CPO 6206: Seminar in African Politics

Class Meeting Time: Monday, 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Class Venue: Matherly Hall 151

Professor: Sebastian Elischer
Office: Anderson Hall 212
Office Hours: Monday 3 PM to 5:30 PM
Email: selischer@ufl.edu
Phone: 352-273-2359

Seminar Description
This seminar is a graduate, in-depth survey of the major debates in African politics. It is open to everyone who is interested in examining political events in Africa. The seminar accommodates the interests of students from a variety of disciplines. It is structured around several recurrent and mutually dependent themes: political history, state formation, regime change and regime consolidation, political economy, violence, conflict and cooperation. Its main objective is to provide students with the ability to study empirical phenomena with the help of general analytical tools. Thereby the seminar enables students to compare and contrast political phenomena in Africa with the same phenomena in other world regions. The seminar examines African politics from a number of methodological angles. Each seminar contains key readings and a selection of additional sources students may consult in order to deepen their knowledge of any of the topics we discuss. The readings are a mix of classic and recent works. Most are comparative; others focus on individual cases. Students should feel free to consult and discuss any material that they feel contributes to any of the sessions listed below.

Requirements, Assignments and Grading
I expect students to read the assigned material (required reading) and come to class prepared. Class attendance is critical. Students should lead the discussions in class. For this to happen students have to read through the material and attend all sessions. In case you cannot make it to class for whatever reason(s), please tell me in advance via email prior to the meeting in question.

In order to get full credit for this seminar students have to pass several assignments. First, all participants need to select two African countries. In regular intervals students provide information on how the topic we discuss in class unfolds in the two countries they have chosen. This exercise is designed to make students transfer their thematic and conceptual knowledge to empirical cases. It is also designed to make students think comparatively. Second, all students are required to provide one thematic review (around 10 pages) of a topic we discuss in class. The thematic review should follow the format of a book review. The thematic review should focus either on the reading lists for the session in question (and cover at least 5 sources!) or alternative sources (which students identify on their own). Students are required to present their review in class (around 15 to 20 minutes) and to distribute their written review to all participants one week after the oral presentation and hence one week after we discussed the topic in class. Finally, students need to write a research paper on a topic of their choice (20 pages excluding bibliography). After week eight all students have to discuss their research assignment with me during my office hours. Everyone also needs to discuss their paper in class in order to get
constructive feedback. There will be more detailed information about all assignments in our first meeting.

Grading: class participation including regular updates on the political trajectory of two African countries (25%), thematic review and class presentation (25%) and final research paper (50%).

Grading scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>91 or above</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>88-90</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>81-84</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>78-80</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>85-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75-77</td>
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**Policies on Persons with Disabilities**
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. It will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Anyone with a disability should feel free to see me during office hours to make the necessary arrangements.

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**
All students should observe the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. In the event that a student is found cheating or plagiarizing, he/she will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs and to the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator for possible dismissal from the program. Acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or another assignment that was written by someone else (i.e., by another student, by a research service, or downloaded off the Internet);
- Copying, verbatim, a sentence or 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 someone else without citing that author;
- Using a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, without citing that work.

**Policy on Late Assignments**
I understand that sometimes there are reasons why an assignment cannot be handed in on time. If you see such a situation emerging please contact me ahead of time to discuss the issue with me. This MUST happen prior to the deadline of the assignment. In any case: Whatever happens, please do get in touch with me!
Required Textbooks
Two books are required for this seminar. All participants should purchase these books. They are available at the university bookstore or can be ordered online. The majority of the readings will be articles and excerpts. I will undertake any effort to post these sources online.


Class Calendar
Please note that any session may be subject to change

August 24: Introduction to the Seminar

A chance to get acquainted! We discuss the syllabus and your expectations. We organize all participants for future meetings. There are no assigned readings for this class but students may read through the following articles to get a feeling for how to think about and approach African politics in contemporary political research.


August 31: Pan-Africanism and African Independence

Required Reading
Meredith, Martin (2011). Chapter 1 to 7.


Additional Reading


September 7: Independence, State-Building and the African State

Required Reading


Additional Reading


September 14: The Rise of Autocratic Rule. One Party Rule and Military Dictatorships

Required Reading


Students who want to focus on one-party rule should consult one of the following:


Students who want to focus on military rule should consult one of the following:


**September 21: Neopatrimonialism and Informal Institutions**

**Required Reading**

Cheeseman, Nic, Chapter 2.


**Additional Reading**


**September 28: Democratization and Elections**

**Required Reading**

Cheeseman, Nic, Chapter 3.

Meredith, Martin, Chapter 23 and 24.


**Additional Reading**


**October 5: Political Regimes and Regime Dynamics**

**Required Reading**
Cheeseman, Nicolas, Chapter 5


**Additional Reading**


**October 12: Formal Institutions and Their Effects**

**Required Reading**


Additional Reading


**October 19: The Search for Economic Growth**

Required Reading
Cheeseman, Nic, Chapter 4.
Or: Meredith, Martin, Chapter 21 and 22.


Additional Reading


**October 26: Ethnic Politics**

**Required Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**November 2: Violence and Conflict**

**Required Reading**

Meredith, Martin (2011), Chapters 26, 27 and 29.


Additional Reading


**November 9: Political Participation in Contemporary African Politics**

Required Reading


Additional Reading


**November 16: Religion and Politics in Africa**

Required Reading


Additional Reading


**November 23: Africa in the World I: Regional Dynamics**

Required Reading


Additional Reading


**November 30: Africa in the World II: Global Dynamics**


**December 7: tba**