

**PSC 444 D: Political Economy of Africa**  
**Spring 2017 / TR 10:00-11:50 / KBB 216**

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Office Hours: Wednesday (10am-3pm)

Objective:

Africa is a diverse continent. In terms of area, Africa is larger than the US, China, and Europe, combined. Living in this vast expanse are approximately 1 billion Africans who speak thousands of different languages, live in 54 different countries, and range from some of the world's richest to some of the world's poorest residents. Grappling with the political issues facing such a diverse population is no small task. Over the next several months we will only be able to lay the groundwork for this exploration and scratch the surface.

This course is divided into two parts. Over the duration of the first five weeks we work to put African politics into a broad context. We do this first by exercising some of our built-in cultural biases. Then we jump into African political history which tends to be understood in three phases: pre-colonial, colonial, and independence. We explore the politics of these periods both separately and as they relate to each other. After our whirlwind tour of African biases and political history, we dive into a series of debates on issues affecting large swaths of the continent. These issues include development, governance, armed conflict, and social tumult. This will help us address some of the cutting edge scholarship on African politics. Interspersed with these broad issue discussions are some more focused case studies to provide detailed and specific examples of these issues as they play out on the ground.

By the end of the course you will not have a comprehensive understanding of African politics. If, however, you put in the necessary time and effort you will understand many of the major issues facing many Africans and the debates surrounding these issues. You will also understand that the continent cannot be painted with a single brush.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the material, attended lectures regularly, done the readings, completed all assignments diligently, and studied for exams, should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- The student will understand that the African continent is not a country.
- The student will be able to identify significant historical and contemporary trends in African Politics.
- The student will be able to explain and analyze issues and debates within the Africanist political science community pertaining to governance, development, conflict, and social issues.
- The student will know in great detail about one of the course's thematic issues (governance, development, conflict, social issues) in a single self-selected African country.

### Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class, via email, or on Blackboard, consider this syllabus a contract between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly and bring it to class with your notebook. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which averages around 200 pages a week. You are also expected to attend EVERY lecture. Visiting me on occasion during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or paper topics will not hurt either. Listening regularly to BBC's *Focus on Africa* radio program will also not only help you pick up a few more points on your occasional quizzes, but will help you come up with a more interesting paper topic and understand the contemporary ramifications of the histories and concepts we study. If you do these things you will do very well in the course. If you do not do these things you will not do so well in the course. Consider this fair warning up front.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in 6 areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exam #1 (20%) – Given out in-class on Tuesday 21 February. The exam will cover all material from the readings and in-class discussions for weeks 1 through 5. If you miss a class over this period, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. The closed book exam will include both multiple choice and short essay questions. There will be NO review sheet. Excused late or early exams will only be given in extreme circumstances and extensive documentation and/or prior permission (at least two weeks in advance) from the professor. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day. If you miss an exam it is YOUR responsibility to contact me on the day of the exam or sooner to schedule a make-up.

Exam #2 (30%) – Exactly like Exam #1 in format but covering material from weeks 1 through 14. It will be administered in-class during the exam period on Thursday 4 May. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #1.

Research Paper (30%) – This course is listed in the UT catalogue as writing intensive which requires a substantial research paper. In addition it is a 400-level course in PSC which means it is research intensive. Your grade on this project is divided up into two parts:

*Preparation (5%)* – To improve your final product, this course requires a multi-stage writing process. On Thursday 9 February you will turn in your proposed (1) research question and a brief abstract explaining what you want to write about. On Thursday 2 March you will present to the class a detailed (2) literature review outlining the important literature related to your research question and framing it in such a way that you shed light on the debate you are entering and articulate testable hypotheses. While there is no upper or lower limit in terms of texts you must cite in your literature review, it is difficult to imagine something satisfactory that does not contain at least 3 academic books and at least 5 academic articles. Every paper in this class will use AfroBarometer, or a similar large-N data set preapproved by your professor, to test a hypothesis. On Tuesday 21 March you will present the (3) data you intend to use in your research paper. This means at a minimum justifying the questions you intend to use to operationalize your variables and going over their summary statistics. Exploring the relationship between these variables, while not a requirement, is encouraged. On Tuesday 11 April you will make a (4) research presentation to the class. These presentations should be practiced and professional and take 10 minutes or less. This is your opportunity to get quality feedback on your penultimate draft. If you put in a good faith effort and turn these assignments in on time you will receive all preparation points. Less than

adequate effort and late assignments will result in a score of less than 5 points. Though not required, it is a VERY GOOD idea to make use of office hours to discuss this project.

*Final Paper (25%)* – Your final paper should have a research question that addresses a suitable issue in African politics. Begin thinking about topics early so you will have time to discuss your thoughts with your professor and come up with a topic you are excited about instead of just any topic that pops into your head in early February the day before research questions and abstracts are due. In 15 pages or less (TNR 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) you should provide well-researched and well-argued answers to this question. Papers are due via Turnitin by Friday 21 April. Late papers will be docked 10 points per day and as you are not supposed to write this paper the night before it is due and have the entire semester to work on it there are no excused absences. Note that this is a political science course and I expect papers to reflect this fact both topically and structurally. Topically this means making explicit how what you are writing about helps me learn more about a theme we cover in the course. Structurally this means including an introduction and conclusion, academic literature review, methods discussion and case analysis. If you are not sure what these components are or how to organize them it is your job to figure it out either on your own or with the help of your professor. To highlight models for you, peer-reviewed research articles are noted in the syllabus with an asterisk next to the mouse symbol.

Pop Quizzes (10%) – At least seven times throughout the semester I will administer a pop quiz during our class period covering the readings assigned for that day. There will also be a bonus question drawn from that week's BBC *Focus on Africa* program. Only your top five scores will be counted towards your final grade making each quiz worth 2 percent of your grade. If you miss a quiz either through tardiness or absence you will receive 0 points. As you have at least a two quiz leeway, there are no make-up quizzes for any reason.

Keim Reflection Paper (5%) – Over the course of the first two weeks of classes and the first weekend of the semester you will read a substantial portion of Curtis Keim's *Mistaking Africa*. The book is a polemical take on Western biases regarding Africa. On Tuesday 24 January you will turn in a 1-2 page essay (single-spaced) explaining some things you have learned about your own cultural biases through reading Keim's text. It should not be a laundry list of things you thought about while reading Keim, but rather a well-organized, informed, and thoughtful discussion of your personal mistaking of Africa. Take this assignment seriously as it provides me a very early look at your writing abilities. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day without an excused absence.

Map Quiz (5%) – There is a political map of Africa attached to this syllabus. You should begin learning this map immediately. On Tuesday 7 February you will be presented with a similar map of Africa sanitized of country and capital names and asked to identify 20 countries and 20 capitals randomly selected by your professor. This quiz will be administered during the first 10 minutes of class. Learning where these country and capital names are early on will help you understand what is going on in future discussions. There will be no make-up map quizzes without an excused absence.

Important Due Dates:

Keim Reflections	Tuesday 24 January
Map Quiz	Tuesday 7 February
Exam #1	Tuesday 21 February
Exam #2	Thursday 4 May
Research Paper	
Question	Thursday 9 February
Lit Review	Tuesday 2 March
Data	Tuesday 21 March
Presentation	Tuesday 11 April
Final Draft	Friday 21 April

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale*</i>
A	4.0	93-100
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

\*I will round up at the .5 and NOT before. For example, if you earn an 87.49 you will receive a B for the class. If you earn an 87.5 you will receive an AB. The only exception to this rule concerns the line between a D and an F. If you make below 60 points, even if it is by the smallest fraction of a point, I will NOT round up.

Required Texts:

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*.

**E&D** Englebert, Pierre and Kevin C. Dunn. *Inside African Politics*.

Keim, Curtis. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Matigari*.

Sembène, Ousmane. *God's Bits of Wood*.

(☞) Article or chapter available through UT Blackboard.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via Blackboard.

### Week 1 (January 17 - 20)

*Tuesday* Introduction

Readings: ∅ syllabus and **E&D** chs. 1 and 2.

*Thursday* Clearing up some Misperceptions, I

Readings: ∅ Wainaina, Binyavanga. 2005. "How to Write About Africa." *Granata*, Winter: 91-95; ∅ Adichie, Chimanda Ngozi. 2009. "The Danger of a Single Story." *TEDGlobal*; and **Keim** chs. 1 and 2.

### Week 2 (January 23 – 27)

*Tuesday* Clearing up some Misperceptions, II

**KEIM REFLECTION PAPER due in hardcopy at beginning of class**

Readings: **Keim** chs. 3-12.

*Thursday* Historical Overview - Precolonial African Politics, Life Before Europeans

Readings: **Achebe** Part I (chs. 1-13).

### Week 3 (January 30 – February 3)

*Tuesday* Historical Overview - Precolonial African Politics, Europeans Arrive

Readings: **Achebe** Parts II and III (chs. 14-25).

*Thursday* Historical Overview – Colonialism's Early and Formative Years

Readings: **Sembène** chs. BAMAKO Ad'jibid'ji - DAKAR Mame Sofi.

### Week 4 (February 6 – 10)

*Tuesday* Historical Overview – Colonialism's Last Vestiges

**MAP QUIZ**

Readings: **Sembène** chs. THIÈS Sounkaré, the Watchman – THIÈS Epilogue.

*Thursday* Historical Overview – Between Colonialism and Independence

**QUESTIONS AND ABSTRACT due in hardcopy at beginning of class**

Readings: None, we'll watch the movie *Lumumba* in class

### Week 5 (February 13 – 17)

*Tuesday* Historical Overview – Independence and Hope

Readings: **Ngũgĩ**.

*Thursday* Historical Overview – Independence and Disillusionment

Readings: None, we'll watch the movie *Xala* in class.

### Week 6 (February 20 – 24)

*Tuesday* **EXAM #1**

*Thursday* People, Identity, Politics – Ethnicity

Readings: **E&D** ch. 3; ∅\* Ekeh, Peter P. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1):91-112; ∅\* Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 1996. "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation." *American Political Science Review* 90 (4): 715-735; ∅\* Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-545

### Week 7 (February 27 – March 3)

- Tuesday* People, Identity, Politics – Gender  
Readings: ∅ Valley, Paul. 2006. “From dawn to dusk, the daily struggle of African Women.” *The Independent*, 21 September; ∅ Bauer, Gretchen and Aili Tripp, eds. 2012. “Symposium: New Directions in Gender and Politics Scholarship: Transforming the Study of African Politics.” *Newsletter of the African Politics Conference Group* 8 (2): 2-12; ∅ Bah, Valerie. 2014. “Mixing Business and Pleasure with some of Africa’s Invisible Gay Activists.” *ThinkAfrica Press*, 13 January.
- Thursday* **LITERATURE REVIEW presented to class**

\*\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\*\*

### Week 8 (March 13 – 17)

- Tuesday* Practice of Power – Corruption, Politics, or Both?  
Readings: E&D ch. 4 and ∅ Maass, Peter. 2005. “A Touch of Crude.” *Mother Jones*, January/February.
- Thursday* Increasing Range of Regimes – Democracy and its Limits  
Readings: E&D ch. 5; ∅ French, Howard W. 1996. “African Anomaly: An Election Up for Grabs.” *New York Times*, 2 March; and ∅\* Monga, Célestin. 1997. “Eight Problems with African Politics.” *Journal of Democracy* 8 (3): 156-170.

### Week 9 (March 20 – 24)

- Tuesday* **DATA presented to class**
- Thursday* Economic Dimensions of African Politics - The Problem of Poverty on a Macro-level I  
Readings: None, we’ll watch the movie *Darwin’s Nightmare* in class.

### Week 10 (March 27 – 31)

- Monday* LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW
- Tuesday* Economic Dimensions of African Politics - The Problem of Poverty on a Micro-level II  
Readings: E&D ch. 6; ∅ Scharff, Xanthe. 2005. “What it’s like to live on \$1 a day.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 July; ∅ McNeil, Donald G. Jr. 2006. “Beyond Swollen Limbs, a Disease’s Hidden Agony.” *New York Times*, 9 April; ∅ Kulish, Nicholas. 2014. “Africans Open Fuller Wallets to the Future.” *NY Times*, 20 July; ∅ Kochhar, Rakesh. 2015. “A Global Middle Class is More Promise than Reality.” *Pew Research*, 8 July.
- Thursday* Economic Dimensions of African Politics - Thinking About the Market in Africa  
Readings: ∅ Hyden, Goran. 1980. *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California), Chapter 1; ∅ Bates, Robert. 1981. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California), Chapter 7; ∅ McCrummen, Stephanie. 2006. “In Congo’s Capital, Informal Economy Is Often the Best Opportunity.” *Washington Post*, 7 December; ∅\* MacLean, Lauren M. 2011. “Exhaustion and Exclusion in the African Village: The Non-State Social Welfare of Informal Reciprocity in Rural Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46: 118-136.

### Week 11 (April 3 – 7)

- Tuesday* Economic Dimensions of African Politics - Foreign Aid  
Readings: ∅ Easterly, William. 2005. “Review of Sach’s *A Modest Proposal*.” *Washington Post*, 13 March; ∅ Sachs, Jeffrey. 2006. “Review of Easterly’s *The White Man’s Burden*.” *Lancet* 367: 1309-1310; ∅ “6-Day Visit to Rural African Village Completely Changes Woman’s Facebook Profile Picture.” 2014. *The Onion*, 28 January; ∅ Biddle, Pippa. 2014. “The Problem with Little White Girls (And Boys): Why I stopped Being a Voluntourist.” [www.pippabiddle.com](http://www.pippabiddle.com), 18 February.
- Thursday* Shifting Landscape of Conflict and Security – The Rwandan Genocide  
Readings: E&D ch. 7.

## Week 12 (April 10 – 14)

*Tuesday*      **RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

*Thursday*      Shifting Landscape of Conflict and Security – Failed States

Readings: ∅ Kaplan, Robert. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy." *Atlantic Monthly* (February): 44-77; ∅ Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton); and ∅ Englebort, Pierre. 2015. "The 'Real' Map of Africa: Redrawing Colonial Borders." *Foreign Affairs*, 8 November.

## Week 13 (April 17 – 21)

*Tuesday*      Shifting Landscape of Conflict and Security – The War on Terror

Readings: ∅\* Bleck, Jaimie and Kristin Michelitch. 2015. "The 2012 Crisis in Mali: Ongoing Empirical State Failure." *African Affairs* 114 (457): 598-623.

*Thursday*      International Relations Near and Far

Readings: **E&D** ch. 8 and ∅\* Benton, Adia and Kim Yi Dionne. 2015. "International Political Economy and the 2014 West African Ebola Outbreak." *African Studies Review* 58 (1): 223-236.

*Friday*      **RESEARCH PAPER due via Turnitin**

## Week 14 (April 25 – 28)

*Tuesday*      International Relations Near and Far – Migration and Human Trafficking

Readings: ∅\* de Hass, Hein. 2008. "The Myth of Invasion: the inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe." *Third World Quarterly* 29 (7): 1305-1322 and ∅ Birnbaum, Michael. 2016. "Migrant boat traffic from Libya to Europe is surging – and turning deadlier." *Washington Post*, 30 November.

*Thursday*      International Relations Near and Far – Conservation and the Environment

Readings: ∅ Polgreen, Lydia and Marlise Simons. 2006. "Global Sludge Ends in Tragedy for Ivory Coast" *New York Times*, 2 October; ∅ Siebert, Charles. 2006. "An Elephant Crackup?" *New York Times*, 8 October; ∅ Vidal John. 2010. "Nigeria's Agony Dwarfs the Gulf Oil Spill." *The Guardian*, 30 May; ∅ Greenpeace. 2008. "Poisoning the Poor – Electronic Waste in Ghana." *Greenpeace International*, 5 August; ∅ Nuwer, Rachel. "Trade Ban to Protect Pangolins: Enough to Save Them?" *New York Times*, 29 September; ∅ Goodman, Amy. 2005. "Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai and Son of Executed Nigerian Activist Ken Wiwa Discuss Oil and the Environment." *Democracy Now*, 20 September.

**\*\*\* EXAM #2 in class from 11:00am-1:00pm on Thursday 4 May \*\*\***

### General Information:

These are a few things every student should know.

Emergency Conditions - In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access [www.ut.edu](http://www.ut.edu) for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to Blackboard for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Special Needs - If there is a student who has special needs because of any disability, please go to the Academic Success Center in North Walker Hall for information regarding registering as a student with a disability. You may also call (813) 257-5757 or email [disability.services@ut.edu](mailto:disability.services@ut.edu). Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information. Once registered with ASC we can figure out a mutually agreeable way to meet your individual accommodations.

Classroom Disruption Policy – The University of Tampa has a policy covering disruptive classroom behavior. The policy will be applied in this course and is detailed in the Faculty Handbook Chapter 6 Section XI (available online at [www.ut.edu/provost](http://www.ut.edu/provost)).

Mental Health Counseling – College can be a stressful time in a young person's life. The American Psychiatric Association published a recent study of college students observed over the course of a single academic year. Over 60% of students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times, almost 40% of the men and 50% of the women reported feeling so depressed that they had difficulty functioning one or more times, and 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time. If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel depressed or out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to counsel you on the problems you are having coping with academic life, but there are dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT's Health and Counseling Center located at 111 North Brevard Ave. (behind Austin Hall) who you may feel more comfortable disclosing certain types of non-academic problems to. The time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your grade has deteriorated. Their email is [healthcenter@ut.edu](mailto:healthcenter@ut.edu) and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center ([academicsuccess@ut.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@ut.edu)) in North Walker Hall offers free peer tutoring, credited academic skills courses, national testing services, and services for students with disabilities. The Saunders Writing Center (323 Plant Hall, x6244) aids students with their writing projects. You pay for these services through your tuition and there is no shame in using them if you need help with your course work. I am more than happy to discuss any academic issues you might have during office hours but if I think one of these services can help you be more successful I will not hesitate to recommend it.

Academic Integrity – The University of Tampa is committed to the development of each student to become a productive and responsible citizen who embraces the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. The scholarly community at The University of Tampa strives to instill values that uphold academic integrity and promotes an ethical standard that does not condone academic misconduct. Violation of academic integrity and academic misconduct tarnish the reputation of the University and discredit the accomplishments of past and present students. Sanctions for violation of academic integrity and academic misconduct include a failing grade in



an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the University. I take integrity very seriously and will monitor all submissions and exams for violations of the academic integrity policy. I also expect professional behavior in class that fosters an environment encouraging not only your learning but the learning of your peers. Students are held responsible for knowing and observing the University's Academic Integrity Policy (available online at [www.ut.edu/provost](http://www.ut.edu/provost)). If you have any questions about the policy, please feel free to talk with me.

### Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of things you can do to help me maintain this image as well as some things you can do to reveal it as a mirage. Doing more of the former and less of the latter will make me happy whereas the converse will make me sad!

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture, and vice versa, the lectures and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions in an intelligent way – There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the classroom. Most of my lectures have a built in component for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better than students who do not on exams. So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while you will find that you do not have to pretend any more. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills. If you are worried about your peers' impressions of you forget about it. Those who value education will find your contributions useful and those who roll their eyes are dull and uninteresting.

DO NOT be tardy or leave class early – If you come in late to class enter quietly and sit somewhere where you will not disturb other students. Classes will begin promptly as scheduled so you will need to copy notes from one of your colleagues on lecture days if you feel like you have missed something important. On assignment days you will not be given extra time for your tardiness. If you show up without an excuse 5 minutes before an exam is finished, you will only have 5 minutes to finish the assignment. If you miss an assignment because of tardiness you will need to consult that assignment's make-up policy.

Class is done when I say something to the effect of "see you next class" and not before. I will do my best to end class on time if not a few minutes earlier. There will, however, be some class periods where I might need to go over time by a minute or two to finish an important point. Out of respect for your fellow classmates you should NOT begin filing papers into your book bags

before class has officially ended. I realize that there will be classes where you have a job interview or a club activity or a plane you need to leave early for. By all means let me know before class that you need to leave early, arrange with someone in class to take notes for you, and do not miss your important event.

DO NOT use cell phones, computers, or recording devices in class – There is a boatload of research suggesting students learn more during lectures when they take notes the old fashioned way with paper and a pen or pencil. Even if you do not buy this evidence or consider yourself an outlier, electronic devices prove distracting to your neighbors.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that will appear on the exam. Anything in the readings or lectures is fair game for an exam. Things covered in both readings and lectures, which I post online in the form of Powerpoint slides, are slightly more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit assignment to a student who initiated the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for my courses unreliable measures of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume every student who enters my class wants to take away a greater understanding of the world and that the grade (s)he receives is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge (s)he has gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0) or a high C (2.0). This grade represents both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course and few will. On the other hand it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students who I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students who I would rather never see again. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I have made a mistake I will consider changing a grade only after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than ten days after receiving your graded assignment to file a complaint. 2) You must submit in writing (*typed* and *printed* out) a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the department chair. Challenges that resemble “I’m an A student so there is no way this paper is a B,” “I was making a good argument it just did not come across

in my paper,” “I was having a bad day can you cut me some slack,” or “I need to pass this class to graduate” will be summarily dismissed as they do not speak to the quality of the work.

DO NOT send me an email unless it’s an emergency – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails can become burdensome. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class. So how can you decide if an email is an emergency? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?
- 2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?
- 3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Most assignments I have submitted via Turnitin and those few which require hardcopies there is a drop box on the outside of my office door.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat FEEL FREE to drop by my office during office hours. I keep five hours per week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – The UT catalog has a section on “excused absences.” It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late papers. You know about them well in advance and a last minute illness or death in the family should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment or have a colleague do so on your behalf. Excuses for missed exams or presentations are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will almost always be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student. For each assignment listed in this syllabus there is a detailed policy regarding late penalties. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above.

DO understand that I am interested in discussing your progress in the course with you – If you have a parent, coach, drill sergeant, etc. who is interested in learning about your status in this course feel free to share it with them. I post grades on Blackboard and the syllabus explains in detail my weighting formula so you have access to all the information I do regarding your current standing in the class and may share it with anyone you want.

# Map of Africa (2017)

