War and Conflict in Africa

IAFF 6186.13
3.0 Credits
Government Room 101, 710 21st Street
Mondays and Wednesdays 6.10-8.20pm
Dates: 20 May – 26 June 2013
CRN 70797

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores patterns of armed conflict in contemporary Africa, its most important ingredients, and international responses to it. It does so in four parts. Part 1 explores the major quantitative and qualitative trends in Africa’s armed conflicts. Part 2 analyses some of the major explanations for armed conflict in contemporary Africa namely neopatrimonial systems of governance, ethnicity, state failure, warlord politics, liberation/self-determination struggles, and competition over resources. Part 3 examines some of the main dynamics of Africa’s wars by looking at the roles played by insurgencies, private actors and children. Part 4 explores international responses to Africa’s wars and asks how they might be brought to an end.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course aims to cultivate an MA level understanding of:
• the literature on armed conflict in contemporary/post-Cold War Africa.
• the causes and dynamics of armed conflict in contemporary/post-Cold War Africa.
• the politics of international responses to Africa’s wars.
• selected African case studies.

WEEKLY OVERVIEW
1. War and Conflict in Africa: Introduction (20 May)
2. Trends in Africa’s Armed Conflicts (22 May)
   Why do they fight?
3. Neopatrimonialism and War—is there a link? (28 May)
4. Ethnicity (29 May)
5. Warlord Politics (3 June)
6. State Failure (5 June)
7. Liberation Struggles Continue? (10 June)
8. Resource Wars? (12 June)
   How do they fight?
10. Private Wars and Child Soldiers (19 June)
    International Responses
12. Peace Operations in Africa 2: International Responses (26 June)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Attendance and participation. 20%
Paper 1. 30%
Paper 2. 50%
• **Attendance and participation (20%)**: This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Student contributions are thus essential. Students are required to attend all sessions, arrive on time, and have read at least the items listed under Required Reading prior to each session.

• **Paper 1 (30%)**: What caused war X? The paper should be between ten and twelve, double-spaced, 12-point typed, pages in length, excluding the Bibliography. If the paper exceeds the page limit, the grade will be reduced. Students should submit one hard and one electronic version of the paper. Due Session 10 class (19 June 2012).

• **Paper 2 (50%)**: Devise your own research question addressing an issue related to war and conflict in contemporary Africa. Exact topics must be agreed with Professor Williams. The paper should be between fifteen and twenty, double-spaced, 12-point typed, pages in length, excluding the Bibliography. If the paper exceeds the page limit, the grade will be reduced. Students should submit one hard and one electronic version of the paper. Due 9am (EST) on Monday 1 July 2012.

• Late papers will be penalized one-third of the grade per day (from A to A-, from A- to B+, etc.) Incompletes will not be allowed, except in the case of truly dire emergencies. Save and print your work regularly as you write. Problems with technology are not an acceptable reason for late work.

• Sources should be cited using a recognized system of referencing, preferably Chicago or Harvard.

**UNIVERSITY RESOURCES AND POLICIES**

For university teaching policies: [http://www.gwu.edu/~academic/Teaching/main.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~academic/Teaching/main.htm)

**Academic Integrity**

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html)

**Support for Students Outside the Classroom**

**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information see [http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/](http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/)

**UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300**

The UCC offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations; confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. See [http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices](http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices)

**Security**

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

**RELEVANT JOURNALS**

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<td>African Affairs</td>
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<td>International Security</td>
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<td>Review of African Political Economy</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
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<td>Third World Quarterly</td>
<td>International Affairs</td>
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<td>Survival</td>
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TEXTS FOR PURCHASE
There are no textbooks that cover all the issues discussed in this course. However, we will be reading significant sections of three books in particular. You may wish to purchase them but you will need to get access to them. I would suggest www.amazon.com or another online store.

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (James Currey, 1999). Interesting and important, if controversial, overview of politics in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa.


Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Polity Press, 2011). A book that grew out of teaching this class: covers most of the issues we’ll discuss.

If you are seriously interested in child soldiering issues in Africa, I highly recommend Myrian Denov, *Child Soldiers: Sierra Leone’s Revolutionary United Front* (Cambridge UP, 2010). We will read a couple of chapters for class but you may want to purchase if this is an area you’re particularly interested in.

CLASS TOPICS

Session 1 (Monday 20 May): Introduction
- Overview of the course and your role in it.

Required Reading

Recommended Background Reading

Session 2 (Wednesday 22 May): Trends in Africa’s Armed Conflicts
- What are the major trends in the incidence and nature of armed conflicts in Africa?
- Is there something special about “African wars”?
- What are the main limitations of our current knowledge about Africa’s wars? How might these be rectified?
- To what extent, if any, has the “war on terrorism” affected armed conflict in Africa?

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

On Africa and the “war on terrorism”

WHY DO THEY FIGHT?

Session 3 (Tuesday 28 May): Neopatrimonialism and War—is there a link?

- What are the main characteristics of neopatrimonial systems of governance?
- How important is neopatrimonial politics as an explanation for armed conflict in Africa?
- To what extent do patronage networks affect the dynamics of Africa’s wars?

Required Reading
Chabal, P. and J-P Daloz, Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument (James Currey, 1999), Introduction + pp.1-44.
van de Walle, N., African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis (Cambridge UP, 2001), chapter 3 (pp.113-37).
Williams, P.D., War and Conflict in Africa (Polity, 2011), chapter 3.

Recommended Reading
Taylor, I., NEPAD: Towards Africa’s Development or Another False Start? (Lynne Rienner, 2005), chapter 3 on elite politics.

Session 4 (Wednesday 29 May): Ethnicity (Case Study: Rwanda)

- How important are ethnic differences in explaining armed conflict in Africa?
- How malleable are ethnic identities?
- What role did ethnicity play in causing the war and genocide in Rwanda 1990-1994?

Required Reading
Recommended Reading

On Rwanda’s 1994 Genocide

Session 5 (Monday 3 June): “Warlord politics” (Case Studies: Liberia and Sierra Leone)

- Who is a warlord in Africa?
- Why do warlords emerge?
- What are the chief characteristics of warlord politics?

Required Reading
If you have time, this goes into more detail on the Liberian and Sierra Leone cases: Reno, W., *Warlord Politics and African States* (Lynne Rienner, 1998), pp.1-145.

On warlords


On Liberia and Sierra Leone


Pugh, M. et al., ‘Sierra Leone’ in *War Economies in a Regional Context* (Lynne Rienner, 2004).


Hubbard, M., *The Liberian Civil War* (Frank Cass, 1998). [on the early phases of the war]


Richards, P., *Fighting for the Rainforest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone* (James Currey, 1996). [excellent overview of the causal dynamics and early years of the conflict]


Hirsh, J., *Sierra Leone* (Lynne Rienner/IPA, 2001).

Session 6 (Wednesday 5 June): State Failure (Case Studies: Somalia and Zaire)

- What are weak/failed/collapsed states?
- Why do states fail in Africa?
- How do weak and failing state structures increase the likelihood of armed conflict?
- How do opposition movements form and act in weak states?

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


**On Somalia**

Special Issue on ‘Warlords, Failed States, and Terrorism – The Case of Somalia’ in *Journal of Conflict Studies*, (Fall 2003), articles by Menkhaus, Bryden, and Hansen. Available at: [http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/Fall03/contents.htm](http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/Fall03/contents.htm)

**On Zaire/DRC**

**Session 7 (Monday 10 June): Self-determination (Case Studies: Eritrea, Western Sahara, Somaliland)**

- To what extent does the anti-colonial struggle in Africa continue?
- Why are there not more separatist movements in Africa?
- When are self-determination struggles likely to turn violent?
- What accounts for Eritrea’s independence?
- What are the main obstacles to Western Sahara and Somaliland gaining independence?

**Required Reading**
Plus at least one case study:
Bradbury, M. *Becoming Somaliland* (James Currey, 2008), Introduction & Conclusion.

**On Self-Determination**

On Eritrea

On the subsequent war with Ethiopia
Negash, T. and K. Tronvoll, Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War (James Currey, 2000).

On Western Sahara
Zunes, S. and J. Mundy, Western Sahara: War, Nationalism and Conflict Irresolution (Syracuse UP, 2010).

On Somaliland


Session 8 (Wednesday 12 June): Resource Wars? (Case Studies: DRC and Sudan)

- What is (not) a resource?
- When is the struggle over resources likely to lead to violence?
- Once violence has started, how can economic incentives be reduced?
- What role should outsiders play in these conflicts?

Required Reading
Williams, P.D., War and Conflict in Africa (Polity, 2011), chapter 4.


**Recommended Reading**


**Environmental Change**


Toulmin, C. *Climate Change in Africa* (Zed, 2009).


On Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo


On Sudan


Concordis International, More Than A Line: Sudan’s North-South Border (September 2010), http://www.concordis-international.org/component/content/article/46/245-pnp-project-1.html

United We Stand, Divided We Fall: The Sudans after the Split (Wilson Center, Working Group Series Paper No.2, March 2012), http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/FINAL-AFR120228_policy5T_0329_rpt.pdf

HOW DO THEY FIGHT?

Session 9 (Monday 17 June): African Guerrillas versus African States (Case Study: Sudan-SPLM/A)

- How different are states and insurgents?
- How important are the international politics of insurgency?
- What accounts for the success of the SPLM/A?

Required Reading


On the SPLA

Deng, F.M., War of Visions: Conflicts of Identities in Sudan (Brookings, 1995), Intro, chapters 2 and 3. [Read chapter 1 if you do not have decent knowledge of the war between the government and the SPLM/A.]

Rands, R., In Need of Review: SPLA Transformation in 2006-2010 and Beyond (Sudan HSBA, Small Arms Survey, 2010). [Read Intro & Conclusion and skim the rest.]
Recommended Reading

On Sudan: Government vs SPLM/A
Human Rights Watch, Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights (HRW, 2003).
Iyob, R. and G. Khadiagala, Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace (Lynne Rienner, 2006).
de Zeeuw, J. (ed.), From Soldiers to Politicians (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), chapter on the SPLM.

On Sudan: Darfur
Human Rights Watch, Darfur in Flames: Atrocities in Western Sudan (HRW: 16(5A), April 2004).

Session 10 (Wednesday 19 June): Private Warriors and Child Soldiers (Case Study: Sierra Leone)

Private Companies:
• What explains the recent growth in the private security companies operating in African conflicts?
• How much impact did private actors have on the war in Sierra Leone?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of private security firms participating in African wars?

Child Soldiers:
• What explains the relatively large numbers of child combatants in African wars?
• What are the particular problems associated with this phenomena? What should be done in response, and by whom?
• Can Western ideas about childhood be used in the African context?
• What are the issues associated with trying to reintegrate former child combatants into society?

Required Reading
Howe, H., Ambiguous Order: Militaries in Africa (Lynner Reinner, 2001), chapter 5.

**On PMCs**


**On Child Soldiers**


Rosen, D.M., *Armies of the Young* (Rutgers UP, 2005), ch. 3.


Twum-Danso, A., *Africa’s Young Soldiers: The Co-option of Childhood* (Pretoria ISS, Monograph No. 82, 2003): [http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No82/Content.html](http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No82/Content.html)


McIntyre, A. ‘Rights, Roots, Causes and Recruitment: The Youth Factor in Africa’s Armed Conflicts’,
On Girl Soldiers
Utas, M. *Sexual Abuse Survivors and the Complex of Traditional Healing* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2009), [http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/books/book.xml?id=25283](http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/books/book.xml?id=25283)

**HOW TO RESPOND?**

**Session 11 (Monday 24 June): Peace Operations in Africa 1: African Responses**

- To what extent has the creation of the AU changed the way African states respond to conflicts on the continent?
- How should we assess African responses to the continent’s wars?
- Are there African solutions to African wars?
- What are the best ways forward?

**Required Reading**

**Recommended Reading**
Boulden, J. (ed.), *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The UN and Regional Organizations* (Palgrave, 2003), chapter 2 and Conclusions.


Adebajo, A., Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau (Lynne Rienner, 2002).


**Session 12 (Wednesday 26 June): Peace Operations in Africa 2: International Responses**

- What are the main characteristics of international responses to wars in Africa?
- What are some of the problems with (a) the UN; (b) the EU; and (c) the US AFRICOM response to Africa’s wars?
- How can international responses be improved?

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Adebajo, A., UN Peacekeeping in Africa (Lynne Rienner, 2011).


Durch. W.J. (ed.), Twenty-First-Century Peace Operations (USIP, 2006), esp. chapters on Sierra Leone and DRC.

