This course is designed as an introduction to the issues and trends dominating African political life today. A brief review of African history from 1600 through the post-colonial period provides critical background for a deeper investigation of the themes and political trends that have dominated the African continent since the end of the Cold War. Core course debates will revolve around recent trends in African economic growth, the status of democratic governance, and the proliferation of armed conflict, in addition to several other issues of contemporary concern. The course concludes with an exploration of important but less widely discussed themes: the political impacts of African diasporas and migration, the ongoing political challenges of rapid urbanization, and the relationship between the advocacy of western publics and the shifting contours of African political life.

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 politics look like in Africa today, 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 African politics today, and encourages students to critically weigh available evidence in developing their own original understandings.

Course Assignments
It is essential that students complete the weekly readings prior to class. While the instructor may lecture from time to time, this course is a seminar, and depends on student’s careful consideration of assigned reading material and classroom contributions. Many readings will be posted to Blackboard. Those readings not posted to Blackboard can be purchased from the BU bookstore. The reading load per week will generally be between 100-150 pages.

Students will also be asked to write two papers, roughly 8-10 pages in length (paper topics will be assigned in class). These papers will be due weeks 6 and 12. The final exam for the course consists will be held on the assigned exam day for this course.

Late papers will be accepted, but students will lose one letter grade for every day that a paper is late.
Course Texts


Elizabeth Schmidt. 2013. *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From The Cold War to the War on Terror.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press


Grading
Participation: 20%
Analytic Papers: 50%
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/)

Week 1: African Politics Before 1991


Elizabeth Schmidt. 2013. *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From The Cold War to the War on Terror.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pages TBA)

Michael Crowder, “Indirect Rule—French and British Style.” *Journal of the International African Institute* (July 1964)


Week 2: Economic Development


Lorenzo Fioramonti, “Africa Rising? Think Again.” Hinrich Boll Stiftung Blog, which can be found at http://ke.boell.org/2014/03/04/africa-rising-think-again

Week 3: Democracy


Week 4: Armed Conflict

Jeffrey Gettleman, “Africa’s Forever Wars: Why the Continent’s Conflicts Never End,” ForeignPolicy.com, which can be found at http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/02/11/africas-forever-wars/


Week 5: Foreign Aid


**Week 6: Continental Cooperation and the AU**


**Week 7: Gender Politics**


**Week 8: The War on Terror in Africa**


Elizabeth Schmidt. 2013. *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From The Cold War to the War on Terror.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pages TBA)

**Week 9: Public Health**


**Week 10: Rise of the BRICS**


**Week 11: Natural Resource Politics**
Week 12: The African Diaspora and Migration


Week 13: Urbanization and African Cities

TBA

Week 14: Western Publics and African Politics
