

# Course Syllabus

## PA 388K (60219) Fa24 - Contemporary Africa Policy Issues

Meetings: Mondays 0900-Noon Room: SRH 3.314

Faculty: Ambassador (ret) Larry Andre

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Consultations: by appointment in person or by video. I am eager to engage students on course topics and on international careers. Please contact me to set up a time, in-person or video conference. I welcome both individual and group consultations.

Attendance Policy: In-person, unless excused for cause in advance. Attendance and discussion blog contributions are the two elements making up the participation grade.

Screen Policy: Use of electronic devices for notetaking is allowed during class sessions.

Recording Policy: To encourage free exchanges, recording of class proceedings is prohibited.

AI Policy: AI tools are allowed to aid in research, but not to aid in drafting writing assignments.

### Learning Objectives:

The course's three learning objectives are:

- 1) to acquire knowledge of contemporary Africa (including some historical background and culture),
- 2) to understand key policy concepts and dynamics primarily from African perspectives, and
- 3) to enhance briefing and drafting skills.

### Course Modification

This syllabus and the related modules tab represent an outline for our study of this subject. While I intend to follow this outline, it may be necessary to make adjustments as the semester progresses. As an example, a guest speaker opportunity may arise unexpectedly. Should such revisions become necessary, I will make them in ways that do not cause significant or sudden changes of workload. In the event of an adjustment, the class agendas found in the modules will be updated, but not the syllabus.

I will publish the syllabus and related course material over the summer. I may then tweak it up to one week prior to the first day of class (i.e., 19AUG). During the first day of class, I will hold a class discussion on modest proposed adjustments, additions and

deletions to the course to satisfy student learning interests and preferences. Bring your proposals. I will then publish a revised syllabus, modules, etc. prior to class 2. After that date, only the class agendas will be subject to alteration if circumstances require.

### **Course Structure:**

The course is divided into two units.

Unit 1 consists of a multidimensional survey of contemporary Africa's five regions as defined by the African Union (first five classes), and a review of Africa's continental and selected regional organizations (class 6). A midterm examination at the top of Class 7 (14OCT) concludes Unit 1.

Unit 2 considers six policy clusters: 1) international relations, 2) governance, 3) security, 4) socio-economic development and foreign aid, 5) business, finance, and trade, and 6) climate change, humanitarian response, and migration (classes 7-12). In class 13 we will look at continental and regional trends, examine the concept of coherence, and review Unit 2's key facts, concepts and dynamics. A final examination at the bottom of class 14 covers the second half of the course (Unit 2).

There are two writing assignments. The first uses the format of a professional briefing memo. The second uses the format of a think tank or media article. A "mini-seminar" on memoranda and article drafting is included in class 3.

An oral presentation (briefing) assignment is informed by a mini-seminar scheduled for class 1.

The course is conducted as a mix of lectures, class discussion, guest speakers, and various media. Readings and other media are a mix of African and external sources with an emphasis on topical reporting and analyses. There is an assigned text for you to acquire (see below). Some of the assigned films may also entail streaming service purchase. Whenever possible, I will present free alternatives. Class participation is measured by attendance and contributions to a weekly discussion blog.

### **Community of Learning and "Practitioner Perspective"**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. I expect LBJ students to be familiar with the University's policies on academic honesty, and to abide by them.

Students are not in competition with one another. I do not grade on a curve. Students are graded on the degree to which they achieve the assignment's desired outcome and learning objective. In class discussions, share your experiences, skills, and insights. If you have a question about an assignment or about course topics, then I prefer that you raise them in class so that all can benefit from the response rather than approaching me individually. (If for some reason you feel you must raise directly with me, then you are free to do so.) Students are responsible for knowing key points discussed in class

whether or not they were present. I urge all students at the beginning of the semester to make note sharing arrangements with a classmate.

During my first academic year as a professor, I learned a lot from students. I aim to continue doing so. I welcome student contributions and suggestions. I do not always choose to apply student suggestions.

As I understand it, the LBJ School faculty is composed of about two-thirds academic scholars and one-third "professors of practice." I am a member of the latter category. (This strikes me as a healthy mix.) Consequently, the course is run on workplace principles and dynamics. The writing assignments use an office format and a general public format rather than a scholarly format. Workplace values include punctuality, preparedness, participation, and commitment to maintaining a comfortable, open, and friendly environment where we may respectfully challenge one another's ideas, including mine. Your active participation in our weekly discussions plays a vital role in the educational process. You should come to class having completed all the readings, prepared to engage with your classmates and me by contributing your comments, critiques, and questions.

### **Media Assignments:**

- Subscribe at no cost to the daily media review offered by [africacenter.org](http://africacenter.org). Analyses are also regularly available on this site.
- At least once a week review the website [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com). This site offers reporting and analysis about Africa by Africans.
- Through these sources, I expect you to stay current on developments in Africa. Come to class with your questions and comments.
- I will post to Canvas module class reading assignments no later than one week prior to the relevant class. These will be a mix of current reporting and analyses, and book chapters.
- Most class modules include a "dig deeper" list of recommended media. You will not be assessed on this material. Some of this media may be helpful for writing and briefing assignments.
- Films: The first half of the course includes assigned films from each of the five regions. The films are made by Africans. Take notes on policy issues raised in the films. The midterm examination will include prompts on the films. Access to some of the films is by streaming services, hence a rental fee will be involved. I provide free alternatives when possible.
- The only book to be acquired is Dead Aid by Baroness Dambisa Moyo. This book will be referenced throughout Unit 2. Finish the book prior to 14OCT24 (class 7). The book features in some assignment options. Read it critically. (I recommend that you read and listen to everything critically.) Take notes on course-relevant facts, concepts, and dynamics, and on points of agreement and disagreement.
- I registered Dead Aid with the UT Coop. The UT Library system has copies. It is widely available for order online as paperback, e-book, and audiobook. Also, this book is available through the Longhorn Textbook

Access (LTA) program, a collaboration between UT Austin, The University Co-op and textbook publishers to significantly reduce the cost of digital course materials for students. You can access [Dead Aid](#) through the “My Textbooks” tab in Canvas. You are automatically opted into the program but can easily opt-out (and back in) via Canvas through the 12th class day. If you remain opted-in at the end of the add/drop period (12th class day fall/spring, 4th class day summer sessions), you will receive a bill through your “What I Owe” page. If you do not pay your bill by the specified deadline, you will lose access to the course materials and your charge will be removed. More information about the LTA program is available at Longhorn Textbook Access website.

### **Assessed Assignments:**

20% Midterm examination covering Unit 1 (administered 14OCT24)

20% Final examination covering Unit 2 (administered 09DEC24)

20% Discussion Blog contributions (With attendance, comprises the participation grade), due no later than 24 hours prior to relevant class beginning with class 2, i.e., first blog post is due Sunday 8 September at 0900

15% Memorandum on approved research topic (due on an individually agreed date)

15% Article on approved research topic (due on an individually agreed date)

10% Oral presentation on research project with bullet points (due on an individually agreed date)

Examinations: The purpose of the examinations is to assess acquisition of facts and comprehension of concepts and dynamics: that which resides between your ears. Electronic devices are used to submit examination responses but not as reference tools during the examination. Honor code applies.

A word on lectures and examinations: The learning objectives go beyond that which can be assessed. I will highlight in lectures and class discussions specific facts, concepts, and dynamics which could potentially be referenced in an examination. My lectures and our discussions will venture beyond that which is relevant to the two examinations. This is meant to convey a "feel" for the subject, which is often not assessable. If I neglect to differentiate between assessable and not assessable material, then please remind me to do so.

Discussion Blog: I will list topics for each discussion blog no later than one week prior to due date. Timely responses that engage the topic meet the criteria (see Canvas assignment and rubric tabs for details). Responses are due 24 hours prior to class (i.e., 0900 Sunday). Responses should be brief, yet comprehensive. You unlock access to your classmates' blog posts once you submit yours. This is the main method I use to determine the class participation grade (20% of overall grade), along with attendance.

Writing Assignments (memorandum and article on approved topics): As public policy students at the LBJ School, you are expected to produce fluent and lucid writing. I strongly recommend that you ask someone able to do so to proofread your writing. I will supply some tips during our drafting mini-seminar. Any assignment with more than three spelling or grammar mistakes per page may be returned to you and incur a one-day late penalty.

Class 3 (16SEP) includes a "mini-seminar" on drafting memoranda and articles. I will provide a list of potential writing assignment topics. I am receptive to students' topic proposals. The two writing assignments will require research. A student/instructor consultation will determine the individual due date. The topic's relevance to a specific course session plays a role in determining that date. For more details on these two assignments, see the Canvas assignments tab. I will also supply examples, templates, and rubrics for these two writing assignments.

Oral presentation (briefing) of a research project (with bullet points): Class 1 (26AUG) includes a mini-seminar on oral presentations/briefings. I will provide a list of potential topics. I am receptive to students' topic proposals. The presentation will require research. A student/instructor consultation will determine the individual due date. The topic's relevance to a specific course session plays a role in determining that date. For more details on this assignment, see the Canvas assignments tab. I provided an example of a briefing bullet points document in the assignment tab.

### **Schedule of Assessed Assignments (also see assignments tab and Calendar):**

To be individually scheduled with me: memorandum, article, and oral presentation (briefing).

Discussion Blog contributions no later than Sunday 08SEP, 15SEP, 22SEP, 29SEP, 06OCT, 13OCT, 20OCT, 27OCT, 03NOV, 17NOV.

Midterm Examination covering Unit 1: 14OCT

Final Examination covering Unit 2: 09DEC

### **Grading:**

All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale. I will grade on the following scale:

A: >94; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73.

[NOTE: according to Graduate School rules, a student must earn at least a C (i.e. at least 74/100) to pass the course.]

Writing assignments have individualized due dates. Since students co-determine the date, I expect on time delivery. Late writing assignments are penalized one-half grade (B+ becomes B). Papers turned in more than 24 hours after the deadline are marked down a full grade. Papers over 48 hours late are marked down a grade and a half. In exceptional circumstances, I will grant an extension. Inform me of such circumstances as much in advance as possible.

## UT and LBJ School information for students:

Please see the Simple Syllabus for comprehensive and current information for student review.

## Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Mon Aug 26, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Africa Class 1: Introductions, Syllabus Review, Northern Africa Survey</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Sep 2, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Labor Day No class</a>	12am
Mon Sep 9, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Africa Class 2: Western Africa Survey</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Sep 16, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Africa Class 3: Central Africa Survey &amp; Writing mini-Seminar</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Sep 23, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Africa Class 4: Eastern Africa Survey</a>	9am to 12pm

Date	Details	Due
Mon Sep 30, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Class 5: Southern Africa Survey &amp; Briefing mini-Seminar</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Oct 7, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 1 Contemporary Africa Class 6: African Union, Selected Regional Organizations, Midterm Review</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Oct 14, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 7: Midterm Examination, International Relations</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Oct 21, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 8: Governance</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Oct 28, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 9: Security</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Nov 4, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 10: Socio-Economic Development &amp; Foreign Aid</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Nov 11, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 11: Business, Finance &amp; Trade</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Nov 18, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 12: Climate Change, Humanitarian Crisis &amp; Displacement</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Nov 25, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Fall Break 25-30 November No classes</a>	12am
Mon Dec 2, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 13: Continental &amp; Regional Trends, Coherence; Final Examination (Unit 2) Review</a>	9am to 12pm
Mon Dec 9, 2024	Calendar Event <a href="#">Unit 2 Policy Issues Class 14: Unfinished Business, Class Evaluation</a>	9am to 10:30am