Thirty-nine years have passed since Ghana became the first state in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence from the imperial powers. In the early years of African independence, immediately after 1960 - the "Year of Independence" for seventeen new states, the future appeared bright. After eighty years of imperial rule, African people achieved a measure of political autonomy. New leaders promised a future of development of the continent's potential. Expectations were high.

The past four decades have not been kind ones. African states, with few exceptions, have been beleaguered by declining living standards, famine, dependence on primary commodity exports, and governmental instability. Since 1958, there have been over 70 military interventions, as civilian rulers have failed to deliver on promises. The notion of the nationstate, so integral a part of European political science since the Peace of Westphalia lacks concreteness in the African setting. With few exceptions, the states that emerged in subSaharan Africa were artificial. The imperial powers demarcated borders that were indifferent to the ethno-linguistic boundaries prevailing at the time of the imperium.

African governments have tried many formulae to address the issue of the multi-ethnic state. Most, however, have resorted to ethnic domination by one group, setting in train further political instability. The Western democratic constitutions that most African states had at the onset of independence were soon found to be mere pieces of paper. Lacking indigenous roots, the ideals that these constitutions held were alien to the populace. Traditional African forms of governance were shunned by the new Westernized elites that came to power at independence, partly for the sub-national community basis of traditional societies. The new leaders of African states had the burdens of nation-building and of creating new allegiances among the people.

Those tasks for African governments would have been formidable enough, given the deep ethno-linguistic cleavages in society, but compounding the issues were the equally formidable problems of economic development. As parts of empires, African economies were geared toward serving the needs of the imperial metropole. Cash crops and mineral ores were the main exports. Manufacturing and other industries, beyond those of processing the raw materials for exports, were discouraged. What emerged from this economic structure were economies woefully dependent upon the vagaries of the global commodities markets. Given the decline of commodity prices vis-à-vis industrial product prices after World War II, African states have suffered a precipitous decline in their terms of trade. State-sponsored efforts to overcome this dependency have often resulted in a misallocation of resources as governments sought to extract the value of commodity production and trade in order to fund new industrial schemes.

Thus, in brief, is much of the subject matter of this course. The units of analysis are subSaharan Africa and its component states. We will look at the imperial legacy and problems of nation-building. We will encounter the ethno-linguistic conflicts that have continued to be the pivot of African politics. We will explore the phenomena of military intervention, of civilian tyranny, and of the revived hope for democracy. And finally, time willing, we will explore the strategies for economic development.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

It is presumed that participants have a nascent knowledge of post-imperial African history, and a rather thorough understanding of comparative politics. The course will set up in seminar style. I will briefly outline some of the salient points pertaining to the day's topic. However, it is expected that all students participate in discussion of
the reading materials. Because this is a political science course, government and politics are what is stressed. However, social science is interdisciplinary. Therefore, certain economic, historical, and sociological concerns will be addressed as they create conditions for certain political behavior to play themselves out.

A note on geography: it has been cited in the popular press that American students lack geographic sophistication. Hopefully, this is not the case for this class. Because there are over fifty independent states in Africa as a whole, it is important for Africa scholars to know the location, topography, and climate of each state under study.

TEXTBOOKS

Given what may be varying degrees of knowledge about Africa coming into the course, I have ordered two texts - and will use parts of several others - that should be useful references for the experienced and exciting introductions for the novice. The two major texts are:


Some brief words on each. The Tordoff text is classic introductory material. It is excellent in highlighting and explaining the major substantive issues in African politics. The Chazan et al. text looks at Africa from a slightly more advanced, social science, perspective. It attempts to outline the debate in African studies scholarship, and offers a richer analysis of African politics.

Other texts, of which I will place selected chapters on Library Reserve, are:


Hyden and Bratton, *Governance and Politics in Africa* (1992),

Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, (ed.), *Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa* (1988),

Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa*, 2nd ed. (1990),

Berg and Whitaker, (ed.), *Strategies for African Development* (1986),

Obasanjo and d'Orville, (ed.), *The Leadership Challenge of Economic Reform in Africa* (1991),


The Liebenow text is an excellent introductory source, which, like Tordoff, illuminate major issues. Hyden and Bratton, like Chazan, et al, uses more of a social science approach. The Diamond, et al, and Decalo texts deal with forms of rulership on the continent, and provide excellent case studies with a clear analytic focus. The final four all have economic conditions and policy as their central themes.

In addition to the above texts and book chapters, shorter readings, i.e., articles from scholarly journals and respected dailies and weeklies, will be assigned on certain topics. Given the transition to democracy taking place in many African countries, the hoped-for end to long and devastating civil wars, and the international humanitarian call to arms in Somalia and Rwanda, now is an exciting time to study sub-Saharan Africa.
ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to regular, required discussion, there will be a midterm, final term paper, and three short papers to be divided as follows:

- Discussion 20%
- Midterm (take-home; two four-to-five-page essays) 30%
- Term Paper (15-20 pages) 35%
- Three abstracts of articles in African studies (two pages each) 10%

The abstracts should be of data-based articles, with predictor and outcome variables. Though quantification is not required, a careful analysis of argument is. There are many "conventional wisdom" nostrums of how politics operate (in Africa, as elsewhere). As future scholars in the academy, or as professionals in the policy arena, the dissecting, careful review, and evaluation of arguments presented in print (and in discussion) are important, valued, skills. The purpose of research is to translate non-falsifiable statements into testable propositions, and thus attempt to separate the known from the speculative. Essential in the research quest are issues of epistemology (i.e., how do we know what we purport to know) and the choice of empirical referents used as evidence in testing propositions.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction: Modernization, Dependency, and State Capacity

January 4


January 9


II. The Colonial Legacy and the Challenge of State-Building

January 11


January 16


**III. State Institutions and Civil Society**

January 18


January 23


January 25


**IV. Political Process and Political Change**

January 30


February 1


February 6


February 8


V. Country Cases

February 13


February 15


February 20


February 22


VI. Political Economy

February 27


February 29


March 1


IV. Africa and the World

March 7

