Overview
This course provides an introduction to African politics since independence and the political challenges confronting contemporary African countries. We will begin with a brief overview of the pre-colonial and colonial legacies that have shaped African politics. We will then examine (a) why state capacity is low, (b) how political regimes and social cleavages affect political accountability, (c) why African economic growth has been so slow, and (d) when and why political violence has affected African countries.

Requirements and grading
Class sessions will consist of a combination of lecture and discussion. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. There will be a brief map quiz during Session 3. The midterm will consist of a choice of short answer essays. Each student will become an expert on one African country, and will be responsible for providing a brief assessment of how the country’s contemporary politics fit in to paradigms discussed during each class session as well as a final presentation. The final exam will consist of longer essay questions that should be answered using the country case studies from our readings and class presentations as examples.

- Class attendance and participation, including daily country assessments (25%)
- Map quiz, May 31st (10%)
- Take-home midterm, due June 12th (20%)
- Country presentation, June 26th (20%)
- Final exam (in class), June 28th (25%)

Map Quiz
The quiz will include countries, names of capitals (largest cities), and politically and economically important geographic features: rivers (Congo, Limpopo, Niger, Nile, Zambezi), lakes (Chad, Malawi/Nyasa, Tanganyika, Victoria), and climatic regions (tropical rainforest, Sahel, deserts). You must also be able to identify former colonial rulers. Helpful online resources (maps and practice quizzes):

- [http://open.lib.umn.edu/worldgeography/chapter/7-1-introducing-the-realm/](http://open.lib.umn.edu/worldgeography/chapter/7-1-introducing-the-realm/)
- [http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africa.html](http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africa.html)
- [http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africacapitals.html](http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/africacapitals.html)
Country expert recommendations:
Angola, Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan & South Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Readings
We will read both articles and chapters from many different books. Readings marked with an asterisk will be available via NYU classes. Others will be on reserve at Bobst. All are available for purchase. The following are particularly recommended for purchase since we will read many chapters and they will therefore not be available via NYU Classes:

- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. States and Power in Africa

Office Hours
I will hold office hours immediately after class on Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment. For any urgent questions, please email me at shana.warren@nyu.edu.
Course outline

Part 1: The Weight of History

Session 1 Introduction to African Politics & Pre-colonial Africa (5/22)

Required readings


Recommended readings

- #africaisnotacountry

Session 2 The Slave Trade and Colonial Africa (5/24)

Required readings


Recommended readings


Session 3 The End of Colonial rule and Independence & Map Quiz (5/31)

Required readings


**Recommended readings**


**Part 2: Political Institutions**

**Session 4 African states (6/5)**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Session 5 Politically Relevant Social identities (6/7)**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


**Session 6 Political regimes and political change (6/12)**

**Required readings**


**Recommended readings**

Part 3: Political Challenges

Session 7 Patronage politics (6/14)

Required readings


Recommended readings


Session 8 Political economy of growth, development and foreign aid (6/19)

Required readings


Recommended readings

Session 9 Political Violence and Reconciliation (6/21)

Required readings

Recommended readings

Session 10 Country presentations and final exam review (6/26)
All students will prepare a 10-minute presentation about how their chosen county fits into the themes of the course and the broad arc of contemporary African political history. Details TBD

Session 11 Final Exam (6/28)
Final exam will be held during the final scheduled class meeting.