



DSS/X 5311: Strategic Survey of Africa

Syllabus Part I | Core Information

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Course Dates | May 15th, 2023 – July 2nd, 2023 **Classes** | Online

Note | Please let me know if you spot any errors or confusions; some changes may happen

Core Information

Course and Instructor Introduction

Hello all, and welcome to DSS 5311 'Strategic Survey of Africa'. This course aims to provide you with an overview understanding of the major historical and contemporary security, military, and strategic issues within Africa itself, and contemporary U.S.-Africa relations. We have a heavy focus on the blight of conflict on the African continent, but we will also seek to look at other security issues, where they come from, and other trends.

My name is Dr. Paul Ashby. I am a *relatively* recent arrival El Paso, TX from the UK – specifically a seaside town called Ramsgate (although I have been here for around eight years now). I have taught numerous courses in International Relations (IR) and Security Studies for nine-ish years, here and in the UK, and both face-to-face and online.

My major research is in U.S. foreign policy and grand strategy. Africa has waxed and waned as an important region for U.S. global strategy, and has never been the top of U.S. concerns. However, there is an overall increase and change in the U.S.' official policy towards the continent, especially through U.S. African Command ([USAFRICOM](#)) which is the most recent geographic Combatant Command under the Unified Command Plan (UCP), stood up in 2007. The growing influence of China in many African countries has become a source of concern for the U.S. – and China is not the only international actor stepping up involvement in the region. It also receives popular awareness over certain key issues. Insurgency in Nigeria, disease in Democratic Republic of the Congo, the security challenges in the Sahel, the breakdown of Libya – all rise to attention at times. However, overall the continent maybe

overlooked and subject to negative stereotypes.

In this course, we'll be battling with time to cover some deeper ground. Africa (a continent of multiple political configurations, remember) is vast, rich in history, different, diffuse, and times difficult. We'll try and analyze as much as we can in these seven weeks.

Contacting Dr. Ashby

You can contact me on this course in numerous ways. The most direct is through email - pdashby@utep.edu. I will always try and respond to you within 24 hours, and although this may not always be possible, I will respond as soon as I am able.

We can also set up Blackboard Collaborate sessions or phone calls to discuss matters. Please email about this first. We can set these up at your convenience (within reason!)

You can also use the Help Board for the course in **Blackboard** - our online 'classroom' where we will be doing much of our work.

Information in the Syllabus

This Syllabus document is meant to be a complete guide to the Course, giving you the all the key information necessary prior to its commencement. However, there's more helpful stuff for the whole course in the following documents I'll also share with you.

[Work Guidance](#) | It gives deeper guidance and advice for all the assessed work on the course.

Online Classroom

We will use Blackboard as our online classroom. I'll post all the necessary course materials and module materials there.

- There is an official graded **Discussion Board** for some modules which will be assessed, as detailed below. I will provide a variety of prior material for each module to help you with this activity.
- There will also be a **Weekly Open Discussion Space** in each module for a freer (but graded place to discuss the week's topics with each other. I will try and post interesting material here on a more ad hoc basis, and we can use it to discuss contemporary developments and news stories.
- There'll also be a space upload your **Final Assignment Plan** and **Final Assignment** here.

I'll try to help with any technical issues, but likely if you require technical support related to Blackboard it is best to contact the [UTEP Helpdesk](#) at (915) 747-5257 or helpdesk@utep.edu.

Course Description

This course aims to provide students with a brief yet intensive introduction to the history and processes of international politics, foreign policy, and spikes in conflict within Africa. We will also examine what plays into this history and these processes. Although we will briefly examine the legacies of the colonial and pre-colonial periods (which are crucial to African countries history and development) most of the more 'practical' elements of the course will cover developments on the African continent after the waves of independence in the 1960s.

Sadly, Africa is host to more than its fair share of conflict and challenge as a continent. However, firstly, *it is* a continent. We do not want to get drawn into treating 'Africa' - which

contains 54 states (53 of which fall under AFRICOM's Area of Responsibility) as a homogenous mass. ['Africa is not a country'](#). There are amazing things happening in many of these countries and huge diversity between and within them.

Nonetheless, neither do we seek to deny the obvious issues so much of these countries face or host. This is a Security Studies course, and that means looking squarely at security challenges. An emphasis will be placed on the causes, consequences, and solutions to the high levels of insurgency and political (and perhaps non-political...) violence within the region. We will try to move beyond images of Africa dominated by legacies of colonialism and media fixation with negatives – famine, war, ethnic conflict, poverty - whilst not slipping into euphemism about the genuine and deep problems.

Organizationally, the class will first cover colonialism, the origin of the state-system in Africa, and the causes and consequences of state failure. This will be followed by an examination of political violence, civil war, and the concept of new wars with an eye to possible solutions. We will then examine some issues related to economic development, international relations and different ways of understanding what security means.

We will try to balance learning about countries, events, and themes in Africa 'for their own sake' as well as thinking about them from the point of view of U.S. strategy and foreign policy. Indeed, the U.S. role and geopolitical competition is officially looked at towards the end of the course – though we will think about it throughout.

Course Objectives

After completion of the course students will be able to:

- Outline some of the core history of the African continent's relations with Europe and colonialism, including state independence;
- Understand and discuss state development and state failure in the African context;
- Understand and apply some of the core concepts and theories seeking to explain the proliferation of conflict across large parts of Africa;
- Understand the complexity of specific African conflicts;
- Discuss the recent growth of salafi-jihadist violence in several African states:
- Discuss and analyze efforts to prevent and mitigate conflict in parts of Africa, including peacekeeping, peace operations, interventions...
- Examine both 'international' and 'African' contributions to the above;
- Discuss other security challenges across Africa, and how they link to conflicts, such as health security, economic security, environmental security etc.
- Consider human security, development, and democracy in the context of conflicts in parts of Africa, and more widely;
- Analyze and think comparatively about growing strategic competition across several African countries and regions;
- Understand and examine the expanding and changing role of USAFRICOM;

- Throughout, consider the link between African regional security issues and US interests, and understand actual and potential impacts of the above on U.S. interests and strategy

Textbook

We will use the following text as a key textbook. You should be able to pick up used copies, though do note they can take longer to arrive! Do endeavor to read the Introduction and the first two chapters in the first couple of weeks if you can, it'll help give context and let you get ahead.

- Paul D. Williams [*War and Conflict in Africa*](#) 2nd edn., revised and updated (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016)

Course Module Breakdown

Here is a simple breakdown of the weekly modules on the course (continued next page).

Week	Module	Class Date
1	Introduction and Historical Background The Colonial Legacy	05.15.23
2	The 'African' State, and State Failure	05.22.23
3	Conflicts in Africa I 'Neopatrimonialism', Resources, Greed, and Grievance	05.29.23
4	Conflicts in Africa II Sovereignty, Ethnicity, Religion	06.05.23
5	Conflict Interventions in Africa	06.12.23
6	The Continent beyond Conflict Democracy, Development, and the Future?	06.19.23
7	Human Security or Strategic Competition? The Role of USAFRICOM	06.26.23

Task Breakdown, Due Dates, and Overall Grading

This course has several tasks and assessments, which will be due and weighted as follows:

Activity	% of Overall Grade	Due Date
Student Introduction	1%	05.19.23
Weekly Discussion (7)	28% (4% each)	Modules 1-7
Content Pieces (3)	30% (10% each)	Modules 2, 4 and 6
Final Assignment Plan	10%	06.16.23 11.59pm
Final Assignment	30%	06.30.23 11.59pm

The achieved grades will be given numerically in percentages on the UTEP grading scale:

59 & below (F) | 60-69 (D) | 70-79 [C] | 80-89 (B) | 90-100

Submission of Work

Everything will be submitted via Blackboard, and the links for work will be in each relevant module. It should be clear once you are in there! For the Final Assignment Plan and the Final Assignment, you will be able to submit your work in the 'Assignments: Submission and Guidance' section of our Blackboard page. The instructions should be clear, but please email me if you have any questions prior to submission.

Course Expectations and Key Advice

My Expectations of You...

My expectations are straightforward - I expect you to try your best on this course, keep to deadlines - or keep me informed if you need some extra time - and complete the work required! This course relies on the participation of all the people in the class to make it successful. The pace of these 7-week courses is pretty frenetic and requires significant motivation and self-discipline.

As this is a graduate course, the reading is quite extensive, and very important. This is the key thing I expect each week – for you to have completed *some* of the required reading. This reading, and some extra effort, is key to your work being strong, and the quality of your Final Assignment. **Indeed, reading is the key to success!** In my experience, there is almost always a correlation between those who demonstrate they have read carefully and widely during the course and those who get the highest marks!

What you can expect of me

You should expect flexibility from me and understanding of any situations that might impact your work.

You should always feel comfortable approaching me for help, guidance, and advice. If you do need something, let me know. I will endeavor to respond to any email queries within 24 hours. I really do encourage you to contact me about your assignment topics early on.

Instructions and what you need to do to perform well in particular assessment tasks and on the course as a whole should be clear from the material provided you within and without of class.

I will endeavor to provide assessment feedback within seven days of the due date. I will let you know if there is any likely delay to that. This has been a tough aim during the extra responsibilities I have gathered in work and life *but*, for those of you in my recent classes, you should know I aim to meet this. Working on a more even work-life balance this year!

Expectations of each other!

If there is anything you are unsure of, let me know! Again, communication between us will only ever help.

If you require content-related help and support, please reach out. You can use the 'Ask the Professor' forum in the Blackboard shell - if you are wondering about something, probably other people are wondering too, and you are helping everybody out by being the brave one who asks! Plus, you can of course contact me directly anytime. I will aim to help with content, and with any situations that are affecting or likely to affect your work. I am always available! You just need to reach out – you won't find out unless you ask! 😊

Be courteous in online communication. Stick to the rules and expectations of academic integrity! More on those below.

Late Policies

As this course lasts only 7 weeks, it is *essential* to be organized and manage your time wisely. However! If, because of work, illness or family emergency, you find yourself struggling to keep up with what is expected, please email me as soon as possible. I know that on occasion life does of course intrude on other plans! I am aware that you have existing commitments and responsibilities. DSS students are busy people with day jobs - I will be flexible as long as you communicate with me!

If you require an extension on course work because of extenuating work, health or family reasons, email me at least 24 hours before the relevant assignment deadline. Briefly explain your situation and request an extension of a specific length (e.g. 1 day). I will reply as soon as possible. Depending on the case, you may need to submit supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor's note).

In cases where an extension has not been arranged and no contact has been made between me and the student, work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day.

Assignments will not be accepted after they are 5 days late and there has been no communication between us; they will be given a grade of 0.

IMPORTANT! To repeat! I will work with you on these issues! I know how busy you all are in the program, often with full time work commitments and everything else life throws at us! All I ask is that you make sure you let me know what is going on, and I will help.

Academic Integrity

As a UTEP student, you are expected to demonstrate academic integrity. In particular, you must properly identify and provide references for *all* material that you quote or closely paraphrase.

Cheating, plagiarism and collusion are all violations of the UTEP [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#). Again, for more on this see the relevant section of the [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#). Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a

UTEP student is unacceptable and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action.

NOTE Large tracts of texts copied verbatim, even if you have a reference for them, can be considered technical plagiarism, especially if they are not indicated with quotations. Repeating your own work can be a form of self-plagiarism. These will not be formally acted upon but be aware your grade will be severely affected if you do this. It limits the quality of your work profoundly.

We will cover this again 'in class'. However, if you have any questions or concerns about this please do let me know. If in doubt – check!

Evaluations

We will have an official evaluation near the completion of the course through UTEP. UTEP greatly appreciates your input and opinion on courses. From a personal perspective, I take your feedback seriously and will always try to incorporate it into the course where appropriate. We therefore greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete these evaluations.

➤ **IF I GET A 70% EVALUATION RESPONSE RATE, I WILL GIVE EXTRA CREDIT!**

The Online Learning Community

Learning relies on the participation of all the people in the class to make it successful. You should actively engage in the course and be courteous and thoughtful at all times. Before you begin the course, take a few minutes to review the [core rules of online communication](#). The key thing - be as respectful online as you would offline! Disagreement is healthy and natural; insults and *ad hominem* are not! Read other's post carefully, respond with mutual respect, and remember we're a community learning together.

Other Important / Helpful Information

UTEP Course Drop Policy

If unforeseen circumstances happen where a drop is necessary, *students* are responsible for initiating any course drop. It is the student's responsibility to determine how dropping courses may affect financial aid. Students are limited to dropping no more than 6 courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or University in Texas.

You should contact me as your advisor about this.

- a) Students who drop a course *before the "official census date,"* the course will not appear on the transcript, and doesn't count toward the 6-course drop limit.
- b) Dropping a course *after the official census date, but before the "course drop date"* will generate a "W" in the course—although the drop shows on your transcript, a "W" does not lower your GPA. However, a "W" counts against your 6-drop limit.

c) If the course is dropped *after the “course drop date”* or if the student just stops participating, taking tests, etc., UTEP requires the instructor to issue an “F” in the course that permanently remains on the transcript.

d) UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of too many times the student fails to submit assignments, discussion questions, or because of disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP student email account. A “W” or an “F” will be issued. A “W” for these reasons counts against the 6-drop limit.

Accessibility Statement

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, it is your responsibility to contact [The Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS) at (915) 747-5148 (voice or TTY) or cass@utep.edu. CASS has a new portal for students and instructors that makes the whole system electronic – there’s information in the link above.

You are also encouraged to discuss this in confidence with me, preferably before classes begin.

Copyright & Fair Use

Much of the material that is posted within this course is protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

Full Course Overview

Module 1
Introduction and Historical Background
<i>Class Aims</i>
This will be a gentle introduction to the class, and we’ll explore some of the colonial history of the African continent.
<i>Readings</i>
<i>Required Readings</i>
Paul D. Williams <i>War and Conflict in Africa</i> 2 nd edn. Revised and Updated (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016)- Introduction
Saul David ‘Slavery and the “Scramble for Africa”
The Berlin Conference
Adekeye Adebajo <i>The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War</i> (Oxford, UK: Oxford University

Press, 2013) 'Introduction' – I will share this with you; read if you want to go deeper

Recommended Readings

Peter P. Ekeh ["Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement."](#) *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1975) 17(1): 91-112.

Williams *War and Conflict* Try to read Chapters 1 and 2 over this next couple of weeks

Module 2

The 'African' State, and State Failure

Class Aims

We'll go a bit more in depth this week with the history of early independence, and how African states have developed, both negatively and positively.

Readings

Required Readings

Williams *War and Conflict* Ch 3

Jeffrey Herbst "Responding to State Failure in Africa." *International Security* (1996/97) 21(3): 120-144.

Recommended Readings

Williams *War and Conflict* Keep working your way through Chs 1-2

Discussion Piece Prompt(s)

Why does Adebajo quote that particular [Bismarck](#) phrase at the beginning of his chapter (see Module 1)? What is Bismarck saying? The quote is: "[M]y map of Africa lies in Europe. Here is Russia, and here... is France, and we are in the middle; that is my map of Africa."

or

Briefly explore the relationship between state failure and colonialism

or

Briefly explore the relationship between state failure and conflict/violence in an African country of your choice

or

Is "state failure" a useful term for understanding events in parts of Africa?

or

Briefly explore the colonial relationship and independence process of an African country and an imperial country of your choice

Module 3

Conflicts in Africa I | Sovereignty, Resources, Greed, and Grievance

Class Aims

In this class we'll begin to uncover the various factors within Africa's civil wars and violent conflicts. We'll also explore these wars from a factual, historical perspective. This will also be our aim next week in Module 4.

Readings

Required Readings

Williams *War and Conflict* Chs 4 & 5

Mats Berdal 'The New Wars Thesis Revisited' in Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers [eds.] *The Changing Character of Warfare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Recommended Readings

I'll share some other 'new war' and 'greed or grievance' resources with you! Including some case study stuff on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler "[Greed and Grievance in Civil War.](#)" *Oxford Economic Papers* (2004) 56: 563–595.

Paul Collier *et al* [Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy](#) (Washington DC: The World Bank, Oxford University Press, 2003) esp. Overview, Chs 3 & 4

Module 4

Conflicts in Africa II | Ethnicity and Religion

Class Aims

We carry on the work from our first class on this topic, and take a focused look at some of the contemporary salafi-jihadist violence in North Africa, Nigeria, and across the Sahel

Readings

Required Readings

Williams *War and Conflict* Ch 6 & 7

Recommended Reading

Sahel

Jennifer G. Cooke '[Militancy and the Arc of Instability: Violent Extremism in the Sahel](#)' *Center for International and Strategic Studies* (September 27th, 2016)

Michael Shurkin '[France's War in the Sahel and the Evolution of Counterinsurgency Doctrine](#)' *Texas National Security Review* 4,1 (Winter 2020/2021)

Broader

Daniel Posner "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* (2004) 98(4): 529–545.

Luke Abbs, Govinda Clayton, and Andrew Thompson 'The Ties That Bind: Ethnicity, Pro-government Militia, and the Dynamics of Violence in Civil War' *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64,5 (2020)

(Both below are) part of an interesting Special Issue

Naomi R. Pendle "The Nuer of Dinka Money' and the demands of the dead: contesting the moral limits of monetised politics in South Sudan' *Conflict, Security & Development* 20,5 (2020)

Kasper Hoffman, Koen Vlassenroot, Tatiana Careyannis and Godefroid Muzelia 'Violent conflict and ethnicity in the Congo: beyond materialism, primordialism and symbolism' *Conflict, Security & Development* 20,5 (2020)

Discussion Piece Prompt(s)

Briefly explain neopatrimonialism and some of its effects, using examples

or

Briefly critically evaluate the 'greed or grievance' paradigm

or

With an African conflict of your choice, discuss if we may call it a 'new war'

or

Is contemporary salafi-jihadist violence something 'new' in 'Africa's' conflicts? You could focus on a region or country here.

or

Referencing Williams, how important is religion or ethnicity to recent and/or ongoing conflict in parts of Africa?

or

Can a societal security perspective help us understand some conflicts in Africa?

or

Explore the interplay between resources, identity, and politics in a conflict case study of your choice

or

Critically evaluate Williams' idea of conflict 'ingredients'. Is he right each conflict involves multiple ingredients?

Module 5

Conflict Interventions in Africa

Class Aims

In this class we'll begin exploring responses to violence and conflict in Africa, from peacekeeping by the United Nations and the African Union, to the African Union's more overall role.

Readings

Required Reading

Williams *War and Conflict* Chs 8 and 9

Anna Kapambwe Mwaba ['Foreign Intervention in Africa After the Cold War' looks at new players and old powers in Africa's conflicts'](#) *The Washington Post* (July 12th, 2019)

['Peace Operations in Africa'](#) *Council on Foreign Relations*

Recommended Reading

Williams *War and Conflict* Chs 10 and 11 – basically read as much as you can of these four chapters over these next three weeks

Paul Collier *et al* ['Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy'](#) (Washington DC: The World Bank, Oxford University Press, 2003) esp. Chs. 5 and 6

Denis M. Tull 'The Limits and Unintended Consequences of UN Peace Enforcement: The Force Intervention Brigade in the DR Congo' *International Peacekeeping* 25,2 (2018)

Debora Valentina Malito 'Neutral in favour of whom? The UN intervention in Somalia and the Somaliland peace process' *International Peacekeeping* 24,2 (2017)

(New) Paul D Williams ['Enhancing US Support for Peace Operations in Africa'](#) *Council on Foreign Relations*

I'll have some case study readings on the intervention in Sierra Leone in Blackboard, too.

['African Solutions to African Problems'](#)

I'll share a Special Issue of *International Peacekeeping* with you here

Module 6

The Continent beyond Conflict | Democracy, Development, and the Future?

Class Aims

In this week's class we'll take a broad look at development, democracy, and human security in Africa.

Readings

Required Readings

Williams, *War and Conflict* Ch 10 & 11

Jacqueline Zwambila '[In Africa, Investment Opportunities Abound – and not Just for China](#)'
War on the Rocks (January 19th, 2019)

Recommended Readings

Office of the Director of National Intelligence '[Global Trends - Paradox of Progress: Sub-Saharan Africa](#)'

Have a dig around [here](#)! The key – much of sub-Saharan Africa has experienced strong growth for some time, and did not slip into recession even during the Great Recession (though it disaggregates at the country level, of course. However, there are concerns about [slowing growth](#) and the impact of [Covid](#), even as the continent embarks on an amazing experiment of [regional economic integration](#)!

Nicolas van de Walle "Africa's Range of Regimes" *Journal of Democracy* (2002)13(2): 16–80.

CRS '[African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCTA\)](#)'

Discussion Piece Prompt(s)

Briefly discuss an intervention/peacekeeping mission in an African conflict your choice, with regards its relative success

or

Does the UN's mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo represent progress and lessons learned about peacekeeping?

or

Would a human security approach be useful in stymieing or ameliorating African conflicts?

or

Is China's investment and interaction across Africa a strategic challenge for the US?

or

Briefly discuss major socio-economic trends across sub-Saharan Africa, and what they mean for the US

Module 7

Human Security or Strategic Competition? The Role of USAFRICOM

Class Aims

We'll summarize our work, but also look at the waxing and waning role of USAFRICOM.

Readings

Required Readings

US AFRICOM Posture Statement 2020 (available [here](#) alongside other resources)

Eleanor Albert '[China in Africa](#)'

Recommended Readings

John P. Banks et. al. 2013. "Top Five Reasons Why Africa Should Be a Priority for the United States." *Brookings Africa Growth Initiative*

Judd Devermont ['The World is Coming to Sub-Saharan Africa: Where is the United States?'](#)
Center for International and Strategic Studies (August 24th, 2018)

USAFRICOM Posture Statement 2019 (available [here](#) as a download, alongside other resources)