Boston University  
Dept. of International Relations  

Africa in International Politics (300 Level)  
Instructor: Prof. Michael Woldemariam  
Email: mwoldema@bu.edu  
Office: BSR 154, G04C  
Tel: 6173586674  
Office Hours: Tues, Thurs, 3-5pm

This course is designed as an introduction to the international relations of post-colonial Africa. Background topics, which occupy the first four weeks of class, include the international politics of pre-colonial Africa, the dynamics of colonialism, and the international relations of de-colonization. Core themes, covered in the remainder of the class, include the politics of post-independence international alignments, the external causes and effects of authoritarian rule, and Africa’s role in the global political economy. The course concludes with a careful consideration of pressing current issues on the African continent, including state-failure, the “war on terror,” and China’s growing economic and political footprint.

Beyond the course’s descriptive goals, an important emphasis is placed on the problem explanation. Students should not only develop an understanding of what patterns of international relations in post-colonial Africa look like, but also engage a range of academic theories designed to explain these patterns. Thus, the course pays careful attention to competing theoretical claims designed to explain particular aspects of Africa’s international politics, and encourages students to critically weigh available evidence in developing their own original understandings.

Course Assignments
It is essential that students complete weekly readings prior to class. While the instructor will lecture periodically, classroom discussion will be the basis of the course. Thus student participation will be crucial. Readings not contained in the two course texts for purchase will be posted to Blackboard.

Students will also be asked to become experts in the foreign policy and international relations of one African country. Beyond offering insights in class about how the experiences of their country applies (or does not apply) to the themes and theories explored in the weekly readings, students must write three analytic papers in a similar vein (countries and paper topics will be assigned in class). The papers will be due in class at the beginning of weeks 4, 8, and 13. Late papers will be accepted, but students will lose one letter grade for every day that a paper is late.

There will be a final sit-down exam for the course. The final will be held during exam period, at a time scheduled by Boston University.
**Grading**  
Participation: 30%  
Country-Analytic Papers: 40%  
Final Exam: 30%

**Absences**  
Students are expected to attend ALL classes. Absences will be excused for official, medical, religious and personal reasons, as long as appropriate documentation is provided. Students who miss class are encouraged to visit the instructor’s office hours in order to discuss course material.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**  
You are expected to provide citations in papers for all quotations, paraphrases, and ideas taken from any source other than your own original thoughts. Boston University has very strict standards for intellectual integrity, and punishment for plagiarism is severe, and can include permanent expulsion from the university. For more on the definition of plagiarism and the standards to which you will be held, see the *Academic Conduct Code*, available at [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/)

**Required Books (available for purchase at BU bookstore)**


**Course Outline (readings assignments are subject to change at Prof’s discretion)**

**Week 1: Introductions and Syllabus**

**Week 2: Governance and International Relations in Pre-Colonial Africa**


Herbst, Chapters 1 and 2


**Week 3: Colonial Dynamics and Legacies**
Meredith, Chapters 1-3 (rest assured, the Meredith chapters are short, and a quick read!)

Herbst, Chapter 3


**Week 4: Decolonization (ANALYTIC PAPER 1 DUE)**

Meredith, Chapters 4-8


**Week 5: Post-Independence Policy Choice and Alignment**

Herbst, Chapter 4


**Week 6: Political Breakdown, Authoritarianism, and Identity Conflict**

Herbst, Chapter 5

Meredith, Chapters 9-15


**Week 7: Dependency, the International Political Economy, and Economic Collapse**

Meredith, Chapter 16


**Week 8: Structural Adjustment, Foreign Aid, and Economic Reform (ANALYTIC PAPER 2 DUE)**

Meredith, Chapter 22


**Week 9: The End of the Cold War and Africa’s Democratic Transitions**

Meredith, Chapters 23-24


**Week 10: State Failure and Civil War**


Paul Williams, “State Failure in Africa: Causes, Consequences, and Responses,” which has been published online at [http://elliott.gwu.edu/assets/docs/research/williams07.pdf](http://elliott.gwu.edu/assets/docs/research/williams07.pdf)

**Week 11: The Aids Crisis**

Meredith, Chapter 21


**Week 12: Africa’s “New Arrivals”** (ANALYTIC PAPER 3 DUE)


**Week 13: The “War on Terror” in Africa**


**Week 14: Africa Rising?**