**CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN POLITICS**  
Political Science, GU4496  
Columbia University, Fall 2016

Professor Kimuli Kasara  
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**Time:** MW 10:10-11:25  
**Location:** 1219 IAB

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### COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course explores how social scientists have tried to answer important questions concerning people with an interest in African politics:  
1) Why have democratic governments flourished in some countries and not others?  
2) What institutions enable Africans to hold their leaders accountable?  
3) How do people participate in politics?  
4) In what ways do aspiring African political leaders build public support?  
5) To what extent does poverty on the continent have political causes?  
6) Why is violence used to resolve some political disputes and not others?  
7) To what extent are political outcomes in contemporary Africa a consequence of its history, culture, and geography?

Political scientists seek to address these and other research questions using different types of evidence. Because many developments in African politics cannot be understood in isolation from African societies or their historical context, this course augments political science research with work by historians, economists, and anthropologists.

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### OVERVIEW

This course has six parts. First, we conduct a brief historical survey, concentrating on colonialism and its legacies. Second, we consider the state and political regimes. Third, we examine the identity and interest groups that have shaped political outcomes. Fourth, we examine economic policy. Fifth, we study parties, elections, and political behavior. Finally, we consider the causes and consequences of political violence.

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### REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The requirements are:

- **Participation in lecture discussions** – 15% of the final grade for the class.  
  You are expected to come to the lectures having done the required readings and to participate in class discussions.

- **Map Quiz** – Thursday, September 26\(^{th}\) in class – 5%  
  You will have to locate several African countries on a map.
- **Response Paper – 10%**
  You will write one response paper during the semester. Response papers should be an integrated critical assessment of two of the required readings for a topic. Summarize and discuss the validity of both the logic of the argument and the evidence used by the authors in 2 to 4 pages. Response papers should be emailed to me by 9 am on the day before the class session on which I’ve assigned that reading.

- **Election Report – November 29th & 30th – 20%**
  With other classmates, you will write a brief report on an upcoming African election. Your reports should describe the historical and institutional context of the election and the social and political issues at stake. Your reports are due by 9 am on November 29th, and you will present them in class on November 30th.

- **Midterm Exam – October 26th – 25%**
  The midterm will be a closed-book, in-class exam covering material from both the lectures and the required readings.

- **Final Exam - December 12th – 25%**
  The final exam will be a closed-book, in-class exam covering material from both the lectures and the required readings.

**LOGISTICS**

There is no course reader for this class. All readings are available online or through the class website on Courseworks.

Late assignments will lose a third of a letter grade per day. You may not take make-up exams unless you have a medical excuse provided by a physician or medical office. If you would like to contest a grade, you must submit a written memo describing why your assignment warrants a higher grade.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to do their own work on all tests and assignments for this class and act in accordance with the Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity and Honor Code. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized on an assignment can expect to receive a failing grade on that assignment and will be referred to the Dean’s Discipline process.
READING

Session 1 (9/7): Introduction
There is no required reading for this lecture. Students who want a good introduction to some issues covered in this class should read Frederick Cooper’s *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press) especially pages 1-90.

Session 2 (9/12): Pre-Colonial Political Structures

Session 3 (9/14): Africa and Europe

Session 4 (9/19): Nationalism and Independence

Sessions 5 & 6 (9/21 & 9/26): Legacies of Colonial Rule
Sessions 7 & 8 (9/28 & 10/3): The State

Sessions 9 & 10 (10/5 & 10/10): Forms of Government I – Regimes before c. 1989

Session 11 (10/12): Identity and Interests – Ethnicity

Session 12 (10/17): Identity and Interests – Race & Class

Session 13 (10/19): Identity and Interests – Religion
Session 14 (10/24): Identity and Interests – Gender

Session 15 (10/26): Midterm

Session 16 (10/31): Political Economy I

Session 17 (11/2): Political Economy II
Easterly, William. 2001. The Loans that Were, the Growth That Wasn't (Ch. 6). In The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Session 18 (11/7): University Holiday


Session 21 (11/16): Forms of Government II – Candidates and Parties
Session 22 (11/21): Forms of Government II – Voting Behavior

Session 23 (11/23): Thanksgiving

Session 24 (11/28): Forms of Government II – Constitutional Design

Session 25 (11/30): Forms of Government II – Election Case Studies
Group Presentations in Class

Session 26 (12/5): Political Violence – Communal and State-Sponsored Violence

Session 27 (12/7): Political Violence – Civil Wars & Recovering from Conflict

Session 28 (12/12): Final