SA.550 (AFRICA)

Courses

SA.550.100. Democracy, Political Reform and Civil Society in Africa. 4 Credits.

This course analyzes the democratization of politics in African states by focusing on the relationship of civil society groups to political elites and formal political institutions. After reviewing independence movements, the course concentrates on the revival of democratic governance from the mid-nineties to the present. Students will assess if and how political parties, international donors, and indigenous civil society groups contribute to increasing accountability and good governance. Classes will include case studies and interviews with international and African actors engaged in the practical work of democratic reform in Africa.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.780.740[C]

SA.550.101. Conflict and the African Great Lakes. 4 Credits.

Africa's Great Lakes region has become synonymous with conflict. Over the last fivedecades, this region has seen genocides, ethnic violence, land disputes, civil war, cross borderconflict and a multi-national war. Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and the DemocraticRepublic of Congo have been affected by one or many of these destabilizing factors. Thecourse introduces students to the main issues affecting peace, stability and developmentin the Great Lakes.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.780.734[C]

SA.550.102. Making US Policy in Africa: Strategy, Tools, and Tactics. 4 Credits.

Making US Policy in Africa examines the interagency US policymaking process guiding the implementation of African strategic policy by focusing on concrete case studies and interviews with guest speakers from key agencies. It begins with an overview summarizing the evolution of American policy process as it applies to Africa. Subsequent classes assess the strategies, tools, and tactics deployed by agencies to achieve policy objectives in the areas of security, humanitarian crises response, and economic development. By studying case studies and interacting with guest speakers, students gain practical insights into how government institutions formulate and implement US policy in Africa. Institutions include the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy; USAID; Office of the US Trade Representative; and Congress. Evaluation of student performance is based on class participation, formal presentations, and three short professional policy memos analyzing US African policy.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.780.735[C]

SA.550.103. Contemporary African Politics. 4 Credits.

This course considers the origins and nature of political activities as well as some of the major themes, issues, and theories in the study of sub-Saharan Africa since independence. We will discuss broad trends and issues across the continent. At the same time, we will be attuned to the diversity of political, social, and economic life in Africa. The course analyzes the central themes and processes in African politics, including clientelism, ethnicity, authoritarianism and democracy. It also examines the challenges that specific African countries face in a number of important domains, including democracy and democratic backsliding, ethnic politics, economic development, civil war and post-conflict reconstruction, corruption and governance, and Africa's place in the international system.

SA.550.104. African Development. 4 Credits.

The course's primary objective is problematizing and understanding the notion of 'African Development'. In doing so, the course will examine knowledge frameworks that are defining the processes of Africa's historical, economic, political, and socio-cultural changes. The course aims to equip students with a critical understanding of the notions of development in the African context by juxtaposing selected decolonial and mainstream perspectives. The course will cover vital issues in African development, such as the role of the African state; continental development frameworks (AAF-SAP, NEPAD, Agenda 2063, AfCFTA); politics, governance & democracy; as well as social and public policy issues in agriculture & rural development; education; digital development (digitalization); and knowledge production.

SA.550.105. International Relations of Africa. 4 Credits.

The aim of this course is to help students understand Africa and how the continent engages the rest of the world in international relations. The course will examine the assumptions that have informed positive and negative outlooks on the continent. Some of the questions that the course will investigate include the following: What are the hosts of issues propelling Africa's international relations? Can African states fully engage the rest of the world in the absence of good governance? Who benefits from Africa's international relations? There are no easy answers when it comes to Africa. There are 54 states with significant differences in their political and economic characteristics and trajectories. While we will not be able to examine each state individually, we will examine how these states interact with one another and with the broader world.

SA.550.106. Political Economy of African Development. 4 Credits.

This course is intended as an introduction to the political economy of institutions and long-run development, through the lens of African countries. The material and readings will draw from political economy, development economics and economic history and cover topics from the incentives and preferences of politicians to party politics and clientelism, electoral models, collective action and de-facto politics, democracy and dictatorships, taxation and public good provision, modeling and measuring corruption and state capacity, contract enforcement and coercion, and political access and firm behavior. A key objective of the course is to, through careful study of African history and political economy, draw lessons on the effects of institutions on economic welfare and inequality, with generalizable lessons for the US/North America, and other regions globally.

SA.550.107. Political Economy of Africa. 4 Credits.

This interdisciplinary course delves into the political economy of Africa from colonial times to the 21st century. It adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating insights from political sciences, economics, sociology, and history to probe contemporary development issues in Africa.The scope of the course ranges from post-independence challenges to contemporary factors influencing governance, institutions, conflict, and the trajectory of Africa's development. Theoretical and policy analysis tools are employed to study political and socio-economic dynamics in contemporary Africa. Key areas of investigation include the underlying reasons for underdevelopment and conflict in many African countries; the role of global powers in Africa; and the effects of current democratization and growth patterns on the continent.

SA.550.108. Public Policy and Business Strategy in Africa. 4 Credits.
This course explores the nexus of public choice, business strategy and economic performance from the Independence movements to today in Africa. How did politics shape policy and how business enterprises have responded to the social, political and economic environments. The course will cover the Independence Mantra of seek ye first the political Kingdom and the Dirigiste consequences; the rise of UK's Labour Party, LSE and the mixed economy and commanding heights model influence in Africa; the resource curse; the Washington Consensus; the Rise and struggle of the private sector; institutions and economic performance in Africa; a tripartite approach to development; navigating budgeting uncertainty; business strategy models and economic performance; China's growing economic influence in Africa; the AU agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); and the Regional Economic Communities (REC) and challenges of aggregating across borders.

SA.550.109. West Africa: Comparative Challenges in Key Countries. 4 Credits.
As one of five economic and regional zones in Africa, West Africa, with its estimated population of approximately 500 million inhabitants encompasses 15 countries. In the past three decades, the subregion has embraced multiple challenges and opportunities that now place it at the epicenter of various multifaceted global trends including challenges to democratization, the reemergence of military rule and autocracy, the rise in violent extremism and geopolitical rivalries among global powers such as China, Russia, continental Europe and the United States. The sub region is also experiencing significant demographic shifts with a median age of 18 and an uptick in youth engagement and advocacy with a desire to reshape leadership roles and the region's international agency. The course will examine all of these trends in a two-part process: the first six weeks will be devoted to examining linkages to global trends such as democratization, reactions to superpower rivalries and autocracy, violent extremism, climate governance and population shifts, and regional efforts at norm setting and harmonization of governance models. The second half of the course will be devoted to comparative case studies to allow students to critically examine generally held preconceptions about the region. The comparative case studies will focus on: Nigeria and Ghana for Anglophone West Africa; Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal for Francophone West Africa; and Mali and Mauritania for Sahelien West Africa. Active and interactive class participation will be highly valued.

SA.550.110. Sudan: Roots of Conflict and Pathways to Renewal. 4 Credits.
Sudan is the world's largest humanitarian and displacement crisis. As a result of the brutal conflict between the Sudan Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces, over 14 million people have been displaced, up to 150,000 killed, and 25 million require humanitarian assistance. Once considered the potential breadbasket of the Middle East and Africa, the Sudanese people have persistently sought civilian rule and democracy since it emerged as an independent state in 1956. Popular uprisings overthrew military regimes in 1964, 1985, and, most recently, 2019, when a peaceful revolution toppled the 29-year dictatorship of Omar al Bashir and installed a civilian-led transitional government. With a focus on why the various periods of civilian or democratic rule not been sustained, the course will examine the causes of Sudan's fragility, including the historical, economic, demographic, natural, and geopolitical factors that have contributed to conflict, and assess potential pathways for the Sudanese people to reach their elusive goal of civilian-led democratic rule. Students will prepare a combination of group presentations and individual papers. The class will be seminar-style, with the professor and guest speakers prompting student discussion.