

The American University
School of International Service
International Peace and Conflict Resolution

“Conflict in Africa”

SIS-619-016, SIS-419-016

Fall 2010, Wednesdays 5:30 – 8:00 PM, EQB (Old SIS building) 17

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-7 PM, or by appointment

Course Summary:

This course is a historical and analytical overview of conflict in Africa. The course begins with conflict in pre-colonial Africa and the advent of colonialism. The bulk of the course is concerned with an exploration of theories regarding the causes of conflict in Africa, ranging from the economic and social impact of colonialism, political culture, ethnic divisions, greed and grievance, etc. Two recent major conflicts in Africa will be analyzed with respect to these theories. I reserve the right to change or add readings as the semester progresses.

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the following elements:

Event Report. (5%). There are many events happening in Washington DC related to conflict in Africa. You will attend one during the semester, write a one-page report on it (referring to theories discussed in class if possible), and report back to the class what you attended and what you learned. We will maintain a list of possible events on Blackboard. You must have presented once before 11/17/10.

Conflict Report. (20%). You will choose one African conflict, past or present, and give a brief history of the conflict and an assessment of how each of the theories we have discussed contribute to understanding the conflict. (Please do not choose Somalia or Sierra Leone.) Be sure to address at least three distinct theories with respect to the conflict you have chosen, even if you decide to dismiss them as explanations. Ten pages, double-spaced, properly cited. Due 11/3/10.

Term Paper. (35%). This is a more substantial research paper written on any theme related to the class. It should be twenty pages double-spaced and properly cited. A paper proposal (1 page) and a list of at least two external sources is due 11/3/10. The paper is due 12/1/10.

Final Exam. (30%). The exam will include short definitions of terms introduced in class as well as several essay questions requiring you to synthesize course themes.

Participation. (10%). This includes class attendance, participation in classroom discussions, and completion of in-class written assignments.

Required Texts:

Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz. (1999). *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*. James Currey and Indiana University Press.

Collier, Paul, and Nicholas Sambanis, eds. (2005). *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis. Volume 1: Africa*. The World Bank.

Nhema, Alfred and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, eds. (2008). *The Roots of African Conflicts: The Causes & Costs*. James Currey, Ohio University Press, and Unisa Press.

Mamdani, Mahmood. (1996). *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton University Press.

We will also be reading a big chunk of:

Freund, Bill. (1984). *The Making of Contemporary Africa*. Indiana University Press. I've made it a recommended book at the bookstore, but will put the chapters up on Blackboard as well.

All other readings will be available on Blackboard.

Class meetings:

Week 1, 08/25/10: Introduction to the Course

Panel discussion on the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Week 2, 09/01/10: Roots of African Conflicts, an overview

Readings:

Human Security Brief 2007. Chapter 2: "Towards a New Peace in Africa?" Human Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, Canada.

Three Chapters from *The Roots of African Conflicts*:

Mazrui, Ali A. "Conflict in Africa: An Overview" (the Prologue)

Henderson, Errol A. "When States Implode: Africa's Civil Wars 1950-92" (Chapter 1)

Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe. "The Causes and Costs of War in Africa: from Liberation Struggles to the 'War on Terror'" (Introduction)

Nordstrom, Carolyn. (2004). "Finding the Front Lines." Chapter 4 in *Shadows of War: Violence Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. U. of California Press: 45-53.

Week 3, 09/08/10: New Barbarism

Readings:

Kaplan, R. (1994). "The Coming Anarchy: How scarcity, crime, overpopulation, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet." *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994): 44-76.

Besteman, C. (1996). "Representing Violence and "Othering" Somalia." *Cultural Anthropology* **11**(1): 120-133.

Shaw, R. (2003). "Robert Kaplan and 'Juju Journalism' in Sierra Leone's Rebel War: The Primitivizing of an African Conflict." *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment*. B. Meyer and P. Pels. Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press: 81-102.

Week 4, 09/15/10: History and Context

Readings:

Freund, Bill. (1984). *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society since 1800*. Indiana University Press. Chapters 2 (pp. 16-38), 6 (pp. 111-142), 9 and 10 (pp. 191-251). "Material and Cultural Development in Africa Before the Nineteenth Century," "The Material Basis of Colonial Society, 1900-1940," "The Decolonization of Africa, 1940-1960," and "Tropical Africa since Independence: Class, State, and the Problem of Development."

Fanon, Frantz. (1963). "Concerning Violence" in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press. Pp. 29-74.

Zartman, I. William (1985). *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 3-18), "Conflict in Africa."

Week 5, 09/22/09: The Collier-Hoeffler Model ("greed or grievance")

Readings:

Collier and Sambanis, Chapters 1 and 10, and one case study chapter of your choosing (not Sudan).

Ross, Michael L. (2004). "What Do We Know about Natural Resources and Civil War?" *Journal of Peace Research*. 41(3): 337-356.

Humphreys, Macartan. (2005). "Natural Resources, Conflict, and Conflict Resolution: Uncovering the Mechanisms." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 49(4): 508-537.

Week 6, 09/29/10: Citizenship

Readings:

Mamdani, Mahmood. Introduction and Part I of *Citizen and Subject*.

Week 7, 10/06/10: The State (Weak and Criminal)

Readings:

Chabal and Daloz, Chapters 1-3.

Reno, W. (1997). "African Weak States and Commercial Alliances." *African Affairs* 96: 165-185.

Akokpari, John. "'You Don't Belong Here': Citizenship, the State & Africa's Conflicts. Reflections on Ivory Coast." In *The Roots of African Conflicts*

De Waal, Alex. (2009). "Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace." *International Affairs* 85(1): 99-113.

Week 8, 10/13/10: Culture

Readings:

Chabal and Daloz, Chapters 4-6.

Ellis, S. (1999). *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*. New York, New York University Press. Chapter 6 (pp. 220-280)

Mkandawire, Thandika. "The Terrible Toll of Postcolonial Rebel Movements: Towards an Explanation of the Violence against the Peasantry." In *The Roots of African Conflicts*.

Week 9, 10/20/10: Neo-patrimonialism

Readings:

Chabal and Daloz, Chapters 7-10.

Vlassenroot, Koen. (2006). "A Societal View on Violence and War: Conflict and Militia Formation in Eastern Congo." In Kaarsholm P. (ed.) *Violence, Political Culture & Development in Africa*. Pp. 49-65.

O'Brien, D. C. (1996). "A Lost Generation? Youth Identity and state decay in West Africa." *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. R. Werbner and T. Ranger. London, Zed Books Ltd.: 55-74.

Week 10, 10/27/10: Global Forces, External Actors

Readings:

McLean, Sandra J. "Fighting Locally, Connecting Globally: Inside & Outside Dimensions of African Conflict" in *The Roots of African Conflicts*.

Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. (2003). "Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict." *International Security*. 28(1): 79-109.

Forest, James J.F. and Rebecca Crispin. (2009). "AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future." *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30(1): 5-27

Menkhaus, Ken. (2009). "False Start in AFRICOM." *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30(1): 53-57.

Week 11, 11/03/10: Conflict Reports Due – Present to Class
(One page term paper proposals are also due.)

Week 12, 11/10/10: Sierra Leone Case

Readings:

- Richards, P. (2001). “Are ‘Forest’ Wars in Africa Resource Conflicts? The Case of Sierra Leone.” *Violent Environments*. N. L. Peluso and M. Watts. Ithaca, Cornell University Press: 65-82.
- Richards, P. (2006). “Forced Labour & Civil War: Agrarian Underpinnings of the Sierra Leone Conflict.” In Kaarsholm P. (ed.) *Violence, Political Culture & Development in Africa*. Pp. 181-198.
- Abdullah, I. (2004). “Bush Path to Destruction: The Origin and Character of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF/SL).” *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*. I. Abdullah. Dakar, CODESRIA: 41-65.
- Fanthorpe, R. (2001). “Neither Citizen nor Subject? ‘Lumpen’ Agency and the Legacy of Native Administration in Sierra Leone.” *African Affairs* **100**: 363-386.

Week 13, 11/17/10: Somalia Case

Readings:

- Helander, Bernhard (2005). “Who Needs a State? Civilians, Security, and Social Services in North-East Somalia” in *No Peace No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*. Richards, P., Ed. Athens, OH, Ohio University Press.
- Menkhous, Ken. (2007). “Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping.” *International Security*. 31(3): 74-106.
- Middleton, Roger. (2008). “Piracy in Somalia: Threatening global trade, feeding local wars.” Chatham House Briefing Paper. (AFP BP 08/02).
- Møller, Bjørn. (2009). “The Somali Conflict: The Role of External Actors.” Danish Institute for International Studies, Report 2009:03.
(and something else on pirates, to be determined)

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14, 12/01/10: Term Papers Due – In-class presentations
Summing Up

12/13/10: FINAL EXAM

Messages from our sponsors:

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.