

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **The Politics and Governance of Africa**

Course Number and Section

POLISCI

3359G 550

Instructor Name(s): Lindsay Scorgie

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

POL3359G will introduce students to the politics of contemporary Africa, with a particular emphasis on addressing the question of why Africa continues to be the poorest and arguably most volatile continent. The course will explore this query through the use of both theoretical literature on Africa's underdevelopment, as well as focused case studies of particular countries. It will cover the history, politics, economics, and socio-cultural factors of development in Africa, starting with the precolonial era, but with particular emphasis on the 20th and 21st centuries.

The course begins with an exploration into precolonial and colonial political structures, before moving on to the legacies of colonial rule with regards to leadership styles and governance trends in the latter half of the 20th century. Students will then look into the causes and consequences of conflict in Africa, including consideration of the 'greed versus grievance' debate, the 'resource curse', weak states and borderland spaces, as well as the approaches taken by different countries towards transitional justice and reconstruction in the aftermath of war. Finally, the course will consider a range of other issues currently affecting African politics, including China's extensive neocolonial presence on the continent, trends in foreign aid by the international community, gender and sexuality politics, and chronic health crises.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

a thorough understanding of trends in contemporary African politics

be familiar with the historical developments that contributed to such trends

be able to identify the lasting ramifications of colonialism and continuing neo-colonial dynamics on the continent

critical analysis and writing skills via conducting original research with secondary sources

time management and organization skills via meeting assignment deadlines

public speaking skills via contributing to class discussions and group exercises

Textbooks and Course Materials:

None.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Newsreel	N/A	5
Seminar lead	N/A	10
Map quiz	Jan. 28	15
Participation	N/A	20
Research essay	March 23	25
Exam	April exam period	25

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Huron Brief Course Outline

In-course Costs \$000.00

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook's publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].