

PLSC 597: African Politics

Wednesday 2:00 – 5:00

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This course will provide a survey of the African political and political economy, including the political consequences of Africa's (un?)exceptional history and geography; the nature of the African state; and the behavior and preferences of African citizens. Throughout the course, we will address the challenges of generating relevant, accurate conclusions in a context where poverty, autocracy, and insecurity make reliable research simultaneously more urgent and more difficult.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READINGS

One book is required for this course – Herbst's *States and Power*. All other readings are either online and linked in the syllabus below, or on Angel.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Class participation – 20%
Three short design papers – 45% (15% each)
Final research paper – 35%

Design papers

You are to turn in a three-page single-space design memo by the end of each of the three units on the syllabus. In the paper, you will identify a question left unanswered by the reading from the unit: this can include an untested assumption, a missing mechanism, or a new puzzle that follows from the presented findings. In a two-page memo, you will state your hypothesis, justify it, and indicate how you would test it. The memo must include a discussion of what you would observe if your hypothesis was correct as well as what you would observe if your hypothesis were NOT correct. To keep your design focused, identify a single dependent variable, with a single operationalization.

Though this is a design memo, you should focus on theory-building rather than technical proficiency. A design with a simple test of a crisp theory will receive a higher grade than a mathematically advanced test of a poorly-justified empirical expectation. A design that generates and tests a theory of why X affects Y will also receive a higher grade than one that simply estimates the effect of X on Y. You do not need to generate a new theory wholesale – you may develop additional testable implications of theories already in the literature – but you must still precisely state in your own words your theory of how individuals, leaders or firms decide how to behave.

Research paper

Your final paper does not need to address one of the questions you raised in your design memos, but should take a similar approach. You will identify a puzzle/question; present a precise theory of how individual-level decision-making leads to the outcome; generate the testable implications of the theory; and follow through with the test using available data. You do not need to generate statistically significant results, nor must you demonstrate that your hypothesis was correct: otherwise, the paper should have the content and length of a publishable article. Your paper is due **May 6 by 5 PM**.

Class participation

You will receive a participation grade for each of the 15 weeks of the class. You will receive zero points on days when you are absent. *You will also receive no credit on days when you are silent.* You will receive half-credit on days when you speak, but do not contribute substantially to the discussion.

CLASS POLICIES

All written material for the class must be *hard-copy* in a standard 11- or 12-inch font.. Late work loses ten percent per 24 hours late; make-up work or extensions will be allowed only with an official written excuse for your absence/inability to meet the deadline.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

By enrolling in this class, you are indicating that you understand and agree to abide by all university regulations on cheating and plagiarism. In the event that you turn in something that violates these academic norms, ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse. I will turn all suspicious work over to the administration. Please note that I do not allow audio (or video) recording of class without prior permission and consider the sharing of any such recordings to be cheating.

CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS

UNIT ONE: HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND CONTEXT

1. Jan 13: Disentangling Long Term Effects of Colonization

- [AJR](#). 2001. The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development. *The American Economic Review*.
- [Albouy, David](#). 2012. The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Investigation of the Settler Mortality Data.
- [Sachs, Jeffrey](#). 2003. Institutions Don't Rule. NBER Working Paper 9490.
- [Freyer, James and Bruce Sacerdote](#). 2009. Colonialism and Modern Income: Islands as Natural Experiments.
- [Lee, Alexander and Kenneth Schultz](#). 2012. Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

2. Jan 20: Mechanisms of the Colonial Legacy

- [Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon](#). 2011. The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review*.
- [Garcia-Ponce and Leonard Wantchekon](#). 2011. Echoes of Colonial Repression: The Long-Term Effects of the 1947 Revolt upon Political Attitudes in Madagascar.
- [Michalopoulos, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou](#). 2011. The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa.

- [Posner, Daniel](#). 2003. Colonial Origins of Ethnic Cleavages: the Case of Linguistic Divisions in Zambia. *Comparative Politics*.
- [Woodberry, Robert](#). 2012. The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy. *American Political Science Review*.

3. Jan 27: Ethnic Diversity

- [Habyarimana, James et al](#). 2007. Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision? *American Political Science Review*.
- [Glennerster, Rachel](#), Edward Miguel, and Alexander D. Rothenberg. 2013. Collective Action in Diverse Sierra Leone Communities. *Economic Journal* 123 (568): 285-316.
- [Baldwin, Kate and John Huber](#). 2010. Economic vs. Cultural Differences: Forms of Ethnic Diversity and Public Goods Provision.
- [Eoin McGuirk](#). 2013. Teacher Absenteeism and the Salience of Local Ethnic Diversity: Evidence from African Districts.
- [Arriola, Leonardo and Martha Johnson](#). 2014. Ethnic Politics and Women's Empowerment in Africa: Ministerial Appointments to Executive Cabinets. *American Journal of Political Science*.

4. Feb 3: Chieftaincy and Traditional Leadership

- [Logan, Carolyn](#). 2013. Roots of Resilience: Exploring Popular Support for Traditional Leaders. *African Affairs*.
- [Gennaioli, Nicola and Ilija Rainer](#). 2007. The Modern Impact of Precolonial Centralization. *Journal of Economic Growth*.
- [Baldwin, Kate and Eric Mvukiyeye](#). 2015. Elections and Collective Action: Evidence from Changes in Traditional Institutions in Liberia. *World Politics*.
- [de Kadt, Daniel](#). 2014. Agents of the Regime? Traditional Leaders and Electoral Behavior in South Africa
- [Sandefur, Justin and Bilal Siddiqi](#). 2013. Delivering Justice to the Poor: Theory and Experimental Evidence from Liberia.

5. Feb 10: **No class. Attend conference Feb 12 or 13.**

- Select five conference papers to read in advance.

UNIT TWO: THE AFRICAN STATE

6. Feb 17: State Origins

- Herbst, Jeffrey. 2000. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*.

7. Feb 24: Democracy?

- [Burgess, Robin et al](#). The Value of Democracy: Evidence from Road Building in Kenya. *American Economic Review*.
- [Mylonas, Harris and Nasos Roussias](#). 2008. When Do Votes Count? Regime Type, Electoral Conduct and Political Competition in Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*.
- [Ichino, Nahomi and Matthias Schundeln](#). Deterring or Displacing Electoral Irregularities? Spillover Effects of Observers in a Randomized Field Experiment in Ghana. *Journal of Politics*.
- [VonDeopp, Peter and Daniel Young](#). 2013. Assaults on the Fourth Estate: Explaining Media Harassment in Africa. *Journal of Politics*.
- [Linberg, Staffan](#). 2004. *The Power of Elections Democratic Participation, Competition, and Legitimacy in Africa*. Chapter 5.

8. March 2: Constraints on the Executive

- [Arriola, Leonardo](#). 2013. Capital and Opposition in Africa: Coalition Building in Multiethnic Societies. *World Politics*.
- [Gottlieb, Jessica](#). 2015. The Logic of Party Collusion in a Democracy: Evidence from Mali. *World Politics*.
- [Opalo, Kennedy](#). 2014. Institutions and Legislative Incumbency Advantage: A Regression Discontinuity Analysis of Legislative Elections in Africa.
- [Grossman, Guy and Janet Lewis](#). 2014. Administrative Unit Proliferation. *American Political Science Review*.
- [Von Doeppe, Peter and Rachel Ellett](#). 2011. Reworking Strategic Models of Executive-Judicial Relations: Insights from New African Democracies. *Comparative Politics*.

9. March 9: Distribution

- [Fearon, James](#). 1999. Why Ethnic Politics and Pork Tend to Go Together.
- [Franck, Raphael and Ilia Rainer](#). 2012. Does the Leader's Ethnicity Matter? Ethnic Favoritism, Education and Health and Sub-Saharan Africa. *American Political Science Review*.
- [Harris, J. Andrew and Daniel Posner](#). 2015. (Under what conditions) do politicians reward their supporters?
- [Hoffman, Vivian et al.](#) 2015. Targeting, Discretionary Funding, and the Provision of Local Public Goods: Evidence from Kenya.
- [Kasara, Kamuli](#). 2007. Tax Me If You Can: Ethnic Geography, Democracy, and the Taxation of Agriculture in Africa. *American Political Science Review*.

UNIT THREE: POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

10. March 23: (Non-) Ethnic Voting

- [Carlson, Elizabeth](#). 2015. Ethnic Voting and Accountability: A Choice Experiment in Uganda. *World Politics*.
- [Ichino, Nahomi and Noah Nathan](#). 2013. Crossing the Line: Ethnic Geography and Voting in Ghana. *American Political Science Review*.
- [Dunning, Thad and Jennifer Harrison](#). 2010. Cross-cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali. *American Political Science Review*.
- [Koter, Dominika](#). 2013. King Makers: Local Leaders and Ethnic Politics in Africa. *World Politics*.
- [Posner, Daniel](#). 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *American Political Science Review*.

11. March 30: Clientelism and Vote-Buying

- [Wantchekon, Leonard](#). 2003. Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin. *World Politics*.
- Carlson, Elizabeth. 2015. The Relevance of Relative Distribution: Favoritism, Information and Vote Choice in Africa. (On Angel.)
- [Kramon, Eric](#). 2009. Vote Buying and Turnout in Kenya's 2002 Elections.
- [Vicente, Pedro](#). 2012. Is Vote-Buying Effective? Evidence from a Field Experiment in West Africa. *The Economic Journal*.
- [Baldwin, Kate](#). 2013. Why Vote with the Chief? Political Connections and Public Goods Provision in Zambia. *American Journal of Political Science*.

12. April 13: Parties and partisanship

- [Kuenzi, Michelle and Gina Lambright](#). 2001. Party System Institutionalization in 30 African Countries. *Party Politics*.

- [Bleck, Jamie and Nicolas van de Walle](#). 2012. Valance Issues in African Elections: Navigating Uncertainty and the Weight of the Past. *Comparative Political Studies*.
- [Carlson, Elizabeth](#). 2015. Finding Partisanship Where We Least Expect It: Evidence of Partisan Bias in a New African Democracy. *Political Behavior*.
- [Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey and Devra Moehler](#). 2015. Moderation from Bias: A Field Experiment on Partisan Media in a New Democracy. *Journal of Politics*.
- [Moehler, Devra et al.](#) 2015. Partisan Cues and Vote Choice in New Multiparty Systems. *Comparative Political Studies*.

13. April 20: Improving accountability

- [Logan, Carolyn and Micahel Bratton](#). 2006. Voters but Not Yet Citizens: The Weak Demand for Political Accountability in Africa's Unclaimed Democracies. Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 63
- [Martin, Lucy](#). 2014. Taxation, Loss Aversion, and Accountability: Theory and Experimental Evidence for Taxation's Effect on Citizen Behavior
- [Garcia-Ponce and Benjamin Pasquale](#). 2015. How Political Violence Shapes Trust in the State.
 - [Friedman, Willa et al.](#) 2011. Education as Liberation? *Economica*.
- [Gottlieb, Jessica](#). 2015. Greater Expectations: A Field Experiment to Improve Accountability in Malawi. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- [Harding, Robin](#). 2015. Attribution and Accountability: Voting for Roads in Ghana. *World Politics*.

14. April 6: Participation

- [Kuenzi, Michelle and Gina Lambright](#). 2011. Who Votes in Africa? An Examination of Electoral Participation in 10 African Countries. *Party Politics*.
- [Riedl, Rachel and Gwyneth McClendon](#). 2015. Religion as a Stimulant of Political Participation: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Politics*.
- [Gottlieb, Jessica](#). 2013. Why Women Participate Less in Civic Activity: Evidence from Mali.
- [Blattman, Christopher](#). 2009. From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda.
- [Bailard, Catie](#). 2012. A Field Experiment on the Internet's Effect in an African Election: Savvier Citizens, Disaffected Voters, or Both? *Journal of Communication*.

15. April 27: Attitudes, policy preferences and public opinion

- [Logan, Carolyn and Michael Bratton](#). 2006. The Political Gender Gap in Africa: Similar Attitudes, Different Behaviors.
- [McCauley, John](#). 2015. The Political Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Africa. *American Political Science Review*.
- [Grossman, Guy](#). 2015. Renewalist Christianity and the Political Saliency of LGBTs: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Politics*.
- [Lieberman, Evan and Gwyneth McClendon](#). 2013. The Ethnicity-Policy Preference Link in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*.
- [Adida, Claire](#). 2011. Too Close for Comfort? Immigrant Exclusion in Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*