Government 1197: The Political Economy of Africa  
Harvard University, Spring 2013

Professors:

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Course Meetings: Lectures MW 10-11 in CGIS S-010 and Section TBD.

Course Website: http://isites.harvard.edu/k91677

Although there are notable exceptions, much of Sub-Saharan Africa is marked by dire poverty, the lack of democracy, and the prevalence of violent conflict. The purpose of this course is to investigate the reasons for these political and economic outcomes, with particular attention to political institutions and the role of ethnicity.

Evaluation:

For undergraduate and masters students, your grade for the course will determined by participation in the sections (30%), a mid-term (30%) on Monday, March 11, and a final exam (40%) on Saturday, May 18. Ph.D. students taking the course for credit must instead write a research paper due on May 9.

Collaboration Policy:

Collaboration of any sort on any work submitted for formal evaluation is not permitted. This means that you may not discuss your exams or any other assignments with other students. All work should be entirely your own and must use appropriate citation practices to acknowledge the use of books, articles, websites, lectures, discussions, etc., that you have consulted to complete your assignments.

Academic Accommodations:

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodation is requested to present his/her letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with one of the professors by February 4. All discussions will remain confidential, although we may consult the AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.
SCHEDULE

Monday, January 28: Lecture 1
Themes, questions, and aspirations.

Wednesday, January 30: Lecture 2 (Robinson)
The emergence of Homo Sapiens, the Neolithic Revolution and the emergence of agriculture. Africa in comparative perspective.


Monday, February 4: Lecture 3 (Robinson)
The historical evolution of technology in Africa. Stone, Iron and copper (but no bronze), horses and wheels.


Wednesday, February 6: Lecture 4 (Robinson)
Development of states and political complexity #1: Aksum and Ethiopia in long-run comparative perspective.


Monday, February 11: Lecture 5 (Robinson)
Development of states and political complexity #2: Eastern Africa.


(Version: 24 Jan 2013)
Wednesday, February 13: Lecture 6 (Robinson)

Drivers of institutions and economic growth.


Monday, February 18: Holiday Presidents Day

Wednesday, February 20: Lecture 7 (Ichino)

Ethnicity and its salience in politics.


Monday, February 25: Lecture 8 (Robinson)

The impact of slavery and the slave trade.


Wednesday, February 27: Lecture 9 (Robinson)

Legitimate commerce and colonialism. Creation of colonial economies.


Monday, March 4: Lecture 10 (Ichino)

Nationalist movements and independence.


Wednesday, March 6: Lecture 11 (Ichino)

Post-independence turn to personal and authoritarian rule.


Monday, March 11: Mid-Term Examination in class

Wednesday, March 13: Lecture 12 (Ichino)

State and civil society.


Monday, March 18, and Wednesday, March 20: Spring Break

Monday, March 25: Lecture 13 (Robinson)

The economic success of Botswana.


Wednesday, March 27: Lecture 14 (TF: Luna)

Inside African administration.

Monday, April 1: Lecture 15 (Ichino)

Political liberalization in the 1990s.


Wednesday, April 3: Lecture 16 (Guest: Hassan)

State restructuring after democratization. Mai Hassan’s office hours: Thursday, April 4, 3-4pm, in CGIS K435.


Monday, April 8: Lecture 17 (Ichino)

Voting, ethnicity and clientelism.


Wednesday, April 10: Lecture 18 (Ichino)

Political parties and institutionalizing constraints on leaders.


Monday, April 15: Lecture 19 (TF: Pinkston)

Barriers to electoral opposition in multiparty regimes.

**Wednesday, April 17: Lecture 20 (Ichino)**

Civil war and state failure.


**Monday, April 22: Lecture 21 (Ichino)**

Federalism, democracy and conflict in Nigeria.


**Wednesday, April 24: Lecture 22 (Robinson)**

Indirect rule, colonialism, economic decline and civil war in Sierra Leone.

- Acemoglu, Daron, Tristan Reed and James A. Robinson (2012) “Chiefs”

**Monday, April 29: Lecture 23 (Ichino)**

War in DR Congo (First Congo War, Africa’s World War).


**Wednesday, May 1: Lecture 24 (Robinson)**

Understanding African poverty over the *longue durée* and what can be done about it.


**FINAL EXAM: May 18, 2013**