Course description

This course introduces students to the idea that Africa is not all conflict, famine and loss. It offers an overview of successful cases of political and economic development, and seeks to answer the following questions: Why and how have some countries successfully democratized, grown, recovered from conflict, or developed solutions to lower malaria, improve agricultural productivity, and reduce monetary transaction costs? According to what criteria can we deem these cases successful? How might we be able to scale up a successful intervention at the village level to the district, national, or even regional level?

Each success case will be analyzed according to five questions: (1) What is the problem and how is it characterized in the broader African region? (2) How does this problem apply to the case at hand? (3) What does the intervention consist of? (4) How is success assessed? (5) What are the broader policy implications or take-aways?

We will cover a different issue area each week. After an introduction to the historical challenges and legacies African countries must face, we will spend a week on each of the following topics: democratization, economic growth, foreign aid, health, agriculture, and information technology. The last three weeks of the quarter as well as our allotted final exam time slot will be dedicated to student presentations (there is no final).

Course format

This course meets as a lecture twice a week for the ten weeks of the quarter. Students are expected to attend lecture having completed the readings for that day. Lecture slides are posted online on a weekly basis, at the end of each week. Lectures will not be podcast. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to obtain the material from classmates.

Course requirements

Students will be graded based on assignments revolving around one intensive case study of success in sub-Saharan Africa. Students will be assigned to a team at the end of week 2; some assignments will be team assignments, while others will be individual assignments. All assignments must be turned in by the beginning of class time, in pdf format, and by email to the TAs. Each student’s final grade will be based on:
(1) Regular assignments throughout the quarter that are designed to help you make progress toward your final presentation. Specifically, each team will be expected to turn in:

   a/ a description of the case selection (due at the end of week 3)
   b/ an annotated bibliography (due at the end of week 5)
   c/ a detailed presentation outline (due at the end of week 6)
   d/ the final slides (due at the end of week 7)

All these assignments should be emailed to the TAs as a pdf by the start of class (12.30pm) on the day they are due. Together, these assignments account for 20% of your grade (each individual assignment accounts for 5% of your grade).

(2) A blog post: Each team will write a blog post summarizing its case study. The blog post should address the five questions that structure our analytic approach in this class. These are enumerated in the Course Description above and reproduced below:

   a/ What is the problem and how is it characterized in the broader African region?
   b/ How does this problem apply to the case at hand?
   c/ What does the intervention consist of?
   d/ How is success assessed?
   e/ What are the broader policy implications or take-aways?

Each team-member will be responsible for answering one of these questions (the team decides question assignment), and each student will be graded in part on an individual basis (how well was the question answered?) and on a team basis (how well does the entire blog post flow?). Most teams will be teams of 5 students. Some teams may be teams of 4 students (depending on the final count of registered students). Teams of 4 students should combine questions c and d, such that one student is responsible for answering question a, one is responsible for answering question b, one is responsible for answering questions c and d, and one is responsible for answering question e. The individual grade accounts for 20% of the student’s final grade; the team grade accounts for 10% of the student’s final grade. Each team’s blog entry will be posted on our class website, which will be publicly accessible on the internet. Email your blog post in a single pdf file (one per student team) to the TAs by 11.30am on June 9.

(3) A final presentation: The last three weeks of class and finals week are devoted to student presentations. These presentations represent the culmination of the quarter’s work (there is no final). Student teams should take these seriously: imagine that the audience is a major foundation (e.g. The Gates Foundation) and that your performance will determine whether or not you receive funding for scaling up or replicating the intervention. In that vein, students should show up early on the day they present, dress professionally, and prepare a captivating 30-minute presentation. Originality, creativity, and depth of research will be heavily rewarded. Staff from the Center for Student Involvement will conduct a workshop during class on April 15 to provide students with resources and training for public speaking. Teams choose how to deliver the final presentation (a single student presenter or a team of student presenters). However, the team gets a single grade. This assignment will account for 35% of the student’s final grade.
(4) Peer evaluation: Each student will be asked to fill out an evaluation form for each of his/her team member. Students will be graded on the quality of their evaluation form – that is – on how well the student provides constructive feedback. Additionally, these forms will provide students an opportunity to report on any free-riders or shirkers in their group. If there is a general sense, from these student evaluations, that one group member was not a team player, this will be taken into account in the final calculation of grades. Peer evaluation forms will not be shared directly with the students; instead, the feedback will be compiled anonymously and provided to each student for his/her benefit. This assignment will account for 15% of the student’s final grade. Email your peer evaluations in a single pdf file to the TAs by 11.30am on June 9.

Resources

Below is a list of resources for writing blog posts and preparing good presentation slides. Use these to your advantage.

- Goodman and Cause Communications. “Why Bad Presentations Happen to Good Causes.”
- Marlboro College Library Guides: Blogging for the Academy http://libraryguides.marlboro.edu/blogging
- Jerz’s Literacy Weblog:
  - Writing for the Web: http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/e-text/
  - Giving oral presentations: http://jerz-setonhill.edu/writing/technical-writing/oral-presentations-tips/
- Slideshare presentation on good presentation slides http://www.slideshare.net/libmarketing/good-slides-matter-13559958
- UCI Writing Center tips on public speaking http://www.writingcenter.uci.edu/speak-up-tips-for-in-class-oral-presentations/
- Harvard Extension blog video tips on public speaking http://www.extension.harvard.edu/hub/topic/steven-cohen
- UCSD resources for blogging http://roger.ucsd.edu/search~S9/?/dBlogs/dblogs/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CE/2exact&FF=dbblogs&1%2C-1%2C/indexsort=r
- UCSD resources for public speaking http://roger.ucsd.edu/search~S9/?/dPublic+speaking/dpublic+speaking/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CE/2exact&FF=dpublic+speaking&1%2C-1%2C/indexsort=r

Contact

Note below the following contact information and office hours:

**Professor Adida**
SSB: 389
OH: Thursday 2.30-4.30pm
cadida@ucsd.edu

**TA: Julia Clark**
SSB: 326
OH: Monday 2.30-4.30pm
jmc003@ucsd.edu

**TA: Cameron Sells**
SSB: 352
OH: Wednesday 3-5pm
csells@ucsd.edu
Readings

All readings are available on the course website: http://pscourses.ucsd.edu/poli120p/

Policies

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of half a letter grade for every 10 minutes. Since all assignments, except for the final presentation, are take-home assignments, there will be no exceptions to this policy except under extraordinary circumstances (i.e. medical emergency). Even then, late assignments will be penalized as per the policy above unless the student can produce a proper written documentation justifying the tardiness (i.e. a doctor’s note), within one week of the assignment’s original due date.

Please consult http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html for UCSD’s Academic Integrity Policy. Students in this course are expected to comply with this policy. Any student in violation of UCSD’s policy will automatically fail this class. In particular, students must be vigilant about plagiarism, which can occur even when students don’t intend to plagiarize. We will go over this in greater detail in class.

If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, please come see me as soon as possible and present your certification to me and to Ariane Parkes (aparkes@ucsd.edu).

If you seek a re-grade, you must email the TA within 72 hours of the assignment being returned to the class, carbon-copy me, and explain – in that email and in detail – why you believe you deserve reconsideration. The TA then has the ability to review the entire assignment, and the authority to increase your grade, decrease your grade, or keep the grade unchanged.
April 1  Introduction

April 3  Africa’s Challenges – an overview
  • Miguel et al. 2008. “Is It Africa’s Turn?” New Democracy Forum

April 8  Democratization in Africa

April 10  Ghana’s successful democratic consolidation
  Student teams and final presentation dates assigned
  • Ayittey, George. 2012. “What Ghana can teach the rest of Africa about democracy.” CNN Opinion

April 15  “Public Speaking: Yes You Can!” Presentation by CSI

April 17  Africa’s economic successes
  • Assignment: Two-page description of case selection due

April 22  Foreign aid: a curse?
  Video: Interview with Dambisa Moyo
  • Sign-up for one-on-one meeting with Professor Adida this week

April 24  Foreign aid: it works!
  • Sachs, Jeffrey. 2014. “The Case for Aid”. Foreign Policy
  • Assignment: meet with Professor Adida to discuss case selection (one student per group)

April 29  How to collect original data for your project - Annelise Sklaar
May 1  Fighting malaria
  • World Health Organization. 2009. “Malaria deaths decline by 66% in Zambia.”
  • Assignment: Annotated bibliography due

May 6  Africa’s Agricultural Quagmire
  Video: World Economic Forum Africa 2013

May 8  New yields, new energy
  • Burney, Jennifer et al. 2010. “Solar powered drip irrigation enhances food security in the Sudano-Sahel” PNAS
  • Denning et al. 2009. “Input subsidies to improve smallholder maize productivity in Malawi: toward an African Green Revolution” PLOS Biology
  • Assignment: Draft outline of presentation due
  • Optional: Draft blog post due for feedback

May 13 Mobile money

May 15 Kenya –MPESA
  Peer evaluation forms distributed to students
  • Assignment: Presentation slides due

May 20 Student presentations

May 22 Student presentations

May 27 Student presentations

May 29 Student presentations

June 3 Student presentations

June 5 Student presentations

June 9 Student presentations: 11.30am-2.30pm
  • Assignment: Blog post and peer evaluations due