POLS W3503: Political Economy of African Development
Columbia University
Fall 2012

Lecture time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:40-3:55pm
Lecture location: 516 Hamilton Hall
Course website: Columbia Courseworks
Credits: 3

Who can take the course? The course is designed for undergraduates of all levels. Auditors are welcome with the instructor’s permission. For credit, MA students should take my Spring 2013 course, INAF U6164, and PhD students should take my Spring 2013 course, Political Science G8412. Taking the course for credit would not count towards MA or PhD course requirements.

Prerequisites: None.

Enrolment limits: The College has capped the course at 40. If the course is oversubscribed, I will try to get an additional TA and bigger room, but otherwise will first give priority to undergraduates by seniority if needed. But stick around as there are usually dropouts after the first week or two and there will likely be space for you.

Instructor: Chris Blattman, Department of Political Science & SIPA, chrisblattman@columbia.edu
Office: IAB 1402c (which they will shortly renumber to 1401a for no apparent reason)
Instructor’s web page / blog: http://www.chrisblattman.com/
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 10:00-11:40am, sign-up online at http://chrisblattman.com/about/officehours

Teaching Assistant: Janny Chang, PhD candidate in Applied Anthropology, jc3439@columbia.edu
Section Time: To be determined
Section Location: To be determined
Office Hours: To be determined

Course Overview
This course is concerned with a few key questions: Why has Africa remained poor, volatile, and violent? Will Africa see future growth in incomes, stability, and freedom? What role has the West played in past failures, and what role (if any) should it play in the future? The course will cover the history, politics and economics of development in Africa, and dabbles in geography, sociology and anthropology as well. We start in prehistory and work our way up to the present day, with a focus on the 20th and 21st centuries. We interrogate the effects of Western intervention in Africa, from slavery and colonialism to modern-day foreign policy, aid, trade, peacekeeping, and democratization. We cover material ranging from qualitative case studies to formal theories of growth to statistical analyses to post-modern critiques.

No prior exposure to any of these fields is required—the material is designed to be accessible to all, and technical material is presented in a relatively non-technical fashion. So freshmen to seniors are welcome.
Grading

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

- Lecture attendance (5%)
- Section participation (10%)
- Weekly assignments (40%)
- Final exam (45%)

Lecture attendance

An attendance sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each class by your TA. You are responsible for ensuring you sign your name. Your grade will be proportional to the lectures you attend. You may not sign on another’s behalf; violators risk penalties at minimum and potentially failure of the course.

Section participation

The TA will lead sections weekly to discuss the readings, explain any technical material, and discuss the weekly essay/discussion questions with the class. You will be graded on the quality and not the quantity of your contributions. Contributing to the discussion in every section is not required, though contributing regularly is important. You should demonstrate an appreciation of the readings and engagement with the material. Note that more is not always better, and that uncivil or disruptive discussion (as well as overwhelming the class discussion) can be penalized.

Weekly assignments

There are 13 weeks of class this semester.

First week of class: No assignment or section.

Second week of class: There will be a special short assignment required for all students intended to build your familiarity with the economic development theories we will apply throughout the semester.

Third to thirteenth week: The assignment will be a short written essay. I will provide one or two questions that require you to use, analyze, critique, or synthesize the readings and lecture material. In at least 6 of these 11 weeks, you should submit a short essay that discusses and analyzes the material from the week.

These written assignments are designed to give you an incentive to read and think critically about all the readings, and an opportunity to internalize some of the lessons in the readings for core questions in the course. The ability to synthesize and critique large amounts of complex material in one to two pages is one of the most important skills you can learn in college. You will use these skills in your professional life more often than you think: writing policy or business memos, e-mails, letters, and articles.

Guidelines:

- Answer one of the assigned questions using the assigned materials and your own thoughts and opinions. Focus on argument and not excessive summarization of course material.
- You may use additional materials you know or find to help answer the question, but these other works should be properly referenced in the text and in the bibliography.
- Each essay should be less than two pages in length (at least 1.5 inch spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font), excluding any reference information on outside materials (if any).
- Your assignment should be submitted electronically. Due dates and method of submission will be confirmed by your TA and on the Courseworks site by the second week of class. Late assignments are not accepted, since you can submit in future weeks.
We are going to read most of the following books to Amazon and in some cases Barnes and Noble. In some cases, these books are cheaper (new and used) online than in the bookstore. Double check. I have provided links to Amazon and in some cases Barnes and Noble.

We are going to read most of the following books, which can be bought new and used online easily:


Final Exam
A final exam will be held on a date to be determined. All required readings and lecture material are testable.

Academic Integrity
Columbia University does not tolerate cheating and/or plagiarism in any form. Those students who violate the code of academic & professional conduct will be subject to disciplinary procedures. College guidelines on academic integrity are here and all students are expected to be familiar with them: http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity

Since there is a substantial amount of writing in this course, please familiarize yourself with the proper methods of citation and attribution. The College provides some useful resources online: http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity/citation

Readings
Staying Current
Paying attention to African and development news is not required, but it will help you (and might even be interesting). The course blog lists podcasts, blogs, and news sources of interest and value. One idea: sign up for news feeds and relevant blogs in an RSS reader (e.g. Google Reader) and make it your home page.

Required books
The books will also be on 2-hour reserve in the library, so scrambling to get these scarce copies is an option, but I suggest purchasing the four main ones. All are less than $25, and some are as cheap as $10 or less. Kindle versions are available in some cases.

Note: Sometimes these books are cheaper (new and used) online than in the bookstore. Double check. I have provided links to Amazon and in some cases Barnes and Noble.

We are going to read most of the following books, which can be bought new and used online easily:

• Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo (2011). *Poor Economics.*

**Further reading**

These books are not required but you may find them interesting background, especially historical background or for alternative perspectives.

This is my list of *Books development researchers and aid workers seldom read but should.*

This history of Africa is concise and interesting:


This book is a rather good summary of “alternative” critiques to the mainstream of development theory, including radical, postcolonial, neo-Marxist and feminist approaches. We will read one or two chapters, and several others are in the “recommended” readings for each week. If you are interested in alternative perspectives, this is not a bad book to purchase. But it is not required.


The following books are some of the more influential ones in the field of economic development. Since this is a course that emphasizes the political side of development, we discuss economic development a great deal but do not necessarily read these books in full. Reading them will be important to careers in development, so consider reading them in future.

• Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee, “Growth Theory Through the Lens of Development Economics”
• William Easterly (2006). *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill, and So Little Good.*
• Dambisa Moyo (2009). *Dead Aid.*

**Weekly readings**

"Required" readings are, well, required—you’ll need to show that you’ve read and understand them in your short essays and critical book reviews.

"Recommended" readings are optional. I will sometimes highlight their findings in lecture, and these lecture discussions (and not the full articles) are testable on the final exam. Reading the recommended articles will undoubtedly give you a better understanding of some of these lecture topics, however, and are also potential sources of material for your short essays. So please do not ignore them entirely.

“Further reading” is a list of books and articles that you should consider in future if the week’s subject interests you. They are not required at all for the course and are not remotely testable.

**Week 1: Introduction (Sept 4 & 6)**

**Required readings**

• Hyden, Chapter 1 [on Courseworks]
• Banerjee and Duflo, Chapter 1 [on Courseworks]
• Moss, p.163-177 (on Courseworks)

Recommended readings

• Moss, Chapters 1 and 6
• Binyavanga Wainaina talks about why he wrote How to Write About Africa in these YouTube videos: Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3

Further Reading


Week 2: Theories of growth and development (Sept 11 & 13)

Required readings

• Chapters 3 (mainly p109-115, 122-132 and 142-149) and 4 of Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith (2009). Economic Development. 10 ed. (on Courseworks)
• Make sure you’ve read last week’s required readings (especially Banerjee & Duflo, Moss, and Sen)

Recommended readings

• Banerjee and Duflo, Chapter 6
• Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapter 1
• Remainders of Todaro & Smith Chapter 3 and Perkins et al Chapter 4
• Paul Krugman, “The fall and rise of development economics”

Further reading

• Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee, “Growth Theory Through the Lens of Development Economics”

Week 3: The political and economic consequences of geography (Sept 18 & 20)

Required readings

• Stanley L. Engerman and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, Factor Endowments, Inequality, and Paths of Development among New World Economies, Economia, Fall 2002
• Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapter 2.

Recommended readings

• Nathan Nunn and Diego Puga (2009) "Ruggedness: The Blessing of Bad Geography in Africa"
• Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian (2009), "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas"

Week 4: The legacies of slavery and colonialism (Sept 25 & 27)

Required readings

• Moss, Chapter 2
• Acemoglu and Robinson. Chapter 9.
• Mahmood Mamdani, “Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism,” Princeton 1996 (Chapter 2)
• Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, p. 305-6 only
• Skim the abstract and introductions of the two papers by Nunn and Easterly et al. in the recommended readings, below.

Recommended readings

• Hyden, Chapter 2
• Nathan Nunn, The Long-Term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades
• Mamdani, Chapters 1 and 3
• Herbst, Chapters 3 and 4

Further reading

• Iliffe, Chapters 9 & 10
• Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism, Princeton 1996
• Franz Fanon (2004). The Wretched of the Earth, Grove Press.
Week 5: Independence and the politics of personal rule (Oct 2 & 4)

Required readings

- Moss, Chapter 3
- Hyden, Chapters 3 and 5
- Van de Walle, Introduction and Chapter 3

Recommended readings

- Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 3 to 6
- Hyden, Chapter 4

Further reading

- George Ayittey (2005). Africa Unchained, Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapters 5 and 6)
- Iliffe, Chapter 11

Week 6: Economic and political crisis, reform, and structural adjustment (Oct 9 & 11)

Required readings

- Moss, Chapter 7
- van de Walle, Chapters 1, 2 & 4 (just skim Ch 2, and make sure you look over Ch 3 again from last week)
- Hyden, Chapter 6

Recommended readings

- Interview with Joe Stiglitz: Time to snuff the IMF?

Further reading

Week 7:  
**State failure and conflict (Oct 16 & 18)**

**Required readings**
- Moss Chapter 4

**Recommended readings**
- Hyden, Chapter 9
- Crawford Young (2002). "Deciphering Disorder in Africa: Is Identity the Key?" World Politics 54(4).

**Further reading**
- Christopher Blattman and Edward Miguel, "Civil War," forthcoming in Journal of Economic Literature

Week 8:  
**State formation and statebuilding (Oct 23 & 25)**

**Required readings**
- Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 3 and 12 to 14.

**Recommended readings**
- Herbst, Chapter 2

**Further reading**
- TED talks by either Ory Okolloh or Ashraf Ghani

Week 9:  
**Foreign aid and humanitarianism (Oct 30 & Nov 1)**

**Required readings**
- Moss, Chapter 8
- Banerjee and Duflo, Chapters 1 and 7
• UN Millennium Project, Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, January 2005 (Chapters 1 and 2)
• Podcast with Binyavanga Wainaina: “The Ethics of Aid: One Kenyan’s Perspective” (or see transcript)

Recommended readings

• Hyden Chapter 10
• Dambisa Moyo (2009). Dead Aid. Chapters 1 and 2.
• Joseph E. Stiglitz (2003). Globalization and Its Discontents. (Chapter 1)
• Glenn Hubbard (video): *How to Fix the Aid Crisis*
• Development Drums, *Episode 23: Famine and Foreigners*

Further reading


Week 10:  Foreign aid and humanitarianism, continued (Nov 8 – No class Election Day)

Required readings

• van de Walle, Chapter 5
• Michael Clemens and Todd Moss (2005). *What’s Wrong with the Millennium Development Goals?* CGD Brief.
• Video: Lant Pritchett (2010) *The best of aid*
• Video: Andrew Mwenda, *Africa and the Curse of Foreign Aid*

Recommended readings


Week 11:  Democratization and institutional development (Nov 13 & 15)

Required readings

• Moss, Chapter 5
• van de Walle, Chapter 6
• Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapter 15.

Recommended readings


Further reading

• DFID. 2010. Societies, States and Citizens. A policymaker's guide to the research.

No class Nov 20 and 22

Week 12: Private sector development (Nov 27 & 29)

Required readings

• Moss, Chapter 13
• Banerjee and Duflo, Chapters 6 to 9
• President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Statement to the UN General Assembly, 23 Sept 2008.

Recommended readings

• Moss, Chapter 12
• Hyden, Chapter 7
• Cesar Hidalgo and Ricardo Hausmann, 2008 “A Network View of Economic Development,” Developing Alternatives 12(1) 5-10
• TED talks by Jacqueline Novogratz, Eleni Gabre-Madhin, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Further reading

- Dambisa Moyo (2009). Dead Aid.
- World Bank, 2005 World Development Report – A Better Investment Climate for All

Week 13: Reflections and conclusions (Dec 4 & 6)

Required readings

- Banerjee and Duflo, Chapter 10 and conclusion
- Hyden, Chapters 11 and 12
- van de Walle, Chapter 7

Recommended readings

- Moss, Chapters 6, 11 and 14
- Maxim Pinkovskiy and Xavier Sala-i-Martin (2010) African Poverty is Falling...Much Faster than You Think!
- TED Talk by Euvin Naidoo: Africa as an investment
- George Ayittey (2005). Africa Unchained, Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapters 8 to 11)
POLS W3503 Questionnaire

Name: ___________________________________________ Email: ________________________________

☐ Freshman  ☐ Sophomore  ☐ Junior  ☐ Senior  ☐ MA: __________________________

Major: ________________________________ Minor: ________________________________

Check if you have taken a university-level course in:
☐ African politics  ☐ Other African course  ☐ Writing (non-fiction)
☐ Econ - Intro  ☐ Econ - Intermediate  ☐ Stats – Intro  ☐ Stats – Intermediate
☐ Int’l Relations  ☐ Comparative politics  ☐ Other relevant? __________________________

Planning to take the course?
☐ Not sure  ☐ Probably  ☐ Yes  ☐ I’m only here because I fell asleep in the previous class

Please check any section times that conflict with your class schedule:
☐ Wed 7-8pm  ☐ Thurs 11-12pm  ☐ Thurs 5-6pm  ☐ Thurs 6-7pm  ☐ Thurs 7-8pm  ☐ Fri 12-1pm

Countries or regions that interest you the most? (does not have to be Africa) ________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Any developing country travel or work experience? ________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the career options that interest you after graduation? (No idea is a valid response, but feel free to add anything that catches your interest even a little)
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Random fact about yourself? ________________________________
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