al-Jazeera (August 29, 2012); <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282972539153865.html>

Joseph Massad, "The future of the Arab Uprisings," Al-Jazeera (May 18, 2011) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/05/201151885013738898.html>

### **Week 12 (Nov. 27 & 29): Land Grab and the New Scramble for Africa**

#### Readings:

Saturnino M. Borras Jr., Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones, Ben White & Wendy Wolford, "Towards a better understanding of global land grabbing: an editorial introduction," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 2 (2011), pp. 209-216

Ray Bush, Janet Bujra & Gary Littlejohn, "The Accumulation of Dispossession," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no.128, (2011), pp. 187-192

Tania Murray Li, "Centering Labor in the Land Grab Debate," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no.2 (2011), pp. 281-298



Ruth Hall, "Land Grabbing in Southern Africa: the Many Faces of the Investor Rush," *Review of African Political Economy*, 38:128, (2011), pp. 193-214

Recommended

Klaus Deininger, "Challenges Posed by the New Wave of Farmland Investment," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no.2 (2011), pp. 217-247

Olivier De Schutter, "How not to Think of Land-Grabbing: Three Critiques of Large-Scale Investments in Farmland," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 2 (2011), pp. 249-279

Saturnino M. Borras Jr. & Jennifer C. Franco, "Global Land Grabbing and Trajectories of Agrarian Change: A Preliminary Analysis," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 12, no. 1, (2012), pp. 34–59.

Sam Moyo, "Land Concentration and Accumulation after Redistributive Reform in Post-Settler Zimbabwe," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no.128 (2011), pp. 257-276

**[Note: Final paper due at the end of class on 29 November 2012]**

**(Examination Period: 6–17 December, 2012. There will be no exam for this course).**