

University of Alabama

PSC 336: African Politics

Spring 2024, TR 3:30-4:45pm

Room: 119 ten Hoor Hall

Dr. Amanda B. Edgell

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314 ten Hoor Hall

Office hours: TR 1-2pm

& by appointment

Africa is a diverse continent comprising 54 countries and about 1.5 billion people. The land area of the Gambia is smaller than Connecticut, whereas Algeria and D.R. Congo are larger than Western Europe. Nigeria is home to over 200 million people, nearly 3% of the world's population. Meanwhile, everyone living in Seychelles could fit inside Bryant Denny Stadium with room to spare. The continent is home to all types of political systems – such as liberal democracy in Ghana, an absolute monarchy in Eswatini, a military junta in Sudan, and a one-party regime in Eritrea. This makes Africa an exciting place to study politics.

This course is designed to provide you with a working knowledge of contemporary politics on the African continent. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the origins of contemporary African states, which have important implications for political systems, identities, and citizenship on this diverse continent. We will learn about the successes of African countries since independence while engaging in debates over pressing issues that affect the continent. These discussions will help you better understand how the African continent informs our broader understanding of politics.

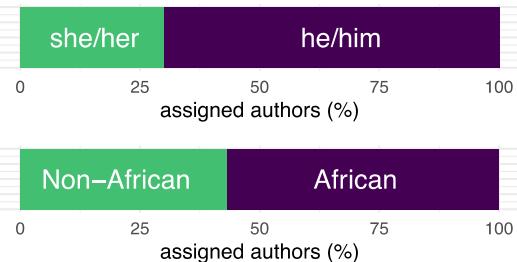
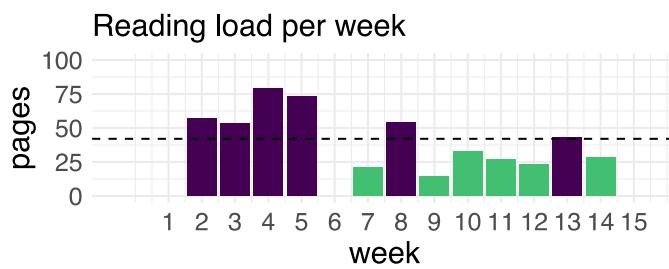
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Identify all contemporary African countries on a map.
2. Evaluate and summarize scholarly research about Africa.
3. Express an informed opinion about current political debates in Africa.
4. Explain how African experiences inform our broader understanding of politics.

Pre-requisites: None required. PSC 203 (Comparative Politics) is recommended.

Writing Designation (W): Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

Required Text: Faloyin, Dipo. *Africa is Not a Country: Notes from a Bright Continent*. WW Norton, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-324-06589-0. Available through Access Granted on Blackboard. You must opt out of Access Granted by 18 January 2024 if you prefer to purchase the book elsewhere.





Content Warning

At times this semester, we will discuss historical and current events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. This course may include content depicting the following situations:

- Violence, abuse, and repression (including blood and torture).
- Executions, including mass executions.
- Kidnapping and abduction.
- Sexual assault and sexual violence.
- Warfare, including irregular warfare and chemical weapons.
- Crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.
- Mental illness and suicide.
- Substance abuse, including drugs and alcohol.
- Child abuse, including child soldiers.
- Xenophobia, racism, sexism, misogyny, antisemitism, and Islamophobia.
- Gun violence, including mass shootings.

All class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the student learning outcomes for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. There will be **two** mental health breaks during the semester for students to recharge and avoid burnout. If you are aware of particular course material that may be triggering to you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have with it before it comes up in class.

Wellness Resources

College can be a stressful time. If you or someone you know is facing a challenging time or dealing with academic or personal stress, anxiety, depression, or other concerns, we strongly encourage and support you to seek assistance or to help friends find the care that they may need by reviewing the Campus Resource List for Students (<https://alabama.app.box.com/s/nz3gs827kx538255typ9hm5owd7x0yj8>).

If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need urgent assistance, you can also contact the following resources:

<u>UA Counseling Center</u> MWRF, 8am-5pm T, 9am-5pm 205-348-3863 Text BAMA to 741-741 www.counseling.sa.ua.edu	<u>Women & Gender RC</u> M-F, 8am-5pm 205-348-5040 www.wgrc.sa.ua.edu	<u>Crisis Line (UAPD)</u> Outside normal hours 205-348-5454 Ask for on-call counselor or advocate
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Attendance Policy

We will track attendance using Microsoft Forms. Please bring a smartphone, tablet, or computer to class so that you can complete the attendance poll.

You do not need to notify me of every absence, as doing so will not result in points for missed classes. However, if you are absent for any reason from more than five class meetings, you will automatically fail the course unless you withdraw before the final grading period. Students with documented disabilities from ODS that require flexible attendance may request reasonable accommodations to this policy, provided that their absences are related to their disability.

Assignments and Exams

Participation (10%): You will be assigned an African country to investigate throughout the semester through in-class activities and (ungraded) homework assignments. There are several days when you will need to research your case study or prepare an ungraded writing assignment for participation credit. You should prepare in advance and bring these to class with you. You may also earn participation credit by visiting office hours and completing the course SOI. You will lose participation points for disrupting class – such as by arriving late or being disengaged from discussion (e.g., sleeping, doom-scrolling, or having side conversations).

Map Test (10%): There will be an in-class closed-book map test covering all 54 independent countries in Africa.

Editorial Essays (25%): On “controversial topics” days, we will discuss the alternative points of view on a pressing issue that directly affects the African continent. Before these discussions, you will review several competing arguments and prepare an editorial essay expressing your view. Your editorial essay is due before class the day the topic is discussed. You should also bring a copy of your essay to class with you. Further instructions and the rubric are available on Blackboard.

Research Translation (25%): You will write at least two research translation essays summarizing academic research for a public audience. Everyone must submit an essay by 11:59pm on February 25th for the Dulani and Tengatenga article (**). You must also submit at least one additional essay summarizing one of the other academic articles we read. These articles are listed with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule, and the essay is due on Blackboard by 11:59pm on Sunday after we discuss the article in class. Further instructions and the rubric are available on Blackboard.

Final Exam (30%): At the end of the semester, we will have an open-note final exam. This exam will assess your ability to explain how African experiences inform our broader understanding of politics.

Grading Policies

We will use the following scale to determine your final earned grade in this class:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
97–	90–	88–	85–	80–	78–	75–	70–	68–	65–	60–	50–	0–
100%	96%	89%	87%	84%	79%	77%	74%	69%	67%	64%	59%	49%
4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0.00

Missed Exams and Assignments: If you need to miss an exam or assignment for a good cause, you must provide written documentation within 48 hours or as soon as physically possible. If excused, all late work must be completed within one week of the original due date, regardless of the reason for missing the exam or assignment.

Grade Disputes: If you think I have made an error, contact me during office hours or schedule an appointment within one week of receiving the grade. Out of respect for your right to privacy under the University's Confidentiality of Student Records policy and the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I do not discuss grades via email.

Incomplete Grades: Incomplete "I" grades will be recorded only in exceptional cases when the student (1) has completed a substantial portion of the course and is otherwise passing, (2) is unable to complete a well-defined portion of a course for reasons beyond the student's control, and (3) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course. Requests for "I" grades must be submitted in writing using this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/1wFD67LTPn>

Plagiarism and AI Technology

In line with UA's Academic Misconduct policy, I expect you to generate your own work in this course. By submitting an assignment, you claim this work is entirely your own. Any work that you have paraphrased should be correctly cited. If you use more than three words in a row from someone else's work, use quotation marks and cite the source, including the page number. If you submit work generated by someone else or created by a computer application such as ChatGPT, this will be considered a violation of the Academic Misconduct policy and may be reported to the Department Chair or Dean's office for review.

Controversial Topics

Some of the topics in this course may be considered controversial. One of the core purposes of a university is to discuss important topics through a scholarly lens. When members of a class find themselves feeling strongly about a topic, that is a signal that the topic is important enough to be discussed rather than avoided. Differences of opinion are expected and will result in rich discussions. In these discussions, students will be expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of concepts presented in the course materials and to ground their positions in concepts and evidence relevant to the course. This in turn will entail coming to class prepared, asking relevant questions, sharing perspectives, having a willingness to listen, and practicing open-mindedness when encountering the perspectives of others. In this course we will assume the positive intentions of all class members when discussing important topics, and we will give them the benefit of the doubt when considering their perspectives and sharing our own.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Names and pronouns: UA provides instructors with a roster listing each student's legal name. However, I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me accordingly early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. You can also designate your pronouns in Banner.

Students with disabilities: The University of Alabama is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate in this class, contact the Office of Disability Services (or ODS; 205-348-4285, ods@ua.edu, Houser Hall 1000, www.ods.ua.edu) as soon as possible. If you have been approved to receive accommodations through ODS, please meet with your instructor or College designee during office hours or by appointment to review your accommodation letter and discuss how accommodations can be implemented in this course.

Pregnancy accommodations: Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the UAct website (<https://uact.ua.edu/information/pregnancy>).

Religious observances: Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines (<https://provost.ua.edu/oaa-guidelines-for-religious-holidays-observance>).

UAct: Ethical community: The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (<http://www.ua.edu/uact>) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Mandatory Reporting: As a faculty member at the University of Alabama, I am a mandatory reporter for known or suspected child abuse or neglect. This means that if I become aware of harm or threatened harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or negligent treatment of any person under the age of 18 or under the age of 19 in need of protective services, I must immediately report the suspected abuse to the University of Alabama Police Department. For more information: <https://uact.ua.edu/information/child-protection>

Responsible Reporting: As a faculty member at the University of Alabama, I am considered a responsible reporting individual for sexual misconduct under Title IX regulations. This means that I am required to immediately report known incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator and the Designated Harassment Resource Person under the UAct program. For more information: <https://uact.ua.edu/information/titleix>

Academic misconduct Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://provost.ua.edu/academic-misconduct>).

Turnitin® policy: Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to Turnitin.com for the purpose of detecting textual similarities and plagiarism.

Audio-video recordings: As a general rule, no one is allowed to make audio or video recordings of our class sessions. This will facilitate an active, honest, open discussion during our meetings. Any student violating this rule may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. Students with documented disabilities requiring access to audio recordings of missed classes should notify me formally through the ODS portal so that we can make alternative accommodations that are more reasonable for the course format.

Sharing course materials: All course materials, presentations, and class discussions are only for viewing by members of this class section. They may not be posted in any public forum or shared with anyone not enrolled. Any student violating these rules may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

Severe weather protocol: Please refer to the Severe Weather Guidelines located on the Office of Emergency Management website: <https://ready.ua.edu/severe-weather-guidelines/>.

Notification of changes: The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Last Updated: 27 December 2023.

Detailed Course Schedule

Below is a required reading schedule and other materials for each class session. You are expected to review the assigned materials before class and come prepared to discuss them. All material aside from the textbook will have links on the course website. You may need to be on campus or logged in through the UA VPN to access some gated resources.

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1 Prelude	09 January <u>No Class.</u>	11 January <u>No Class.</u> Review: Syllabus and course website. Subscribe: <i>The Continent</i>
2 Introductions	16 January Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.1-18. Read: “The Writing Process” and “Reading like a Writer” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner	18 January Read: “How to Write about Africa” by Wainaina Binyavanga Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.185-222 Write: “Who Are You?” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner
3 How Europe Divided Africa	23 January Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp. 19-66 Research: Pre-colonial and colonial politics in your case country	25 January Read: “Titles” and “Proofreading” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner Write: “Is a Hot Dog a Sandwich” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner
4 “Decolonization” and the Repatriation Debate	30 January Write: “A Continent Remade” on NYT Research: The independence experience in your case country	01 February Controversial Topics: The Politics of Art Repatriation Write: Editorial Essay due before class starts
5 Boundaries and (Poor) Planning	06 February Research: The true size of Africa and your case country Practice: You Don’t Know Africa. <u>Map Test!</u>	08 February Read: “Procrastination” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner Read: “Huh? Say What?” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
6 Democracy and Dictatorship	13 February Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp. 111-184 Research: Freedom House report for your assigned country	15 February No Class: Mental Health Break.
7 The Pop Star vs. the Big Man	20 February Watch: Bobi Wine- The People's President by National Geographic Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.325-328	22 February Read: "Big Man Rule in Africa" by Boniface Dulani and John Tengatenga** **Write: First Research Translation due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 25 February
8 Youth Politics and Protest	27 February Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.307-324 Watch: October 2020 Research: Youth and protests in your case country	29 February Read: "Do Politically Irrelevant Events Cause Conflict?" by Kyosuke Kikuta and Mamoru Uesugi* *Write: Research Translation due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 03 March
9 Coups and Military Interventions	05 March Read: "By the Numbers: Coups in Africa" by Duzor and Williamson Research: Coups in your case country	07 March Write: Understanding Sources exercise
<i>Enjoy Spring Break, 8-17 March</i>		
10 The Gender Quota Debate and LGBTQ+ Rights	19 March Controversial Topics: The Politics of Gender Quotas Write: Editorial Essay due before class starts	21 March Read: "The Lies We've Been Told" by Thabo Msibi* Read: "The 'Deviant' African Genders" by Mohammed Elnaiem Watch: <i>Rafiki</i> *Write: Research Translation due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 24 March

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
11 China and Russia in Africa	26 March Read: “Tracking Russian Interference” from The African Center for Strategic Studies Watch: Russia’s Madagascar Election Gamble	28 March Read: “China Regional Snapshot” from the U.S. Senate Read: “Different Approach, Same Focus” by Kwame Adovor Tsikudo* *Write: Research Translation due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 31 March
12 Resource Politics and the Hunting Debate	02 April Read/watch: “Cobalt Pipeline” by Todd Frankel Research: Natural resource politics in your case country	04 April Controversial Topics: The Politics of Big Game Hunting Write: Editorial Essay due before class starts
13 Foreign Aid and White Saviors	09 April Watch: Selected videos (see Blackboard) Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.67-110	11 April <u>No Class: Mental health break.</u>
14 Conclusions	16 April Watch: Selected videos (see Blackboard) Read: <i>Africa is Not a Country</i> by Dipo Faloyin, pp.281-306	18 April Write: “Who Are You Now?” from <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> by John Warner
15 Study Break	23 April <u>No Class. Study Break.</u>	25 April <u>No Class. Study Break.</u>

Final Exam: 02 May, 1:30-3:30pm