

University of Alabama
PSC 336: African Politics
Spring 2022, MWF 9-9:50am
Room: 258 ten Hour Hall

Dr. Amanda B. Edgell
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314 ten Hour Hall
Office hours:
<https://calendly.com/abedgell/office-hours>

Africa is a diverse continent made up of 54 countries and over 1.2 billion people. It is home to all types of political systems – including democracies, monarchies, military governments, and one-party states. This makes it an exciting place to study political science. This course will focus on three big questions:

1. What are the most pressing problems facing African countries since independence?
2. Is there something exceptional about Africa?
3. How can the continent inform our broader understanding of comparative politics?

To answer these questions, we will consult academic scholarship, media reports, policy papers, documentary films, art, music, and fiction across several thematic areas. This course will provide you with a working knowledge of the African context and important skills in research and writing that you can deploy throughout your career in politics, law, public service, the private sector, academia, and beyond.

Student Learning Outcomes

Identify

- all contemporary African countries on a map.

Explain

- how African experiences can inform our broader understanding of politics

Write

- proficiently in a variety of formats for careers related to political science

Writing Designation (W): Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper-division student will not earn a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs in other areas of the course.

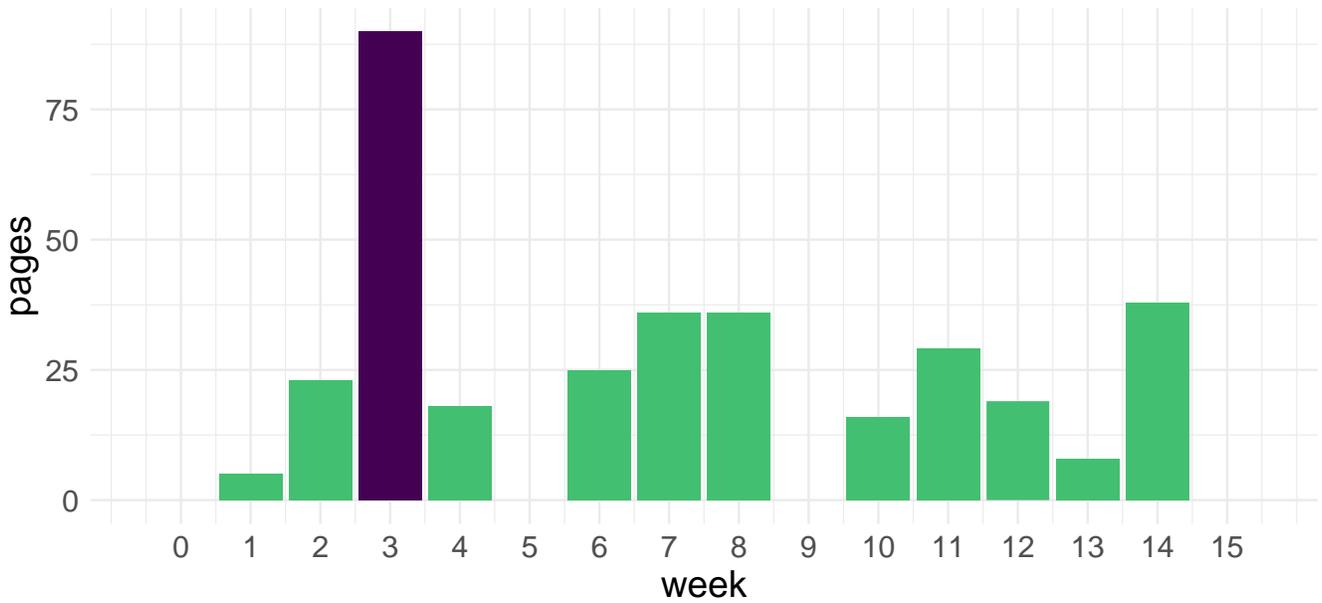
Pre-requisites: None.

Required texts: None. All course materials are available on Blackboard.

What You Can Expect from this Course



Reading load per week



1
Map Test
...with re-takes

writing...
~20
...pages



Face-to-face instruction



International Studies

ACTIVE
learning



Case Studies



Writing Designation

How will we achieve our goals?

Course Materials: We will learn from a variety of materials such as academic texts, novels, speeches, films, podcasts, music, and artwork. All of these will be available through Blackboard. No textbooks are required.

Attendance: If you want to get the most out of this course, you must regularly come to class and participate in discussions.

Assignments: The assignments in this class are designed to help you learn by engaging with the course materials and through your own independent research on the political experience in Africa.

- **Reflection Essays – 20%:** Throughout the semester, you will write short reflection essays on the topic for the week in-class. The reflection essay prompts will not be announced prior to class to encourage students to review the materials ahead of time.
- **Map Test – 15%:** Accurately locate all independent countries on the African continent. This assignment will be completed in class during Week 4.
- **Country background report (W) – 25%:** Prepare a background report on your assigned African country. This report will be graded before the midterm.
- **Research Translation (W) – 15%:** Create a blog or video on one of the assigned academic articles listed with an asterisk (*). This assignment is due on Sunday after we discussed the reading in class.
- **Research Paper (W) – 25%:** Write a research paper on a topic related to African Politics (broadly defined).

More details concerning the writing (W) assignments including instructions and grading rubric are available through Blackboard.

Feedback and revision: My assessment of your work will focus on *feedback* that helps you achieve the learning objectives and improve your writing. You are encouraged to review these comments and to submit revised work to improve your progress toward the learning objectives.

How will we know we achieved our goals?

The following scale will be used to determine grades in this class:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
97–	93–	92–	87–	83–	80–	77–	73–	70–	67–	63–	60–	≤59%
100%	96%	90%	89%	86%	82%	79%	76%	72%	69%	66%	62%	
4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0.00

Majors and minors in political science or international studies are required to carry at least a C letter grade in all political science coursework. Students receiving an “F” for the midterm and final grading periods will be reported as “stopped attending”, “never attended”, or “earned”, depending on the circumstances.

All grades are assigned on a provisional basis. You may submit revised work for any writing assignment (W) until the end of the final week of the class.

Course schedule

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1 Introduction	<p>10 January</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>No Class.</u></p>	<p>12 January</p> <p>Read: Warner, John. 2019. "Reading like a writer" in <i>The Writer's Practice</i>. New York: Penguin, pp.35-40.</p> <p>Review: Syllabus.</p>	<p>14 January</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>No Class.</u></p> <p>First reflection essay due on Blackboard by 5pm.</p>
2 Why study African Politics?	<p>17 January</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>MLK Day. No Class.</u></p> <p>Listen: King Jr., Martin Luther. 1957. "The Birth of a New Nation." Sermon delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, AL.</p>	<p>19 January</p> <p>Read: Dunn, Keven C. and Pierre Englebert. 2019. "Why African Politics Matter" in <i>Inside African Politics</i>. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp.1-16.</p> <p>Watch (in class): <i>The Danger of a Single Story</i> by Chimamanda Adiche.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Drop/Add Ends</u></p>	<p>21 January</p> <p>Read: Wainaina, Binyavanga. 2019 (2005). "How to Write about Africa" <i>NPR</i>.</p> <p>Read: Seay, Laura. 2012. "How Not to Write about Africa" <i>Foreign Policy</i>.</p>
3 Before Europe	<p>24 January</p> <p>Read: Makumbi, Jennifer Nansubuga. 2017. "Book One: Kintu Kidda" in <i>Kintu</i> pp. 11-96.</p>	<p>26 January</p> <p>Research: What was pre-colonial politics like in your case?</p>	<p>28 January</p> <p>Read: Warner, John. 2019. "The Writing Process" in <i>The Writer's Practice</i>. New York: Penguin, pp.24-29.</p>
4 "Decolonization" and Independence	<p>31 January</p> <p>Read: "A continent remade: Reflections on 1960, the Year of Africa" <i>New York Times</i>.</p>	<p>02 February</p> <p>Research: Find out about the colonial and independence experience of your case.</p>	<p>04 February</p> <p>Map Test (in class)</p>
5 Country Background	<p>07 February</p> <p>Research: Independence and post-independence political history.</p>	<p>09 February</p> <p>Research: Successes and challenges since independence.</p>	<p>11 February</p> <p>Read: "Avoiding Plagiarism" handout.</p>
13 February: Country Background Report Deadline			

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
6 Dictators, “Big Men”, and Authoritarianism	14 February Read: Cheeseman, Nic and Jonathan Fisher. 2019. “How Colonial Rule Predisposed Africa to Fragile Authoritarianism” <i>The Conversation</i> . Film (in class): <i>Dictator’s Playbook</i>	16 February Read*: Dulani, Boniface and John Tengatenga. 2020. “Big Man Rule in Africa: Are Africans Getting the Leadership They Want?” <i>The African Review</i> , 46(2), pp.275–291.	18 February Read: Warner, John. 2019. “Huh? Say what?” in <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> . New York: Penguin, pp.131-138.
*20 February: Research Translation of Dulani and Tengatenga (2020) Deadline			
7 Civil Society and Protest	21 February Read*: Harris, Adam and Erin Hern. 2019. “Taking to the Streets: Protest as an Expression of Political Preference in Africa” <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> , 58:2, pp.1169–1199.	23 February Listen (in class): “Here’s the Story Behind the Iconic Image of the Sudanese Woman in White” by Shirin Jaafari <i>Public Radio International</i>	25 February Read: Warner, John. 2019. “Why Should I Trust This?” in <i>The Writer’s Practice</i> . New York: Penguin, pp.139-145.
*27 February: Research Translation of Harris and Hern (2019) Deadline			
8 Democracy and Elections	28 February Read: Cheeseman, Nic. 2015. <i>Democracy in Africa: Successes, Failures, and the Struggle for Political Reform</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.1-31.	02 March Read: Mbaku, John Mukum. 2020. “Threats to Democracy in Africa: The Rise of the Constitutional Coup.” Brookings.	04 March Read: Freedom House. <i>Freedom in the World</i> . For you assigned country. <u>Midterm Grades</u>
9 Simulation	07-11 March We will have a week-long simulation in class during this week.		

Spring Break, 14-18 March

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
10 Ethnicity and Nationalism	21 March Read*: Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." <i>American Political Science Review</i> , 98(4): 529-545.	23 March Research: Ethnic and linguistic groups in your case.	25 March Review: Research project guidelines. Research proposal due.
*27 March: Research Translation of Posner (2004)			
11 Women and Politics	28 March Read*: Edgell, Amanda B. 2018. "Vying for a Man Seat: Gender Quotas and Sustainable Representation in Africa." <i>African Studies Review</i> , 61:1, pp.185-214.	30 March Research: Women and politics in your case. Listen: "Outside in" <i>Invisibilia</i> , National Public Radio. <u>"W" Drop Deadline</u>	01 April Writing topic TBD.
*03 April: Research Translation of Edgell (2018) Deadline			
12 Sexuality and LGBTQI Rights	04 April Read: Thoreson, Ryan. 2018. "LGBTQI Rights and sub-Saharan Africa" <i>Oxford Research Encyclopedias</i> .	06 April Research: Find out about sexuality laws in your case country.	08 April <u>Honors Day, No Class.</u>
13 The Art of Politics	11 April Read/Listen/Observe: Selected examples of art and politics in Africa.	13 April Research: Find an example of art and politics from your case.	15 April Writing topic TBD.
14 Wrapping Up	18 April Read: Gyasi, Yaa. 2016. <i>Homegoing</i> . New York: Vintage, pp.157-176; pp.264-283.	20 April <u>Writing Day. No Class.</u> Final Projects due.	22 April Map Test re-take.
15 Make-up Week	25 April <u>Writing Day. No Class.</u>	27 April <u>Writing Day. No Class.</u>	29 April <u>Writing Day. No Class.</u> Last day to submit revised work for final grade.

COVID-19 Policies

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at studentaccounts.ua.edu and financialaid.ua.edu.

UA students, faculty and staff are required to comply with [UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Task Force](#) and [UA Return Plan](#) guidance regarding social distancing, face coverings and other measures.

Getting vaccinated is the best way to [Protect Our Herd](#). COVID-19 vaccines are being administered by the [University Medical Center](#), the [Student Health Center](#) and various businesses and healthcare providers. Students who [report proof of their vaccination status](#) will receive Bama Cash as a thank you gift for doing their part.

Wellness resources

College can be a stressful time. If you or someone you know is facing a challenging time or dealing with academic or personal stress, anxiety, depression, or other concerns, we strongly encourage and support you to seek assistance or to help friends find the care that they may [need](#).

If you are experiencing a personal crisis and need urgent assistance, you can also contact the following resources:

Counseling Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-3863).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak with the on-call counselor).
- You may also text BAMA to 741-741 to text with a trained volunteer.

Women and Gender Resource Center

- Monday-Friday during routine Center hours (205-348-5040).
- Weekends, holidays, after-hours (contact UAPD at 205-348-5454 and ask to speak to the on-call advocate for the WGRC).

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Respectful dialogue: The classroom should be a welcoming and safe environment for everyone to learn from our diverse views and experiences. You are expected to respect others' opinions, to refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments, and to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.

Names and pronouns: The University of Alabama provides instructors with a roster listing each student's legal name. However, I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me accordingly early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. You can also designate your pronouns in Banner.

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate in this class, please contact ODS and schedule an appointment with me during office hours. For more information, visit: www.catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/disability-services/

Parents and caregivers: If you have caregiver duties (such as for a child, an older relative, or family member with disabilities) that limit your ability to pursue your education at UA in the same capacity as your peers, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make reasonable accommodations. Children are always welcome in the classroom; however, I ask that you sit near the door so that you can step out without disturbing others should that be necessary.

Pregnancy accommodations: If you are pregnant, have recently given birth, or experience a false pregnancy, termination, or miscarriage, please reach out to me so that we can make accommodations. Your other instructors must do the same. It's the law! See Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. Additional resources can be found at: www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/information/pregnancy

Religious observances: Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, you should notify me in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester if you require accommodation for religious observances. For more information on your rights, visit: www.provost.ua.edu/oa-guidelines-for-religious-holidays-observance/

UAct: Ethical community: The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (<http://www.ua.edu/uact>) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Mandatory Reporting: As a faculty member at the University of Alabama, I am a mandatory reporter for known or suspected child abuse or neglect. This means that if I become aware of harm or threatened harm, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or negligent treatment of any person under the age of 18 or under the age of 19 in need of protective services, I must immediately report the suspected abuse to the University of Alabama Police Department. For more information: <https://uact.ua.edu/information/child-protection>

Responsible Reporting: As a faculty member at the University of Alabama, I am considered a responsible reporting individual for sexual misconduct under Title IX regulations. This means that I am required to immediately report known incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault,

dating/domestic violence, and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator and the Designated Harassment Resource Person under the UAct program. For more information:

<https://uact.ua.edu/information/titleix>

Academic misconduct Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Academic Misconduct Policy provided in the Online Catalog. Any suspected academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will be referred to the College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office. For more information: <https://provost.ua.edu/academic-misconduct/>

Turnitin® policy: Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to Turnitin.com for the purpose of detecting textual similarities. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Turnitin.com will be used as a source document to help students avoid plagiarism in written documents.

Grading disputes: Mistakes happen. If you think I have made an error, contact me during office hours or schedule an appointment within one week of receiving the grade. Out of respect for your right to privacy under the University's Confidentiality of Student Records policy and the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I will not discuss grades via email.

Audio-video recordings: Students will be notified if the instructor decides to record class sessions. If students do not want their likeness included in the recorded class session, they may elect to not participate in the video recordings. Recordings are subject to the following regulations under FERPA: (1) Only students enrolled in the class section may view the recording; (2) Students may not post or use the recordings in any other setting (e.g., social media) for any purpose. Students who violate these rules will be subject to student discipline, up to and including expulsion.

Sharing course materials: All lectures, presentations, and class discussions are for viewing by members of this class section only and may not be posted in any public forum or shared with anyone not enrolled in this class. Any student violating these rules may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

Severe weather protocol: The guiding principle at The University of Alabama is to promote the personal safety of our students, faculty and staff during severe weather events. Please see the latest severe weather guidelines in the Online Catalog: www.ready.ua.edu/severe-weather-guidelines/. In particular, I recommend that you download the ABC-3340 weather app, follow James Spann on social media, and activate emergency alerts on your mobile devices.

Notification of changes: The instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, students will receive notification in class and/or via email with reasonable time to adjust to any changes.