

PSC 444-B: Political Economy of Africa
Fall 2019 / TR 8:00-9:50am / GHS 105

Kevin S. Fridy
Office: KBB 103
Phone: (813) 257-3767
E-mail: kfridy@ut.edu
Course Website: <http://ut.blackboard.com>
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday (10:00a-11:40am)

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 more than 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 inhabitants. Grappling with the political issues facing such a large and diverse population is no small task. Over the next several months we only lay the groundwork for this exploration by scratching 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 exposing some of our built-in cultural biases. Then we jump into African political history which tends to be understood in the literature 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 innovative scholarship on African politics along the way. 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 residents of the continent and the debates surrounding these issues. You will also understand, perhaps most importantly, that Africa 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) as it relates to a class wide project.

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 150 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 occasional bonus points, 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 5 areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Exam #1 (25%) – Given out in-class. The exam covers all material from the readings and in-class discussions for class sessions prior to the exam. 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 (25%) – Exactly like Exam #1 in format but covering material from the entire course. It will be administered in-class during the final exam period. A heavy emphasis is placed on lessons covered after Exam #1.

Research Paper (35%) – 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 (10%) – To improve your final product, this course requires a multi-stage writing process. On Thursday Week 2 we go over the over-arching theme for ALL of our research papers, discuss how to turn this theme into a proper research question, and explore the dataset available to you. Our independent variable this semester will be whether someone identifies as the progeny of a pastoralist or farming ethnic group. Your dependent variables MUST be at least tangentially tied to one of the themes we discuss during Weeks 7 through 15. On Thursday Week 4 you will submit to me in hardcopy at the beginning of class a formal (1) *research question* with a clearly defined independent and dependent variable. Once you settle on a research question you need to frame potential answers in a debate called a (2) *literature review*. Sometime during Week 5 I will assign you an appropriate class to present your literature review. Bring this literature review to class to turn in as a hardcopy and be prepared to present the debate you are entering in 4-5 minutes and lead a discussion over the day's readings. The expectation at this level is that you already know how to write a literature review. If you do not, it is your responsibility to figure it out by going through the academic articles on this syllabus and/or coming by office hours early enough for me to give you guidance. 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 10 peer-reviewed citations and most topics will require more. Every paper in this class will use AfroBarometer data to test the hypotheses indicated in your literature review to create a research paper. On Tuesday Week 11 you will bring a polished and complete draft of your research paper to the class where you will trade it with a colleague. Having their paper in hand, you will review it over the weekend and come to class during Week 12 prepared with written comments on a provided worksheet to (3) *serve as a discussant* of this paper and provide useful feedback to the author. If you fail to provide your draft for our meeting on Tuesday Week 11 you will be unable to participate in the paper exchange and you will forfeit all points for the discussant assignment. Lastly you will (4) *present your paper* during Week 12. These presentations should be practiced and professional and take no more than 7 minutes. This is your opportunity to get quality feedback on your penultimate draft. As all four of these assignments are used as building blocks to your final research paper, late unexcused assignments will NOT be accepted. 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 related to the class topic. Everyone in the class will take on the categorical variable “pastoralists versus farmers” as their independent variable, but it is your responsibility to cull through the literature and AfroBarometer data set in search of interesting and relevant dependent variables. 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 the day before literature reviews are due. In 20 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 Blackboard/Turnitin the Friday before Thanksgiving. 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, methodologically, 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. Methodologically the discipline of political science is diverse but there are limits, stay within them. 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.

Keim Reflection Paper (7.5%) – Over the course of the first several classes you will read Curtis Keim’s *Mistaking Africa*. The book is a polemical take on Western biases regarding Africa. On our Tuesday meeting during Week 2 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. You should turn this in via Blackboard/Turnitin and bring a hardcopy to class. The paper 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. No matter how “woke” you think you are they are there. 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 (7.5%) – There is a political map of Africa attached to this syllabus. You should begin learning this map immediately. On the Tuesday of Week 4 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 3 September
Map Quiz	Tuesday 17 September
Exam #1	Thursday 3 October
Exam #2	Tuesday 10 December
Research Paper	
Research Question	Thursday 19 September
Lit Review	TBA
First Draft	Tuesday 5 November
Discussant	Week 12
Presentation	Week 12
Final Draft	Friday 22 November

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*, 4th ed

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Matigari*.

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

(📖) Article or chapter available through UT Blackboard.

(🎬) Film or audio clip available online or through the library linked on 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 (August 26 – 30)

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** Part 1.

Week 2 (September 2 – 6)

Tuesday **KEIM REFLECTION PAPER**
Clearing up some Misperceptions, II
Readings: **Keim** Parts 2-4.

Thursday Governance – Conflicts between Herder and Farmer
Laying the Groundwork for your Research Paper!!!
Readings: 📖 Baca, Michael W. 2015. "My Land, Not Your Land: Farmer-Herder Wars in the Sahel." *Foreign Affairs*, 21 August.

Week 3 (September 9 – 13)

Tuesday Historical Overview - Precolonial African Politics, Life Before Europeans
Readings: **Achebe** Part I (chs. 1-13).

Thursday Historical Overview - Precolonial African Politics, Europeans Arrive
Readings: **Achebe** Parts II and III (chs. 14-25).

Week 4 (September 16 – 20)

Tuesday **MAP QUIZ**
Historical Overview – Colonialism's Early and Formative Years
Readings: **Sembène** chs. BAMAKO Ad'jibid'ji - DAKAR Mame Sofi.

Thursday **RESEARCH QUESTION**
Historical Overview – Colonialism's Last Vestiges
Readings: **Sembène** chs. THIÈS Sounkaré, the Watchman – THIÈS Epilogue.

Week 5 (September 23 – 27)

- Tuesday* Historical Overview – Between Colonialism and Independence
Readings: Ngũgĩ, Part I
- Thursday* Historical Overview – Independence and Hope
Readings: Ngũgĩ, Parts II and III

Week 6 (September 30 – October 4)

- Tuesday* Historical Overview – Independence and Disillusionment
Readings: None, we'll watch the movie *Xala* in class.
- Thursday* **EXAM #1**

Week 7 (October 7 – 11)

- Tuesday* Governance – Democracy
Readings: E&D ch. 5; 🇳🇪 Monga, Célestin. 1997. "Eight Problems with African Politics." *Journal of Democracy* 8 (3): 156-170
- Thursday* Governance – Corruption
Readings: E&D ch. 4; 🇳🇪* Ekeh, Peter P. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1):91-112; and 🇳🇪 Big Men (2013).

Week 8 (October 14 – 18)

- Tuesday* Representation – Ethnicity
Readings: E&D ch. 3; 🇳🇪* 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
- Thursday* Representation – Gender
Readings: 🇳🇪 Vallely, 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.

Week 9 (October 21 – 25)

- Tuesday* Representation – Class
Readings: 🇳🇪 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; 🇳🇪* Handley, Antoinette. 2015. "Varieties of Capitalists? The Middle-Class, Private Sector and Economic Outcomes in Africa.
- Thursday* Economy – Macro-picture
Readings: E&D ch. 6.

Week 10 (October 28 – November 1)

Tuesday Economy – Markets

Readings: ∅ Hyden, Goran. 1980. *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California), Chapter 1; and ∅ Bates, Robert. 1981. *Markets and States in Tropical Africa*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California), Chapter 7.

Thursday Economy – Foreign Aid

Readings: ∅ Easterly, William. 2014. “The Aid Debate Is Over.” *Reason*, January; ∅ Sachs, Jeffrey. 2014. “The Case for Aid.” *Foreign Policy*, 21 January; ∅ “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, 18 February.

Week 11 (November 4 – 8)

Monday LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

Tuesday **DRAFT PAPER**

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 ∅ Englebert, Pierre. 2015. “The ‘Real’ Map of Africa: Redrawing Colonial Borders.” *Foreign Affairs*, 8 November.

Thursday Security – Civil War

Readings: E&D ch. 7.

Week 12 (November 11 – 15)

Tuesday **RESEARCH PRESENTATION#1**

Thursday **RESEARCH PRESENTATION#2**

Week 13 (November 18 – 22)

Tuesday Security – War on Terror

Readings: ∅ Africa Center for Strategic Studies. 2019 “Frontlines in Flux in Battle against African Militant Islamist Groups.” 9 July; ∅* Bleck, Jaimie and Kristin Michelitch. 2015. “The 2012 Crisis in Mali: Ongoing Empirical State Failure.” *African Affairs* 114 (457): 598-623; and ∅ *Timbuktu* (2014).

Thursday IR – Africa in the World

Readings: E&D ch. 8; ∅* Benton, Adia and Kim Yi Dionne. 2015. “International Political Economy and the 2014 West African Ebola Outbreak.” *African Studies Review* 58 (1): 223-236; ∅ Brautigam, Deborah. 2019. “Is China the World’s Loan Shark?” *New York Times*, 26 April.

Friday **RESEARCH PAPER**

Week 14 (November 24 – 29)

Tuesday I IR – Migration and Human Trafficking I

Readings: None we will watch *14 Kilometers*.

Thursday **THANKSGIVING**

Week 15 (December 2 – 6)

Tuesday

IR – Migration and Human Trafficking II

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.

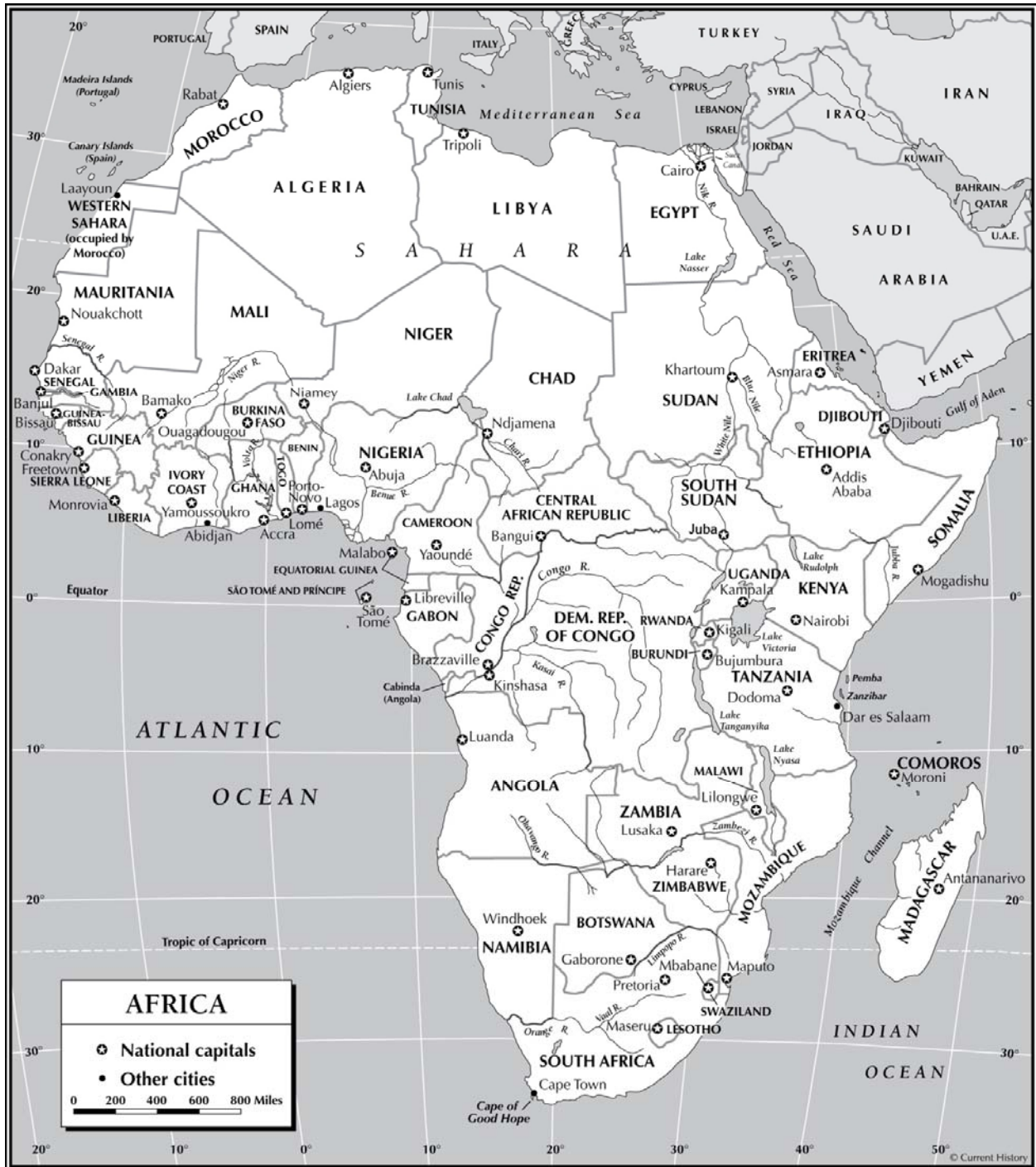
Thursday

IR – Environment

Readings: √ Yeebo, Yepoka. 2014. “Inside a Massive Electronics Graveyard.” *The Atlantic*, 29 December; √ Environmental Justice Foundation. 2018. *China’s Hidden Fleet*. EJR: London, UK; and √ Bale, Rachel. 2019. “Poaching is sending the shy, elusive pangolin to its doom.” *National Geographic*, June.

***** EXAM #2 in class from 8:30am-10:30am on Tuesday 10 December *****

MAP OF AFRICA (2019)



General Classroom 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 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 requires accommodations 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. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information.

Classroom Disruption Policy – Every student has the right to a comfortable learning environment where the open and honest exchange of ideas may freely occur. Each student is expected to do his or her part to ensure that the classroom (and anywhere else the class may meet) remains conducive to learning. This includes respectful and courteous treatment of all in the classroom. According to the terms of the University of Tampa Disruption Policy, the professor will take immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs.

Audio and Video Recording – 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 and may have a stifling impact on conversation if your peers suspect they are being recorded on such a device. Unless you are given permission by the instructor in writing prior, you may NOT record video or audio of lectures or discussions. Violating this policy will result in your removal from class.

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 and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Title IX Statement - Sexual violence includes nonconsensual sexual contact and nonconsensual sexual intercourse (which is any type of sexual contact without your explicit consent, including rape), dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and stalking. You may reach out for confidential help or report an incident for investigation. If you choose to write or speak about an incident of sexual violence and disclose that this violence occurred while you were a UT student, the instructor is obligated to report the incident to the Title IX Deputy Coordinator for Students. The purpose of this report is to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The Deputy Coordinator or his or her designee will contact you to let you know about the resources, accommodations, and support services at UT and possibilities for holding the perpetrator accountable. If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, you can speak confidentially with the following individuals: - The Victim's Advocacy Hotline

813.257.3900; Dickey Health & Wellness Center (wellness@ut.edu) 813.257.1877; Health and Counseling Center (healthcenter@ut.edu) 813.253.6250. They can connect you with support services and discuss options for holding the perpetrator accountable.

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center (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. The Public Speaking Center (KBB 200, speakingcenter@ut.edu) offers students help with presentations. 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 – Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any other behavior that is contrary to University standards of behavior will not be tolerated. Students caught violating any aspect of the University of Tampa's Academic Integrity Policy will be penalized in all cases. Penalty ranges from "0" on an assignment to "F" for the course without regard to a student's accumulated points. Students may also face expulsion. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies of the university regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating such policies. Policy information is found at: <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy>

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 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 NOT send me an email unless it's absolutely necessary – 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 and for general points of inquiry it is inefficient as emails regularly get lost in my Inbox. So how can you decide if an email must be sent to me? 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. If you answer all of the questions in the negative, feel free to send the email. Make sure, however, to send it from your @spartans.ut.edu email account and keep in mind that I only check email during office hours. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Most assignments I have submitted via Blackboard/Turnitin and for those few which require hardcopies there is a drop box on the outside of my office door.

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 know the university policy on “excused” absences – I do not take roll so the only time you need an excused absence is when there is an assignment due. The UT catalog has a detailed 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 written assignments. 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.