



Course Level

***AXL2202F: African Political Thought* Course Outline: 2018**

Convenors: Associate Professor: H. Chitonge and Ms. Z. Msomi

This is a second-year undergraduate core course for a new African Studies major.

Course Description

This course explores African political systems and thought, from precolonial Africa through to postcolonial political systems. In so-doing, the course examines the forms of African political thought that emerged across three periods: the pre-colonial; the era of colonisation and political forms of resistance against it; and the postcolonial/neo-colonial period.

The course starts with an exploration of political formations and systems in precolonial Africa as an entry into the thoughts behind the systems. The first section of the course demonstrates that there were well-established political systems in various parts of Africa before the advent of colonialism, contrary to claims that politics and history in Africa are a product of the colonial period. In order to understand how the introduction of colonial rule affected African political thought and institutions, the course also examines the forms of political organisation and institutions introduced during colonialism in Africa. From here, it moves to the forms of political resistance to colonial rule that emerged within Africa, and examines some of the alternative political forms put forward by movements such as pan- Africanism, and various nationalists. In so doing, we demonstrate that colonialism was not an all- encompassing system, and that African agency and forms of African political thinking were able to continue. We also demonstrate that African political thought is not a single homogenous system, but

instead encompasses multiple forms. Finally, the course looks at postcolonial political thought and institutions, demonstrating the tensions that emerge within local-global

nexus of power. The course ends with current critiques of postcolonial governance, which argue that, in many important ways, decolonisation of our political systems has not yet occurred. **This is a paperless course. Ensure that you check VULA announcements and refer regularly to your emails. All readings and assignments will be uploaded onto VULA. Your student card will be loaded with Rx.**

Motivation for the Course

This course presents African political thought from the perspective of African political thinkers and African Studies analysts. Political institutions and forms of political thought are the means by which power is exerted and resisted. Current events in South Africa and Africa more broadly show the long- ranging effects of forms of political thinking. This course allows students to explore, through academic and literary texts, the complex interplays of forms of power within Africa, and between Africa and other parts of the world. It also allows for a nuanced understanding of the political histories of other parts of the continent which is important for South African students today. It is a core component of the new African Studies major; as such it presents political ideas from an African and interdisciplinary perspective. The course ends with a perspective which challenges students to think about what they themselves can do to contribute to a politics of decolonisation.

Learning Outcomes.

By the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

1. The fact that politics and history in Africa existed before the colonial period
2. The effects of the colonial era on past and present African political thought and forms of governance
3. Current critiques of postcolonial governance, including ideas of decoloniality
4. The complexities and differences that exist within Africa, such that ‘African political thought’ encompasses a wide variety of political forms

Structure of the Course

The weekly teaching structure consists of two lectures, an additional compulsory contact period in the form of a lab, and one tutorial. **Attendance to all teaching components is compulsory.**

Day	Format	Time	Period	Venues
Monday	Lecture	2pm	6	Beattie 106
Tuesday	Computer lab	2pm	6	Bessie Head Lab
Wednesday	Tutorial	2pm	6	TBC
Thursday	Lecture	2pm	6	Beattie 106

The course is divided into three parts as above; within this, each week will have a theme and a set of readings related to the theme. There will be two sets of readings: the required readings are compulsory and should be read before the lecture, and the recommended reading which are not compulsory, but useful additional material relevant to the course.

The course also recommends a non-academic, literary text in the form of a novel/epic novel for the course. This is in keeping with the interdisciplinary focus of the new African Studies major and means that students are able to grasp the complexity of political ideas through non-academic language.

Assessment

Coursework will count for 60% of the mark. Students will be required to hand in four assignments over the course of the semester. **An electronic/soft copy of the assignment must be handed into turnitin.** The other 40% weighting will come from an examination at the end of the semester.

Submission	Due Date	Time	Weighting
Short Assignment 1	Friday 9 th March	2pm	10%
Short Assignment II	Friday 23 rd March	2pm	10%

Long Assignment I	Friday 20 th April	2pm	20%
Long Assignment II	Friday 1 st June	2pm	20%
Exam	June		40%

In addition to weekly course readings, students will be required to read the epic poem *Song of Lawino* over the course of the semester for their second long essay assignment, in which they use the epic poem as an example through which to explore concepts in African political thought.

Choice of Novels/Poems: *Song of Lawino* by Okot p'Bitek (1966) – exemplifies the precolonial and resistance to colonisation

Tutorials and PLUS Tutorials

1. ALL Tutorials take place Wednesday, 2pm. Please see VULA announcements for further details. Tutorial attendance is 80% **which includes the compulsory Exam Prep Tutorial (Tutorial 10).**
2. Tutorial Sign-Up takes place in the first week of lectures and closes on Monday, 26 February at 5pm. Thereafter, you will need to contact your head tutor, Tammy Wilks (WLKTAM001@myuct.ac.za) to manually add you to a tutorial group.
3. Each tutorial is assigned a reading that you must do before the tutorial. **The *Tutorial Worksheet Pack* is available on VULA that you must bring to every tutorial.**

PLUS Tutorials

PLUS Tutorials are for extended-degree students. Plus tutorials are on Wednesdays 2-3.30pm in the *CAS Seminar Room* with Tammy Wilks. **Please ensure that you are registered for both AXL2202F and AXL2203F.**

Computer Labs

1. ALL computer labs are compulsory. They build toward the tutorial and assignment submissions.
2. **Computer labs takes place on Tuesdays, 2pm in the Bessie Head Lab (Basement of**

Beattie)

Part 1: Precolonial African Political Systems and Thought

Week 1: Foundations of African Political Systems and Thought

Required Readings

Diop, Cheikh Anta. 'Introduction' in *Precolonial Black Africa* Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Company, 1978.

Asante, Molefi(2007). *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony*. New York/London: Routledge. Pp. 93-115.

Recommended Readings

Boamah-Wiafe, Daniel (1993) *Africa: The Land, People and Cultural Institutions*. Omaha: Wisdom Publications.

Wolf, Eric. 'Introduction' in *Europe and the People Without Histories*. Univ of California Press, 2010. [330.903 WOLF]

Fortes, M and Evan-Pritchard, E.(1940[1970]). "Introduction" in M. Fortes & E. Evans-Prichard(eds.), *African Political Systems*. London: Oxford University Press. 1-24 [320.96 AFRI]

Week 2: Pre-colonial Political Formations in Africa

Required Readings

Martin, Guy. 2012. Chapter 1: 'The Political Ideology of Indigenous African Political Systems and Institutions from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century.' In *African Political Thought*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan

Mafeje, Archie. 1998. Kingdoms of the Great Lakes region: ethnography of African social formations. Kampala: Fountain Publishers. 37-55.

Recommended Readings

Gluckman, M. 1965. *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*. Oxford : Basil Blackwell. 81-122. [572.1321 GLUC 80/2790]

Boamah-Wiafe, Daniel (1993) *Africa: The Land, People and Cultural Institutions*. Omaha: Wisdom Publications.

Week 3: Case Studies of Precolonial Political Formations

Required Readings

Boaten, K (1971). "The Asante Before 1700." *Institute of African Studies Research Review Issue* 8(1) 50-65.

Wrigley, Christopher (1996). *Kingship and state: the Buganda dynasty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.

Recommended Readings

Wilks, Ivor (1975). *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The structure and Evolution of Political Order*. London: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2. [BA 966.7 WILK]

Oloka-Onyango, J. 1997. "The Question of Buganda in Contemporary Ugandan Politics". *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 15 (2):173-189.

Part Two: The Colonial Influence and Resistance to Colonisation

Song of Lawino (1966) by Okot p'Bitek (epic poem translated into English from Luo).

Week 4: The Colonial Influence

Required Readings

Peter Ekeh, 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 17, No. 1

Mamdani, M(1996). *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Kampala; Fountain Publishers. Chapter 1.

Recommended

Mafeje, Archie. 1971. "The Ideology of 'Tribalism'." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9(2):253-61.

Diouf, M. 1998. "The French Colonial Policy of Assimilation and the Civility of the

Originaires of the Four Communes (Senegal): A nineteenth century Globalisation Project”. *Development and Change* 29(4)

Week 5: Resistance to Colonisation: Nationalisms A

Required Readings

Martin, G. 2012. Pan-Africanism and African Unity. From Ideal to Practice. In *African Political Thought*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan pp.55-70

The Pan African Congress, Manchester, 1945, Resolution in Mutiso, Gideon-Cyrua and Rohio, SW (1979). *Readings in African Political Thought*. London, Nairobi, Ibadan and Lusaka: Heinemann

Recommended Readings

Azikiwe N. (1968). “Africa in Renaissance”, in *Renasant Africa*. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. [BA 320.54096 AZIK]

Ki- Zerbo, J. (1962) African Personality and the New African Society, in *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered*, University of California Press, Berkeley. [960.3 AME 64/1404]

Week 6: Resistance to Colonisation: Nationalisms B – Africa’s Political Thinkers

Required Readings

Nkrumah K (1963). *Africa Must Unite*. London: Longman. Chapter 2.

Nyerere, J.K. (1965) ‘The Nature and Requirements of African Unity’ in Mutiso, Gideon-Cyrua and Rohio, SW (eds). *Readings in African Political Thought*. London, Nairobi, Ibadan and Lusaka: Heinemann

Recommended Readings

The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 23 May 1962 Lumumba, Patrice. 1962. ‘The Purpose of Colonization.’ In *Congo, My Country*. The Pall Mall Press,

London. [967.5102 LUMU]

Nasser, G.A. 1967. ‘The Philosophy of the Revolution’ in Mutiso, Gideon-Cyrua and Rohio, SW (1979). *Readings in African Political Thought*. London, Nairobi, Ibadan and

Lusaka: Heinemann. [320.5096 READ]

Part 3: The Politics of Postcolonialism and Decolonisation

Week 7: Postcolonial Political Systems

Required Readings

Mamdani, Mahmood. (1996). *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Kampala; Fountain Publishers. Chapter 3.

Sklar, R (2003). "The Premise of Mixed Government in African Politics" in O. Vaughan(ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*. Ibadan: Sefer Books. 3-25.

Recommended

Halisi, D. "The Place of Chiefs in Black Republican Thought in South Africa" in O. Vaughan(ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*. Ibadan: Sefer Books. 64-82. [320.5096 READ]

Ifeanyi Menkiti(2002), "Philosophy and the State in Africa: Some Rawlsian Considerations," *Philosophia Africana*, 5(2)

Week 8: Postcolonial Political Systems continued

Required Readings

Botwe-Asamoah, K. (2005). *Kwame Nkrumah's Political and Cultural Thought and Policies: An African Centred Paradigm for the Second Phase of African Revolution*. New York: Routledge.

Nabudere, Dani.2006. Development Theories, Knowledge Production and Emancipatory Practice in V. Padayach(ed.) *The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa 1994- 2004*. Pretoria: HSRC Press. 33-52

Recommended

Southall, Aidan (1974). "State Formation in Africa." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol.3. 153-165.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2007. "Political Violence and State in Post-colonial Africa." *International Development Centre Working Paper Series No.1*. A Paper presented at the International Conference on African Development and the Next Generation: Towards a Research Agenda, at the Open University, 16-17 May 2007.

Week 9: Traditional Political Institutions and the Postcolonial State

Required Readings

Odotei, Irene (2003). "Chieftancy and Politics in Ghana" in O. Vaughan(ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*. Ibadan: Sefer Books. 291-322.

Ntsebeza, L (2006). *Democracy Compromised*. Pretoria: HSRC. Chapter 2

Recommended:

Awasom, N (2003). "Traditional Rulers, the Principle of Legitimacy and Shifting Loyalties: North- west Chiefs in Colonial and Post-colonial Cameroun" in O. Vaughan(ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*. Ibadan: Sefer Books. 346-371. [320.5096 READ]

Mengisteab, Kidane (2003). "Local Leadership and State Governance in Southern Ethiopia" in O. Vaughan(ed.) *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa*. Ibadan: Sefer Books. [320.5096 READ]

Ayitteh, G (2010). "Traditional Institution and the State of Accountability in Africa." *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 77(4): 1183-1210.

Week 10: Decolonisation and the Postcolonial State

Required Readings:

Rotberg, Robert. 1966. "African Nationalism: Concept or Confusion?" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 4(1): 33-46.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo. 2013. *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*. Dakar: CODESRIA. Chapter 1.

Recommended:

Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. 2004. London. Portsmouth. Harare. East African Educational Publishers.

Introduction, Chapter 1. [809.8896 NGUG]

Week 11: Decolonisation: The Every Day project.

Required readings:

De Bruin, M., van Dijk,R., and Jan Bart Gewald. (2007) "Introduction" in De Bruin, M., van Dijk,R., and Jan Bart Gewald (eds) *Strength Beyond Culture: Social and Cultural Trajectories of Agency in Africa*. Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishers.

Njabulo S. Ndebele, 1986.The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 143-157.

Garuba, H., 'The African Imagination: Postcolonial Studies, Canons, and Stigmatization'. *Research in African Literatures Vol. 34, No. 4 Winter 2003: 145–149*.

Recommended

Squire,C., Davis, M., Esin,C.,Andrews,M., Harrison, B., Hyden,L and Hyden, M., *Narratives in Social Research: Researching Narratives, Power and Resistance*. London, New Dehli, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Degaldo, R and Stefancic, J. 2000. "Why do we tell the same stories? Law Reform, Critical Librarianship, and the Triple Helix Dilemma" in Degaldo,R and Stefancic, J. *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge*. 2ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Week 12: The African State in Political Debates.

Required Readings

Adetula, Victor.2011. "Measuring Democracy and 'Good Governance' in Africa: A Critique of Assumptions and Methods" in K. Kondlo & C. Ejiogu(eds.) *Governance in the 21st Century*. Pretoria. Human and Social Sciences Research Council. 10-25.

Doornbos, Martin. 1990. "The African State in Academic Debate: Retrospect and Prospect." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2. 179-198.

Recommended

Bayart, Francois .1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman.

Boone, Catherine .2003. *Political Typologies of the African State: Territorial Authority*

and Institutional Choice. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.