Course Description
This course investigates the international politics of Africa, from a regional lens. This entails initially examining regional conceptual frameworks – to understand that regions (or sub-regions) are dynamic sites of potential cooperation, competition and conflict. There will be first an examination of the conceptual framework to understand African sub-regions, which will allow a critical engagement with key issues that the region faces and allow for cross-regional analysis in the continent. The framework includes: understanding regionalism (and regional identity) and the role of regional organizations in Africa; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; and relations with external actors. This framework will be applied to specific regions, including: Southern Africa; Central and East Africa; the Horn of Africa; West Africa; and North Africa.

The course aims to provide the students with an academically and policy informed understanding of the regional dimensions of contemporary politics in Africa, and of the interplay between domestic, regional and international factors. Conversely, the course will seek to assess the relevance of the various theories and concepts developed by the discipline of International Relations, Comparative Politics and Development Studies to the study of African politics.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course students should be able to:
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the processes involved in regional African relations at both the theoretical and practical contexts;
- Provide evidence of specialised knowledge of the African politics from a regional perspective;
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of and engagement with a wide range of academic literature related to the key themes in the course;
- Demonstrate critical analytical skills, particular in relation to how meanings, definitions and truths are constructed and reconstructed; and
- Display the above outcomes through the development of a succinct writing style (for essays) and the ability to present complex arguments in class discussions and presentations.

**Required Readings**
All of the required readings are available online or through links via Moodle, respecting York University’s Fair Dealings guidelines.

In the syllabus below, the required readings every week are clearly indicated. There are additional recommended readings and online items should students wish to gain additional information on the topics discussed (not available via Moodle).

**Recommended Background Readings**
The following provide an essential background to the course.

**Books:**


**Specialised Journals/Quarterlies:**

**Magazines, bulletins and websites:**


The following websites will provide useful introductions and links to the ever growing electronic material on Africa:
http://www.africa.upenn.edu/
http://www.irin.org/
http://allafrica.com/

**Assessment**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay proposal</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Commentaries</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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**Essay Proposal**

**DUE IN CLASS: 8 OCTOBER**
The proposal should be 500 words, and include a bibliography that lists a minimum of 3 academic sources. You should clearly outline your argument (main argument/thesis, issues to be discussed) in essay format (i.e., no lists, bullet points).

**Final Essay**

**DUE IN CLASS: 19 NOVEMBER**
Students are required to write an essay of 2,500-3,000 words in length (excluding the bibliography). Anything beyond 3,000 will not be read or marked. The essay must present a clear and detailed argument about a particular issue/debate that was discussed in the course. A minimum of 5 academic sources must be used. Sources should be listed in a bibliography, and quotations should be acknowledged where
necessary. Please note that papers must be submitted in hard copy, and cannot be accepted electronically or by fax.

**Participation**  
20% of final grade

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in the class discussions.  
**N.B.:** Students are also expected to identify a specific African region that they will research weekly (based on the issue discussed in class) and be ready to share their findings with the class - thereby becoming *resident experts*. [Students may also be interested in countries such as Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe.]

**Presentation**  
15% of final grade

Students are required to do at least one presentation on the topics provided in the syllabus. Each class will begin with an oral presentation by one (or two) student(s) on the topic at hand. The presentation should be **not longer than 15 minutes**. The presentation should be not merely summarise the readings, but should be a thoughtful and critical analysis attempting to find linkages and common themes among the readings.

**Weekly commentaries**  
15% of final grade

Students are required to submit **3 (out of 9)** weekly commentaries on the readings. The commentaries should be about **750 words**, typed, double-spaced. They should not be summary of the readings, but should be a critical analysis of the readings and explore common themes among the readings. These must be submitted at the beginning of the class on which the topic is being discussed. You cannot submit commentaries on topics that have already been discussed in class.

**Grading**

Assignments and tests will be graded using **corresponding numerical equivalents for letter grades** (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.).

**Grading Scheme**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>(9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>(8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79%</td>
<td>(7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70-74%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-54%</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 50%</td>
<td>(0)</td>
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</table>
Course Policies and Expectations

I. Critical Thinking
Students are required to read the course readings before each session and be ready to critically engage in class discussion. It is crucial that students understand that this class is meant to cultivate and encourage critical thinking.

II. Course Website
Course readings (with appropriate links), materials and notices will be posted on Moodle, which can be accessed via [http://moodle.yorku.ca]. Be sure to check for new information periodically, including guides to help complete your assignments. Lecture outline and class handouts will be also be posted. My notes however will not be made available to students.

III. Class Attendance
Students are expected to attend every class and participate actively in class discussions.

IV. Assignment Submission
Assignments for this course must be submitted in hard copy at the BEGINNING OF CLASS on the dates provided. If they are submitted in the middle or end of class, the assignment is late.

V. Late Submission Policy
Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized. Late submissions will incur a decrease of 2 marks from your FINAL GRADE in the class mark PER DAY, including weekends. After 7 days, late assignments will NOT be accepted. If you plan to submit assignments late, please drop them off in the Drop Box located at the Department of Political Science, Ross Building. Please staple your assignment, and clearly indicate your name, student number, course number, and my name. Please make sure you submit your assignment in the Drop Box by 8:30AM by the next day. If submitted after 8:30AM, it will be counted as another day late. Emails, faxes or assignments slipped under my office door will not be accepted.

VI. Extensions
I have given you advance notice of submission dates, so please arrange your schedule accordingly. Therefore, I am very unlikely to change due dates or make exceptions for circumstances such as extracurricular activities, busy schedules, computer problems, etc. However, exceptions to the late submission policy for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered by the Course Instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor’s letter). Please see me as soon as possible, so we can discuss a mutually satisfactory solution.
VII. Students with Special Needs
Students with disabilities and special needs may request appropriate academic accommodations, as outlined in the York University Senate policy statement: ‘Policy Regarding Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities’ [Refer to: http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=68]. Students are advised to see the Course Instructor as soon as possible, so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

VIII. Religious Holidays
Please see me as soon as possible (in advance of any holiday) to arrange a means of covering any class material you plan to miss for religious holidays.

IX. The Learning Commons
If you require any additional support with academic writing, library assistance and research skills, etc., you may want refer to the Learning Commons website for further information on the wide range of academic support available for students on campus: [http://www.library.yorku.ca/cms/learning-commons/].

X. Change of the Syllabus
I reserve the right to amend the schedule of meetings, content and evaluation scheme listed in this syllabus, as might become necessary based on events throughout the semester. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and students will receive an amended syllabus (which will be available on Moodle).

CORE SYLLABUS

1) Introductory Class – 10 September
Introduction to the class

2) Regional Perspective; Regional Organizations – 17 September
Required
Rick Fawn, ‘ Regions’ and their Study: Wherefrom, What for and Whereto?’, Review of International Studies, 35, February 2009, pp. 5-34. [Link via Moodle; Available online]


Bjørn Møller, Africa’s Sub-regional Organisations: Seamless Web or Patchwork?, Working Paper No. 56 (Series No. 2), Crisis States Research Centre, Department of
International Development (DESTIN), London School of Economics, August 2009, [Available online: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28486/].


**Recommended**


**Questions:** Why should we understand Africa from a regional perspective? What are some methods of comparison? Is there a predominant regional identity, and if so, how can it be characterized? What is the role of African regional and sub-regional organizations?

3) Colonial and Cold War Experiences – 24 September

**Required**


**Recommended**  


**Questions:** Compare and contrast different colonial experiences (and colonial legacies) of African countries/regions. Compare and contrast various Cold War experiences of African countries/regions. What is the impact of the colonial and Cold War legacies on political, economic and social development in African states?

**4) Regional Security ; Political Development – 1 October**

**Required**  


**Recommended**  


Questions: In terms of security, conflict and war, how should we understand regional dynamics? Please be ready to discuss your regions in the areas of: regional security issues; political dynamics (democratization; authoritarianism; role of the military; identity) in a regional perspective; intervention; refugees and internally-displaced persons; or another issue relevant to the region.

8 OCTOBER: ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE!

5) Economic Development and Trade; Relations with the World – 8 October

Required


Dorothy McCormick, ‘China and India as Africa’s New Donors: The Impact of Aid on Development’, Review of African Political Economy, 35, 115, pp.73-92. [Link via Moodle; Available online]

Recommended


Dambisa Moyo, Dead Aid (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), Chapters 3 (‘Aid Does not Working’) and 4 (‘The Silent Killer of Growth’).


Questions: In terms of economic development, trade and development assistance, how should we understand regional dynamics? Please be ready to discuss your regions in the areas of: economic development; trade (global and regional); development assistance (at a country and/or regional perspective); role of ‘new development’ partners such as China and India; role of the diaspora in economic development; other issues relevant to the region.

6) Southern Africa – 15 October

Required


**Recommended**


**Questions:** How can we understand the Southern Africa region along the conceptual framework discussed earlier: regionalism (regional identity) and the role of sub-regional regional organizations; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; relations with external actors; other issues relevant to the region?
7) Central Africa and East Africa – 22 October

**Required**


**Recommended**


**Questions:** How can we understand the Central Africa and East African regions along the conceptual framework discussed earlier: regionalism (regional identity) and the role of sub-regional regional organizations; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; relations with external actors; other issues relevant to the region?
8) Horn of Africa – 29 October

**Required**


Abdelwahab El-Affendi, ‘The Impasse in the IGAD Peace Process for Sudan: The Limits of Regional Peacemaking?’, *African Affairs*, 100, 401, 2001, pp. 581-599. [Link via Moodle; Available online]


**Recommended**


Elizabeth Schmidt, Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapter 6 (‘Conflict in the Horn, 1952-1993’).

**Questions:** How can we understand the Horn of Africa region along the conceptual framework discussed earlier: regionalism (regional identity) and the role of sub-regional regional organizations; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; relations with external actors; other issues relevant to the region?
9) West Africa – 5 November

**Required**

David Williams and Tom Young, ‘Civil Society and the Liberal Project in Ghana and Sierra Leone’, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 6, 1, 2012, pp. 57-72. [Link via Moodle; Available online]


**Recommended**


Questions: How can we understand the West Africa region along the conceptual framework discussed earlier: regionalism (regional identity) and the role of sub-regional regional organizations; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; relations with external actors; other issues relevant to the region?

10) North Africa – 12 November

Required


Recommended
Jacqueline S. Ismael and Shereen T. Ismael, 'The Arab Spring and the Uncivil State', Arab Studies Quarterly, 35, 3, Summer 2012, pp. 229-240. [Link via Moodle; Available online]

John P. Entelis, 'The Democratic Imperative vs. the Authoritarian Impulse: The Maghreb State between Transition and Terrorism', Strategic Insights, 4, 6, June 2005, pp. 1-20. [Link via Moodle; Available online]


Eva Bellin, 'The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective', Comparative Politics, 36, 2, January 2004, pp. 139-158.


**Questions:** How can we understand the North Africa region along the conceptual framework discussed earlier: regionalism (regional identity) and the role of sub-regional regional organizations; colonial and Cold War experiences; regional security; political development; economic development and trade; relations with external actors; other issues relevant to the region?

**19 NOVEMBER: FINAL ESSAY DUE!**

**11/12) Student Presentations of their Essay Research – 19, 26 November**
Essay Proposal Evaluation

Student Name: ______________________________________________________________

Argument
1. Presents a coherent research problematique and/or research question ______
2. Topic falls within the main themes of the course ______
3. Makes a clear argument/thesis statement ______
4. Addresses counter-arguments

Research
5. Provides evidence of knowledge of the topic ______
6. Uses argument and evidence rather than opinion and authority ______
7. Provides additional background information on the topic ______

Style/
Referencing
8. Writes concisely ______
9. Sufficient word count and number of academic sources ______
10. Cites sources of ideas, arguments, and facts ______
11. Uses standard citation format ______

Comments

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<th>Grade: (     /10)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Late Penalty:</td>
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<td>FINAL GRADE: (     /10)</td>
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FINAL ESSAY EVALUATION
Student Name: ____________________________________________________________

Very Good/Satisfactory/Problematic
ARGUMENT (50%)
   Excellent (46-50)
   Very Good/Minor Errors (41-45)
   Good (35-40)
   Fair/Satisfactory (30-34)
   Weak/Serious Problems (<29)

Focus/Sense of Purpose
   □ □ □ Thesis statement is clear and immediately identifiable
   □ □ □ Research question/problem is clear, coherent and considers the overall themes of the course
   □ □ □ Thesis statement answers_ADDRESSES research question/problem decisively and directly
   □ □ □ Introduction outlines your argument
   □ □ □ Thesis is kept in focus throughout the body of the essay

Content/Support
   □ □ □ Analysis, rather than description, dominates the paper
   □ □ □ Major points support the thesis
   □ □ □ All claims and observations are adequately supported with the use of academic evidence
   □ □ □ Obvious criticisms of your position are considered

Organisation
   □ □ □ Introduction, body and conclusions are clear, and clearly linked together
   □ □ □ Paragraphs are unified around one point, and clearly linked to the central argument
   □ □ □ There is a logical order of ideas, and no excessive repetition

RESEARCH (30%)
   Excellent (28-30)
   Very good/Minor Errors (24-27)
   Good (21-23)
   Fair/Satisfactory (18-20)
   Weak/Serious problems (<17)

Research
   □ □ □ Relevant journal articles or books were consulted
   □ □ □ Non-academic internet or news sources were not heavily used
   □ □ □ Sufficient number and variety of sources were consulted
   □ □ □ Evidence of comprehensive knowledge of topic

STYLE/REFERENCING (20%)
   Excellent (19-20)
   Very good/Minor Errors (17-18)
   Good (14-16)
   Fair/Satisfactory (11-13)
   Weak/Serious problems (<10)

Expression/Style, Referencing and Format
   □ □ □ The prose is coherent, clear and free of jargon
   □ □ □ Meanings are clear – there is no need to ‘read between the lines’
   □ □ □ Appropriate, brief, quotations are used selectively; and their relevance is made clear
   □ □ □ All words, ideas and data taken from someone else are properly credited to them
   □ □ □ Referencing style is correct, coherent and clear
   □ □ □ Essay is not significantly shorter or longer than the required length

Comments

Grade: ( /100) = ( /40)
Late Penalty: ____________________________
FINAL GRADE: ( /40)