



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**POLI 471 L01
Africa: Contemporary Political Problems
Winter 2021**

INSTRUCTOR: Chris W. J. Roberts
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COURSE D2L: <https://d2l.ucalgary.ca>
OFFICE HOURS (via ZOOM): Wednesday 1:00-3:00pm, Friday 9:30-10:30am or by appt
COURSE DAY/TIME (via ZOOM): Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00-11:50am
DELIVERY METHOD: Web-based
COURSE PRE-REQUISITES: Political Science 371 or African Studies 301; or consent of the Department.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course allows students who have taken POLI 371 or African Studies to delve more deeply into selected political challenges facing contemporary African states and societies. There will be one cross-cutting, driving question this term: how and to what extent do formal political institutions matter in African politics? On the surface that seems like an odd question for a political science class, but much of the study of politics on this vast continent is dominated by either attention to informal politics (for example, ethnic group rivalry and/or coalition-building, or neopatrimonialism) or to the constraints offered by geopolitical competition and/or global economic structuralism.

And yet, from constitutions, elections, political parties, and presidential term-limits to legislatures, the judiciary, security apparatus, sub-national levels of government, and land tenure regimes, formal institutions shape and influence political and economic behaviour – to varying degrees – across African political systems as elsewhere. And even when formal institutions are overturned through constitutional amendment, as presidential term-limits often are, the fact that incumbents go through the motions of formal institutional change is in itself significant and can have unintended effects on political actors and rules of the political game. Presidents or military leaders governing through one party states and executive decrees are the exception today, not the norm.

The course will be divided into two thematic halves. The first half of the course will focus on the study of African elections, which have become much more important across most countries since 1990. This is not to say that the mere holding of multi-party elections is a guarantee of entrenched democracy or always helps voters keep the executive and

legislative branches accountable and representative. The degree to which elections can be considered *democratic* varies. But there are countries today with institutionalized elections and political parties that as late as the 1980s or 1990s were ruled by military or other types of autocratic leaders, and even recent cases of long-term autocratic leaders losing power through elections. Elections, electoral systems, and political parties deserve more intensive study in contemporary African politics. Students will be assigned a recent or upcoming (2018-2021) African election to analyze in an in-depth manner, and this will be the basis of the first written assignment.

The second half of the course will look at the wide range of other formal institutions, from constitutions to legislative and judicial branches, the bureaucracy, police/military services, land tenure regimes, and federalism or decentralization. When and to what degree do the formal institutions of African political systems constrain or influence executive power, cultivate economic development, deliver public goods, and empower citizens between elections? Students will select and develop a research topic within guidelines provided, do a short presentation on their research question and findings at the end of the term, and submit a research paper as their final assignment. Thus, please be aware that Poli 471 is a heavy reading, research, participation, and writing course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will ...

- be able to employ core vocabulary, concepts, and theories in the study of African politics, particularly in relation to the study of elections, constitutions, and other formal institutions.
- differentiate, compare, and critique a wide variety of approaches that attempt to explain the role (or non-role) of formal political institutions in contemporary African politics, and how they interact with informal institutions.
- understand the historical evolution of formal political institutions across Africa since the late colonial and independence eras through “third wave democratization” of the early 1990s to today.
- develop comprehensive competencies to find and evaluate relevant primary data and secondary research related to African elections and other topics, including both Western and non-Western sources.
- improve their verbal, reading-analytical, and writing skills relevant to (comparative) political science and the social sciences generally.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Nic Cheeseman, ed., *Institutions and Democracy in Africa: How the Rules of the Game Shape Political Developments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018). This inexpensive textbook should be available from UCalgary Bookstore and other sources in hard copy or digitally.

Optional textbook: If you require a general refresher on African politics, the recently used Poli 371 textbook is widely available: Pierre Englebert & Kevin C. Dunn, *Inside African*

Politics, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2019). The first edition (2013) would also suffice as a useful background resource.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY:

You'll require as a minimum a computer device with internet connection. We'll be using Zoom for live classes and D2L regularly for news, access to course materials, two mid-terms, and to upload assignments to Dropbox. As this is a relatively small class it would be preferred for all students to have a video camera and microphone, but the chat window can be used to participate in class discussions as well. For the research presentation at the end of term, a microphone or some other arrangement will need to be made: a video camera is not necessary to share a PPT presentation, but audio will be required (or, presentations can be prerecorded if this is possible to show to the class without additional technical hurdles).

COURSE COMPONENT WEIGHTS AND DUE DATES:

COMPONENT	WEIGHTING	DUE DATES
Participation (including in-class discussions/exercises/ D2L Discussion Board)	10%	Throughout – expectation that students come to class prepared to discuss readings & election cases
Two In-class Mid-Terms 50 minutes each D2L Quizzes Platform	2 x 10% each = 20%	Wednesday, Feb. 24th Friday, Mar. 26th
Election Analysis Assignment	30%	Saturday, March 6th: uploaded to D2L Dropbox
Research Paper (30%) plus presentation (10%)	40%	Short scheduled presentation during last 2 weeks / paper due (on D2L Dropbox) on Sun, April 18th (noon)
Total	100%	

***Note:** Students must take at least one of the mid-term exams and submit both written assignments in order to be eligible to pass the course.*

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%)

This will be a relatively small class and active student participation will be expected on most days. In-class Zoom participation (via chat or audio), discussion boards, and exercises will create opportunities for students to accumulate participation points during the term. Thus, it is expected you will arrive in class having already read the day's assigned required readings or otherwise prepared appropriately.

TWO MID-TERM EXAMINATIONS (10% each, total 20%)

There will be a short (50 minute, in-class) mid-term exam after each half of the course (first elections, then other formal institutions). They may include a combination of multiple-choice/matching questions but mostly short answers, and will be done on the D2L Quizzes platform on Wed., Feb. 24th and Friday, Mar. 26th. Those who cannot take the exam during the scheduled class time due to a scheduling conflict need to notify the instructor at least 24 hours before the scheduled exam time to make alternative arrangements.

ELECTION ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT (30%)

Each student will be assigned a recent or upcoming (2018-2021) African election to study in-depth. Each student will submit a formal analysis of their election based on guidelines provided. This will be a short paper of approx. 6-8 double-spaced pages due on Saturday, March 6th at 11:59pm. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class with the assignment details, rubric, worksheet, and parameters posted on D2L.

Late penalties of five percent (5%) will be applied for each 24 hours past the deadline, including weekends.

RESEARCH PAPER INCLUDING PRESENTATION (40%)

Within guidelines provided in class and with a final topic approved by the instructor, students will select a relevant research question for their research paper (approx. 8-10 pages, double-spaced). Prior to final submission on Sunday, April 18th (noon) via D2L Dropbox, students will present some of their findings (6-8 minutes) and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates. The live Zoom or pre-recorded presentation will be worth 10%, with the final paper worth 30%.

As the research paper is do after the end of classes, the late penalty will be ten percent (10%) for each 24 hours past the deadline, including weekends.

Writing Statement

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre by contacting them at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

GRADE SCALE: The following grading scale will be used:

A+ (91-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (55-59)
A (85-90)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-54)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (0-49)

LATE PENALTIES:

See above for the different late penalties assigned for the Election Analysis (5%/day) and Research Paper (10%/day).

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS: The schedule is tentative and may change as the need arises.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)		
DATE	TOPICS & THEMES	REQUIRED READINGS BEFORE CLASS Cheeseman (ed.) 2018 textbook = “Chapter”
Week 1 Jan 11-15	Course Introduction Course expectations & structure Syllabus, D2L usage, & assignments Class background survey Countering the “institutionless” approach to African politics	All classes are synchronous via Zoom, recorded, and posted to D2L later that day. Chapter 1 – Cheeseman, “Introduction: Understanding African Politics: Bringing the State Back In” Lynch & Crawford (2011), “Democratization in Africa 1990-2010: an assessment,” <i>Democratization</i> [D2L] <i>Resource for this course:</i> http://democracyinafrica.org Willis, Lynch, and Cheeseman (2018), “Voting, Nationhood, and Citizenship in Late-Colonial Africa,” <i>The Historical Journal</i> . [D2L] Chapter 2 – Riedl, “Institutional Legacies: Understanding Multiparty Politics in Historical Perspective.” Christensen & Latin (2019), “Democratization and the ‘Third Wave’,” Chapter 13 in <i>African States Since Independence</i> [D2L]
Week 2 Jan 18-22	Elections in historical perspective <i>On Friday, January 22nd, a recent or upcoming (2018-2021) African election will be assigned to each student.</i>	
Week 3 Jan 25-29	Deep institutional effects on elections, incumbency, and political parties	Chapter 4 – Arriola, “Financial Institutions: Economic Liberalisation, Credit and Opposition Party Successes” Chapter 3 – Boone, “Property and Land Institutions: Origins, Variations and Political Effects” Koter (2013), “Urban and rural voting patterns in Senegal: the spatial aspects of incumbency, c. 1978-2012,” <i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i> (51, 4). [D2L]
Week 4 Feb 1-5	Democratization by elections? <i>Intro to V-DEM:</i> https://www.v-dem.net/en/	Chapter 9 – Van Ham and Lindberg, “Elections: The Power of Elections in Multiparty Africa” Chapter 10 – Klass, “Electoral Rules: The Relationship between Political Exclusion & Conflict”
Week 5 Feb 8-12	Parties, leadership, & presidents <i>Background: Felter (2019), “Africa’s ‘Leader’s for Life’”: https://www.cfr.org/background/africas-leaders-life & Siegle and Cook (2020), “Circumvention of Term Limits Weakens Governance in Africa”: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/circumvention-of-term-limits-weakens-governance-in-africa/</i>	Chapter 11 – Posner and Young, “Term Limits: Leadership, Political Competition and the Transfer of Power” Chapter 8 – Cooper, “Political Parties: Presidential Succession Crises and Internal Party Democracy” Morse (2018), “Presidential power and democratization by elections in Africa,” <i>Democratization</i> (25, 4). [D2L]
Week 6 Feb 15-19	Reading Break – No Classes	

Week 7 Feb 22-26	Mon, Feb. 22 nd – Elections Review Wed, Feb. 24 th – Mid-Term 1 (50 Minutes) Fri, Feb. 26 th	(Friday) Cheeseman (2020), “State of democracy in Africa: changing leaders doesn’t change politics”: http://democracyinafrica.org/state-of-democracy-in-africa-changing-leaders-doesnt-change-politics/
Week 8 Mar 1-5	Constitutional foundations & the rule of law Add'l sources: www.constituteproject.org & www.constitutionnet.org Saturday, March 6th: Election Assignment due (uploaded to D2L Dropbox)	Mbaku (2020), “Threats to the Rule of Law in Africa,” <i>Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law</i> (48,2) [D2L] Chapter 5 – Ndulo, “Constitutions: The Politics of Constitutional Reform”
Week 9 Mar 8-12	Separation and division of powers: legislative & judicial branches	Chapter 12 – Collard, “The Legislature: Institutional Strengthening in Dominant-Party States” Chapter 13 – Vondoepp, “The Judiciary: Courts, Judges and the Rule of Law” Friedman (2018), “States, Countries, and Peoples: A Comparative Look at Bicameralism in African Federal States,” <i>Fletcher Forum on World Affairs</i> (42, 2). [D2L]
Week 10 Mar 15-19	Bureaucracy, decentralization, & governance	Chapter 7 – Pitcher & Teodoro, “The Bureaucracy: Policy Implementation and Reform” Chapter 6 – Medie, “The Police: Laws, Prosecution and Women’s Rights in Liberia” Chapter 14 – Dyzenhaus, “Decentralization: Accountability in Local Government”
Week 11 Mar 22-26	Military institutions, war, and democracy Friday, Mar. 26: Mid-Term 2 (50 mins)	Ouédraogo (2014), “Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa,” Research Paper from the Africa Center for Strategic Studies. [D2L] Cheeseman, Collard, and Reyntjens (2018), “War and democracy: the legacy of conflict in East Africa,” <i>JMAS</i> (56, 1) [D2L]
Week 12 Mar 29- Apr 2	Mon: Research Presentation Workshop Wed: Research Presentations (via Zoom) Fri: Easter long weekend – No class	Students will make a short (6-8 minute) presentation to the class about their project and receive feedback from instructor and classmates.
Week 13 Apr 5-9	Mon: Easter long weekend – No class Wed & Fri: Research presentations (via Zoom)	Students will make a short (6-8 minute) presentation to the class about their project and receive feedback from instructor and classmates.
Week 14 Apr 12-14	Mon & Wed: Research presentations (via Zoom) Upload research paper by Sunday, April 18 th (noon) on D2L Dropbox	Students will make a short (6-8 minute) presentation to the class about their project and receive feedback from instructor and classmates.

INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak to the instructor during class or their office hours. Should you wish to meet via Zoom outside of office hours, please email or call to make an appointment. It is to the student's advantage to keep such appointments. All meetings will be held virtually.

Email is a common form of communication but it is not always the most effective way of answering student questions. **Always include the course name (Poli 471) in the subject header of your email.** It is imperative that students regularly check their UCalgary email accounts and D2L for course related information and announcements. If you have sent the instructor an email but have not received a reply within 24 hours, please resend.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar)). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar)).

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the

attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Appeals

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

University Regulations

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at

www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Required Access to Technology

Please see the University's resource page at https://ucalgary.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afb2e144b031

Copyright Legislation

As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, "students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy."

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-electronic-resources-and-information-policy.pdf> and <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

For program planning and advice, please consult with the Arts Students' Centre by calling 403-220-3580 or by email at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625].

Important Contact Information

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives

Phone: 403-220-6551

Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.