This is a course for students interested in comparative politics. Africa is a rich mosaic of countries and peoples, with a landmass that is three times larger than the US. Djibouti is smaller than Massachusetts while Sudan is almost as big as the entire Western Europe. The Seychelles is made up of people of African, Asian and European decent and less than 100,000 individuals while Nigeria has a population of about 120 million people and over 250 ethnic groups. The intricacies of the political, economic and social realities of Africa require a willingness to be open to new perspectives if we are to understand some of what is peculiar to African societies, as well as what they have in common with other parts of the world. The course spans Africa’s colonial past through its post-independence era, but the focus is on contemporary African politics. The course also offers a sense of what social research is all about: how we come up with explanations, how we set out about researching them, refine our guesses, argue our points, learn from each other and from the world around us. Finally, you will be writing a paper with the goal of getting it published later in a peer review journal. Welcome.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Africa in the early 21st century is an exciting space. A new generation of political elites, businessmen, journalists and leaders is emerging, many countries are experiencing sustained economic growth and development, and Africa's first female president was elected in Liberia. Rwanda – the site of genocide of a million people in 1994 – has over 50 percent of its legislature made up of women and Mali, while extremely poor, mostly rural and 95 percent Muslim, held four successive democratic elections only to succumb to a military coup and internal war in 2012. UN peace-keeping missions in places like Sierra Leone are held as models to the world. What explains these outcomes?

Another genocide took place recently in Darfur while president Mugabe's increasingly destructive rule in Zimbabwe continues. Somalia has spent over 20 years in anarchy while Ivory Coast, Northern Nigeria, and Democratic Republic of Congo are reeling from sectarian, religious and ethnic violence at the verge of civil war. Some of the world's most corrupt states are found in Africa and nowhere in the world has AIDS become a larger problem. Why are some countries still trapped in decline, violence, poverty and bad leadership?

Africa also has a rich political history with all varieties of colonialism, and leaders that have experimented with liberal capitalism, Marxism, African socialism, and Islamic revivalism in the context of a wide selection of regimes such as
monarchies, military dictatorships, personal rule, Islamic republics, apartheid, and liberal democracies. Yet, over the past decade several countries in Africa has experienced among the highest growth rates in the world. Which differences helps us understand and explain success and failure in contemporary African politics and development?

Different Approaches
The study of Africa was for along time dominated by case studies and ethnographic oriented data collection. The use of, and contribution to, general comparative politics theories have been limited partly because of the relative lack of comparative studies and partly because many studying Africa have been convinced about the continents unique conditions and exceptional nature. In the post-Cold War era and with far ranging political changes in the 1990s, this idea of ‘African exceptionalism’ has declined and our field has seen an infuse of scholars collecting new kinds of data, addressing various theoretical issues with strong roots in mainstream comparative politics, and pursuing studies covering a larger number of countries and recently a series of field and even lab experiments. A recurrent theme of this course will be the advantages and disadvantages with individual case studies versus comparative and even large-N studies. At a general level we can probably all agree that all three strategies have their strengths and weaknesses. But the question of approach suddenly has real consequences when we come down to specific issues and to solving research problems that confronts us. As Africanists, we are also lucky: No other area specialists have as many countries as we have to compare. I am more than open to the advantages and values of case studies and ethnographic research, indeed, I have carried out a fair amount of that myself in Ghana and other places. We will have many discussions and all I require is that you remain open to the value of the kinds of research we encounter, be it case studies, structured small-N comparative, or large-N quantitative and experiments.

Three Themes
Substantially, we will focus largely on contemporary Africa and the most recent most important works rather than taking off from pre-colonial times and move forward. In other words, we will first discuss and analyze the present and then inquire into the ‘why’ and see how far back we need to go to understand and explain what is going on today. Perhaps we need to go far back to explain some issues while others do not require much of historical analysis. This remains an open question and one we will revisit many times over this semester. In substantial terms, three overall themes are in focus:

Political liberalization and democratization has certainly spurred the renewed interest and attracted many new researchers and it constitutes one of the fastest growing and also most exciting areas of research in the present. We will spend a fair amount of time on issues relating to democracy and democratization during this semester. On the one hand, which are the most important factors explaining the variation in political development we see across the continent today? On the other, what are the effects of political liberalization and democratization on economic growth, ethnic and other types of conflict, on women’s rights and empowerment, on distribution of power in society, and legitimacy of the ‘weak’ or ‘soft’ African state?

Development is an issue that has always been high on the agenda for scholars working on Africa and it still is. The early post-independence days were the hey-days of optimism quickly followed by skepticism and outright pessimism in the 1970s and 1980s. Structural adjustment programs were criticized from many quarters but from the mid-1990s most countries in Africa has seen their economies grow, some spectacularly leading the world’s premier league. That provides an excellent setting for inquiries into theories of why Africa has previously not been able to display much economic growth and development. If the causal claims made in those theories are correct, the explanatory factors should have changed recently. Is this so? The development debate is also closely linked to the discussion of the state in Africa and for some countries, violence conducted both by state and non-state actors.

Finally, we will inquire into the question of how much of Africa’s present state of development and political systems can be explained by historical factors such as colonialism, the distribution of people and power between the rural and urban areas, geographical features and traditions.

While we go through all this, keep thinking about your term paper and start working on it as early as possible. It will be a major undertaking and doing it in a rush at the end of the semester always shows in the result, hence impact on your grade so try to avoid that at all cost. The goal is that you will write a paper that down the line can be published in a peer review journal.
II. COURSE FORMAT

This course is organized around seminars with lectures by your professor; students presentations; discussions; individual case studies; possibly guest lectures; weekly papers; and writing of individual term papers.

Required Readings
See reading schedule below. All readings are required except if explicitly listed as recommended.

Weekly Seminars
Students are naturally expected to complete assigned readings before each seminar. I will typically start us off with an introduction of the topic, followed by one or more presentations of reading materials by students. Finally, I will frequently put the required readings into perspective and also give a few remarks about next week's topic. Lectures reinforce materials in required readings but also add other materials, new concepts, ideas and interpretations.

Presentation, Attendance and Participation (25% of final grade)
Each student will be asked to present at least one of the assigned texts. Please, look closely at the reading schedule before our first meeting so we can distribute these presentations immediately. You are expected not only to summarize the text(s), but also comment on them and try to put their argument(s) in the larger context of other readings and the overall topic for discussion. When you prepare for your presentation, make a handout with the main arguments/point from each chapter of the book or the articles. In your handout, also write down two or three discussion questions for each chapter or article. I also encourage you to put some of your thoughts about the text, comments, reflections etc on substantive as well as methodological issues in the handout.

The oral presentation should not consist of you reading the handout out loud. We can all read. It should neither be mainly a summary of the text so make sure to spend more time on commenting on the text. The main point is to further a better and perhaps more critical understanding of each reading and its contribution to the study of African politics in comparative perspective. When you present, also do not be surprised if I intervene, ask questions, and encourage your fellow students to comment further on the text(s). Depending on the text, we may benefit more from alternating between presentation and discussion rather than waiting with discussion until after the presentation is complete.

I will take roll calls and absences will count against the student in compilation of the final grade. Being consistently late or excessively late is a disruption to the class and is not acceptable and will also count against the student in the final grade. Active participation in class discussions is expected and could make a difference in the final grade. Absent students without a documented, university-approved excuse automatically receive zero points for that week's participation.

Comparative Case Studies (25% of final grade)
At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to choose two countries in sub-Saharan Africa as your cases. At least one of the two countries must be included in the Afrobarometer survey (there are now 20 countries being surveyed to choose from). For your second case you can pick any country in sub-Saharan Africa except Ghana. You are to become a “country-expert” on those two countries and two students cannot pick the same country. Students are also strongly recommended to pick two countries you do not know very well in advance, and certainly not any country you have written on before and/or spent significant amounts of time in. If you have a lineage from Africa, you can not pick the country(ies) you and/or your family is from.

Each week that we have a class meeting with assigned readings, a specific question will be posed that students should analyze with respect to their two countries. You are expected to use other than the required readings in
completing this assignment, i.e. academic journal articles, primary survey and other kinds of data from data sets available through the library, analysis of economic and other facts from sources like the Afrobarometer, Freedom House, Transparency International, International Crisis Group, World Bank, UNDP, etc.

As part of the course requirements, ALL students MUST sign up for an individual meeting with librarian David Schweider to get guidance on sources for research on your countries and for the term paper. Schweider will attend first day of class and give you an introduction then.

This ‘weekly paper’ is due at 3.00pm on the day before class (electronic copy submitted both at e-learning and emailed to everyone in the class). A two to four page (not more!) answer is expected. Late submissions are not acceptable. You will receive feedback from me on your answer the following week. **Students without a documented, university-approved excuse for failure to submit the weekly paper on time automatically receive zero points for that week’s paper.**

At the end of the semester, each student compiles the (possibly revised) ten short reports into a comprehensive comparative case study report and submits it online.

When we have in-class discussions, students are also expected to contribute with perspectives on the topic of our discussion from your countries (being the “country-expert”) and you can use your two countries as two of your cases for your term paper given that you do a comparative analysis of at least three countries.

**Term paper (50% of final grade):**
You are expected to write a research-type term paper analyzing a particular trend or issue in sub-Saharan Africa. The paper should be comparative in nature comparing at least three countries. Analyzes based on a larger number of cases, or combination of a quantitative large-N and comparative three/four case studies are particularly encouraged. Papers will be evaluated in terms of how much independent research effort the student demonstrates, how well basic features of the topic are covered from a theoretical point of view, how well it is analyzed, and how coherent and well structured the paper is composed.

You are to submit A) a 3 to 4-page outline of your proposed topic, main theoretical approach and authors you may be using, what kind of data you have and/or think you will be using, and the outline of what you think will be your main argument and findings. You will receive written comments from me on how you can best proceed. Failure to submit your outline on time means you will not get feedback from me on your outline. You need only to submit a hard copy to me.

Then you submit B) the final paper. The model for your research paper is an academic article published in an established, peer-review journal such as the Journal of Modern African Studies, African Affairs, Journal of Democracy, Party Politics, Comparative Politics or World Politics. As a training exercise, you will consult the style and format requirements for Party Politics and your paper should follow those requirements to the last letter, except in one regard: The length should not exceed 6,000 words inclusive of references, footnotes etc. You submit it electronically on e-learning, send it via email to everyone in the class, and hand in a hard copy to me.

Each paper will be subjected to peer-review. Each student will this, as the final component (included in the paper-grade) write an critical and constructive assessment of the paper as if you were reviewing it for publication in a regular journal. I will grade your paper as well as the quality of your performance as peer reviewer. **Students without a documented, university-approved excuse for failure to submit the final paper on time and/or the peer review automatically receive zero points for the term paper and thus fail the course.**

Finally, one thing: Wikipedia is not an acceptable source of information. Anything presented in writing based on Wikipedia will be treated as if no source has been given, hence, will be open to charges of plagiarism.
III. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND GRADING

The most important requirement for this course is that we approach the readings, lectures and each other’s contributions with respect, curiosity, patience, and a willingness to learn. I will allow virtually any arguments and thoughts in class encouraging your individual ability to think and be critical, but I will not tolerate anything insulting or any intimidation of dissenting opinions.

Policy on Make-up and Late Papers

Make-ups will be arranged only for university accepted excuses. In the event of an illness, students should notify the professor prior to the deadline and provide proper documentation from their physician. In almost any situation, it is possible to pass along a message to the professor via email, phone, a classmate or a family member. If a student misses a class, presentation, or other deadline and for good reasons cannot contact me beforehand, it is the student’s responsibility to contact me within 24 hours after the deadline. If the student fails to contact me within the allotted time, or fails to produce acceptable documentation, the student will receive a zero on the assignment.

Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism

All students should observe the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. Progress in the social sciences is predicated on the principle of open access to theories and results produced by other scholars. We staunchly seek to guard our peers’ intellectual property because that is the only way we can make sure that science as we know it survives. You are expected to participate fully in our efforts. In the event that a student is found cheating or plagiarizing, the student will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

Acts of Cheating and Plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or any other assignment that was written by someone else (i.e. another student, a research service, a scholar, downloaded off the internet).
- Copying, verbatim, a sentence or a paragraph of text from the work of another author without properly acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted citation style and using quotation marks.
- Paraphrasing (i.e. restating in your own words) text written by another author without citing that author.
- Using an unique idea or concept which you discovered in a specific reading without citing the author.

Grading Scale

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<td>A</td>
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<td>91-90</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>89-88</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>84-80</td>
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IV. ELECTRONICA & OFFICE HOURS

You will use email as the regular mode of communication for this class so make sure you check your email frequently, especially before coming to class. I will use the website for our class (you will find it when you log in at e-learning) to post class notes and related materials. All class notes are the intellectual property of your professor and cannot be used for any other purpose than completing this course without a written approval from me. I encourage you to take advantage of office hours to pose questions, discuss readings, or explore related topics.
V. DISABILITY POLICY

University of Florida recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can succeed. In accordance with this policy, if you have a documented disability, you may request accommodations to obtain equal access and to promote your learning in this class. Please, contact the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Anyone with disability should feel free to see me during office hours to make the necessary arrangements.

VI. COURSE AND READING SCHEDULE.

* = reading put on reserve in the library
** = reading can be downloaded from the website for the course

WEEK 1
Fri 1/11 First Day
Introducing the professor, the students, and the course.
Introduction to library sources by librarian David Schweider.

Readings:


If this is your first “real” African politics class, you are advised to read Martin Meredith’s terrific book, The Fate of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence (New York: Public Affairs, 2005) to bring you up to speed.

WEEK 2
Thu 1/18 Book Conference – Anderson Hall
8.00 am – 2.00pm (let me know if attending the full day will be a problem for you)
Professor Kate Baldwin’s fresh manuscript Noble Purposes: Traditional Leaders in Democratic Africa is discussed during this conference. Discussants are Thad Dunning (Yale U) and Dan Posner (MIT). You can pick up a copy from professor Baldwin’s office on January 4th (or later) and make copies. She will also send digital copies to everyone in the class.

Your assignment is to read the ms, write a written review of 4-6pages to be handed in on Thursday 1/17 at 3pm, and participate in the conference as demonstrated by offering at least one question/comment.
PART I – RULERS, DEMOCRACY, INSTITUTIONS AND PEOPLE

WEEK 3
Thu 1/25

Seminar 1: CLASSIC STATEMENTS ON LEADERS, RULING AND THE RULED
Readings:

Recommended:

WEEK 4
Thu 2/1

Seminar 2: ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIZATION
Readings:
* Lindberg, Staffan I., 2006. *Elections and Democracy in Africa.* Johns Hopkins, 2006 (copy will be provided)

Recommended:

WEEK 5
Thu 2/8

Seminar 3: POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES
Readings:

Recommended:
WEEK 6
Thu 2/15  Seminar 4: PEOPLES AND THEIR ATTITUDES
Readings:  Afrobarometer, Round 4 Survey Manual (February 2007) (especially Section 5: “Sampling”)

WEEK 7
Thu 2/22  Seminar 5: ETHNICITY, COMPETITION, AND CONFLICT

Outline of term paper due – bring to class!

PART II – DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATE IN AFRICA

WEEK 8
Fri 3/1  Seminar 6: DEVELOPMENT, AID, AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

**Recommended:**


Outlines returned in class.

**WEEK 9**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Spring Break</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
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**WEEK 10**

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<th>Day</th>
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<th>Seminar 7 EXPLAINING THE LACK OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
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**Recommended:**

**WEEK 11**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>3/22</th>
<th>Seminar 8: AMBIGUOUS AND BROKEN DOWN ORDERS</th>
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**Recommended:**
PART III – HISTORICAL PATH DEPENDENCIES AND EXTERNALITIES?

WEEK 12
Fri 3/29  Seminar 9: TOPOGRAPHIES AND HISTORICAL CHALLENGES TO STATE BUILDING


WEEK 13
Fri 4/5  No Class - International Studies Association’s Annual Conference
Work on paper

WEEK 14
Fri 4/12  Seminar 10: COLONIAL INFLUENCES


WEEK 15
Fri 4/19  Seminar 11:
Readings:

WEEK 16
Fri 4/26  No class
Official Reading Day

Final version of Term Paper is due on April 25th, at 6.00 am!!!
Submit on e-learning, one hard copy in the box outside my office, and email a pdf-version to all your peers.

Peer Review Paper is due on April 29th at 8.00am!!!
Submit on e-learning, then email the paper to me and to the author of the paper.

Final version of Comparative Case Study Report is due on April 29th, at 6.00 pm!!!
Submit on e-learning, one hard copy in the box outside my office.
VII. WEB LINKS AND SUGGESTED READINGS

AFRICA GENERAL PORTAL
http://www2.etown.edu/vl/africa.html

IN THE NEWS
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/index.shtml
http://allafrica.com/
http://www.channelafrica.org/currenta.shtml
http://www.irinnews.org

DATA ON AFRICAN COUNTRIES
http://www.worldbank.org/data/
http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/
http://www.odi.org.uk/WGA_Governance/
http://www.uneca.org/
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm
http://www.freedomhouse.org
http://www.transparency.de
http://www.afrobarometer.org
http://osiris.colorado.edu/POLSCI/RES/comp.html
http://store.eiu.com/ep/index_countrydata.asp
http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs has installed a new user guide to improve the search function of its “Database of Party Laws.” Created by Kenneth Janda, Payson S. Wild Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Northwestern University, and Ray Kuo, the Internet database consists of 1,100 national regulations of political parties representing 169 nations. To read more about the project and to search the database, visit www.ndi.org/globalpolparties/programspp/db.asp.

MAPS OF AFRICA NOW AND THEN
http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/maps/mapscan/AFthumbs.html

DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS IN AFRICA
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/election_watch/
http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/election.htm
http://www.electionworld.org/
http://www.idea.int/voter_turnout/africa/index.html
http://www.ifes.org/eguide/elecguide.htm
http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp
http://www.epicproject.org/
http://www.fordemocracy.net/resource.shtml
http://africanelections.tripod.com/index.html
NB: Wikipedia is not a good source!

SUGGESTED READINGS
Below is an incomplete list of readings but it gives you somewhere to start and it also serves as an example of how references should be listed in your country report and term paper. Additional readings are found in the bibliographies of other readings.


Green, Elliott. 2006. 'Ethnicity and the politics of land tenure reform in Central Uganda.' Commonwealth and Comparative Politics 44(3):370-388.


Herbst, Jeffrey. 2001. “Political Liberalization After Ten Years.” 
Comparative Politics 34: 357-375.

American Journal of Political Science 50(2): 365-381.


British Journal of Political Science 2(4).


African Affairs 97: 189-208.


Comparative Politics 29(3): 363-382.


Khan, Mushtaq H. 2005. “Markets, States, and Democracy: Patron-Client Networks and the Case for Democracy in Developing Countries” 
Democratization 12(5).


Koelble, Thomas A. and Edward LiPuma 2006. “The Effects of Circulatory Capitalism on Democratization: Observations from South Africa and Brazil” 
Democratization August 13(4).


Laakso, Maarku, and Rein Taagepera. 1979. “Effective Number of Parties: A Measure with Application to Western Europe.” 
Comparative Political Studies 12: 3-27.

Comparative Politics 38(4).


African Affairs, 106(422).


