Seminar on African Security and Conflicts

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**Course Description**

This course is a historical and analytical overview of conflict in Africa. 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, state weakness, political culture, ethnic divisions, religious identity, greed and grievance, etc. We will read some classic works in the field, as well as some cutting edge scholarly work

**Course Objectives**: By the end of the course students will:

• Be broadly familiar with the range of African conflicts

• Have knowledge of the range of main theories and key questions explaining

conflict in Africa, and how they are related to each other.

• Be able to apply and compare a number of theories with respect to a particular

African conflict.

• Be familiar with the Africa-related policy think tanks in town, and have attended

at least one Washington D.C. area presentation on an African conflict issue.

• Have researched a specific African conflict in depth, and presented the results in

an oral presentation.

• Theorize about the future of African conflict.

**Grading:**

Conflict Report. (25%). 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. 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.

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.

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 debate and discussion.

**Course Schedule and Reading list (tentative and all in zoom online class based)**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

**Week 2: The State of African Conflict, an overview**

Readings:

Williams, Chapters 1 and 2

Human Security Brief 2007. Chapter 2: “Towards a New Peace in Africa?” Human

Security Report Project, Simon Fraser University, Canada.

Straus, Scott. (2012). “Wars Do End! Changing Patterns of Political Violence in SubSaharan Africa.” African Affairs, advance access.

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: New Barbarism and the power of Framing**

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.

Autesserre, Séverine. (2012). “Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and their

Unintended Consequences.” African Affairs, advance access.

Watch: Chimamanda Adichie: The danger of a single story

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\_adichie\_the\_danger\_of\_a\_single\_story.html

**Week 4: The Problem of African States**

Readings:

Herbst, Jeffrey. (2000). States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority

and Control. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.

Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz. (1999). Africa Works: Disorder as Political

Instrument. James Currey. Chapter 1.

Williams, Chapter 5.

**Week 5: Neopatrimonialism**

Readings:

Williams, Chapter 3

Chabal and Daloz, Chapters 6 and 7

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.

**Week 6 : 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).

Williams, Chapter 4

McGovern, Mike. (2011). “Review Essay: Popular Development Economics--An Anthropologist

among the Mandarins.” Perspectives on Politics 9(2): 345-355.

**Week 7: Ethnic Conflict**

Readings:

Williams, Chapter 6

Hutchinson, Sharon Elaine and Jok, Jok Madut. (1999). “Sudan’s Prolonged Second

Civil War and the Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities.” African

Studies Review, 42 (2): 125-145.

De Waal, Alex. (2005). “Who are the Darfurians? Arab and African identities, violence

and external engagement.” African Affairs, 104 (415): 181-205.

Marshall-Fratani, Ruth. (2006). “The war of ‘Who Is Who’: Autochthony, Nationalism,

and Citizenship in the Ivoirian Crisis.” African Studies Review 49-2,

Posner, Daniel N. (2004). “The Political Salience of Cultural Differences: Why Chewas

and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” American

Political Science Review. 98(4): 529-545.

**Week 8: Religious Identity**

Readings:

Williams, Chapter 7

Love, Roy. (2006). “Religion, Ideology & Conflict in Africa”, Review of African

Political Economy, 33:110, 619-634

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)

Krech, Hans. (2011). “The Growing Influence of Al-Qaeda on the African Continent.” Africa

Spectrum 2. 125-137.

**Week 9 : Big Men and Networks**

Readings:

Utas book, Read one chapter from Part One and one chapter from Part Two.

Kalyvas, Stathis N. (2003). “The Ontology of ‘Political Violence’: Action and Identity in

Civil Wars.” American Political Science Review, 1 (3): 475 - 494. 2003.

Autesserre, Séverine. (2006). “Local violence, National Peace? Post-war “settlement” in

the Eastern D.R.Congo,” African Studies Review 49-3, December 2006.

Week 10, 10/30/12: Conflict Reports Due – Present to Class

(One page term paper proposals are also due.)

**Week 11: International Intervention**

Readings:

Williams, Chapters 8 & 9

Uvin, Peter. (2001). “Reading the Rwandan Genocide,” International Studies Review.

3(3): 75-99.

Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. (2003). “Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a

Cause of Conflict.” International Security. 28(1): 79-109.

**Week 12: Peacebuilding Beyond the State**

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.

Soares de Oliveira, Ricardo. (2011). “Illiberal Peacebuilding in Angola.” Journal of

Modern African Studies, 49(2): 287-314.

“Non-State Security and Justice in Fragile States: Lessons from Sierra Leone,” Overseas

Development Institute, Briefing Paper 73. April 2012.

De Waal, Alex. 2009. “Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace.”

International Affairs, 85(1): 99-113.

Thanksgiving Holiday

**Week 13: The Future of African Conflict**

Readings:

Herbst, Jeffrey. (2000). States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority

and Control. Princeton University Press. Chapter 9.

Reno, William. (2011). Warfare in Independent Africa. Cambridge University Press.

“Conclusion: The Past and Future of Warfare in Africa.” Pp. 242-255.

Shaw, Ibrahim Seaga. 2012. “The ‘War on Terror’ frame and Washington Post’s linking of the

Sierra Leone Civil War to 9/11 and al-Qaeda: Implications for US foreign policy in

Africa.” Journal of African Media Studies 4(1): 27-44.

**Week 14 : Term Papers Due – In-class presentations**

Summing Up

: FINAL EXAM