

# **African Politics**

Spring 2024

INTL 4355/CRN 60066

Department of International Affairs  
University of Georgia

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Class: T/Th, 2:20-3:35pm, Sanford Hall 313  
Office Hours: By appointment

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In 2000, *The Economist* labeled Africa the “hopeless continent.” Eleven years later, the same magazine hailed Africa’s emerging markets and democratic transitions with an article titled, “The Sun Shines Bright.” This course will examine the economic, political, and social changes that have generated intense discussion and debate among policymakers, scholars, politicians, and ordinary citizens since a wave of democratization in the mid-1990s, paying close attention to common themes and important variation on the continent.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, students will:

- 1) Have a foundational understanding of key topics in African politics from the mid-1990s to today, such as elections, political parties, protest, and post-conflict politics, among other topics;
- 2) Understand and be able to critically engage with political science research that is focused on African countries but speaks to questions about broad political phenomena elsewhere in the world.

## **READINGS**

All readings will be accessible through eLearning Commons (eLC). In the course schedule below, some readings are listed as required and others as recommended. Please read all the required readings assigned for the day before coming to class. As important current events unfold throughout the term, I will post short newspaper articles and other links on eLC and notify students about them by email. Reading these articles is also a requirement of this course. I will post all lecture slides and other course material on eLC.

This is an upper-level course that entails a lot of reading. If your schedule and other commitments this semester will not allow you to consistently complete the required reading, then please consider taking this course another semester.

If you are looking for a broad and introductory overview of African politics from colonial rule to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I recommend:

Meredith, Martin. 2011. *The Fate of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence*. New York: Public Affairs.  
 (available on Amazon for ~\$20)

Finally, you are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on current events and research on Africa by signing up for the weekly newsletter from [This Week in Africa](#).

**REQUIREMENTS**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Discussion Leader	With a partner, summarize and lead discussion for one academic reading	15	-
Geography quiz	The African continent's 54 countries	10	August 29
Country expert homework	Four assignments, each worth 5%	20	August 20: Current events September 6: Independence politics October 4: Political parties November 15: The State of Democracy
Afrobarometer Essay	6 pages, 1.5 spacing, analyzing Afrobarometer data	20	October 21
Final paper outline	Minimum 1 page outline; bullet points are fine	5	October 24
Final paper	15 pages, 1.5 spacing, excluding references	30	December 9

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is not required, except when you are the discussion leader. It is strongly encouraged, however, along with your active participation.

**DISCUSSION LEADER**

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign up with a partner to be a discussion leader for one of the readings. As discussion leaders, your tasks are to 1) summarize the argument and

evidence from the reading and 2) offer at least three critical questions or reflections to generate class discussion. More information will be provided separately.

### **COUNTRY EXPERT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS**

Given that a key objective of this course is to introduce you to African politics, many of the readings will focus on broad trends and developments across the continent, rather than delve into the specifics of Africa's 54 countries (although we do have several country-specific readings). In order to provide you with more detailed information about individual countries as well as highlight important differences among them, you will each serve as a country expert for the semester. There are four assignments, detailed in the course schedule below, which will provide you with the opportunity to learn more about your country. Generally, these assignments will require you to read a combination of academic research, newspaper articles, and briefings from different research organizations. Students will sign up for a country at the beginning of the semester. More information about the assignments will be provided separately.

Being the class' country expert also means that we will turn to you when major political, economic, and social developments happen in your country. You are thus expected to stay up to date on what is happening in your country.

### **AFROBAROMETER ESSAY**

Working with Afrobarometer's online data analysis tool, you will write a 6 page essay (1.5 spacing, normal margins and font, excluding references) that examines public opinion in one or more African countries. We will use class on October 15 and October 17 to work on this assignment. You are free to analyze public opinion data from your "country expert" country or any other country or countries. More information will be provided separately.

### **FINAL PAPER**

The final paper is an opportunity to 1) explore a specific research question in depth of interest to you and 2) sharpen your writing skills. More information with guidelines and a rubric for the proposal, paper, and presentation will be circulated later in the semester.

### **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

Throughout this semester, you will have the opportunity to strengthen your reading and writing skills (critical reading memos and final paper), oral communication skills (class discussions and presentations), as well as your content knowledge of African politics (country expert assignments, midterm project, and final paper). I will provide more detailed rubrics for each assignment, but generally, grades are assigned on the following basis:

A: 93-100    A-: 90-92    B+: 87-89    B: 83-86    B-: 80-82    C+: 77-79  
C: 73-76    C-: 70-72    D+: 67-69    D: 60-66    F: <60

## CLASS RECORDINGS

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course or share any other material, including but not limited to readings, assignments, handouts, class activities, emails, and the FAQ. The syllabus is considered a public document, is available on SPIA's website, and may be shared publicly.

There may be instances where the lecture portion of this course is recorded under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA ACT. Students who have a recording accommodation with the UGA Disability Resource Center agree in writing that they:

- a) Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course;
- b) Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way;
- c) Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study;
- d) Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials;
- e) Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester; and
- f) Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

If you have questions or concerns about recordings under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA ACT, please contact the Director of the Disability Resource Center at [eeuw@uga.edu](mailto:eeuw@uga.edu).

**Students will lose a full letter grade on their final grade for each instance that they share course material outside of class or violate any of the above terms.**

## UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at:

<https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>.

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES**

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

### **RESOURCES ON AFRICA**

If you want to learn more about African politics, it is essential that you stay up to date on political developments on the continent. We will discuss major events in class as they unfold, such as elections, regime transitions, protests, and violent conflicts, among others. A list of resources is below to help get you started and keep you up to date:

- [This Week in Africa](#)
  - Highly recommended; this newsletter is delivered to your inbox every Friday afternoon. It summarizes the week's news as well as recent social science research in African countries. It's an excellent resource for staying up to date.
- [Ufahamu Africa](#) podcast (~weekly)
- [On Africa](#) podcast (~ monthly)
- [African Tech Roundup](#) podcast
- [Into Africa](#) podcast
- [BBC World Service Africa Today](#) podcast (daily, Monday thru Friday)
- [2minuteafricanpolitics](#) (Laura Seay on Instagram)
- [Democracy in Africa](#) (newsletter)
- [All Africa](#) (a collection of newspapers across Africa)
- [Africa is a country](#) (website)
- [African Arguments](#) (website)
- [Africa Check](#) (fact-checking website)
- Afrobarometer (this is a good place to [start](#))

Finally, there are a number of resources on campus that I strongly encourage you to follow:

- [African Perspective](#) with Dr. Akinloye Ojo, Sunday afternoons at 4pm

- [African Studies Institute](#)
- APERO Lectures with the African Studies Institute

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Thursday, August 15: Introductions and Syllabus Review

Tuesday, August 20: Getting up to speed on current events

- Read the newsletter in the link below and read at least three different stories that interest you. The newsletter will help you get a sense of recent current events in different countries.
  - This Week in Africa’s Top Stories of 2023:  
<https://thisweekinafrica.substack.com/p/top-africa-stories-of-the-year-2023>
- **Homework 1:** Select one story that you find especially interesting and answer the following questions below. You are not required to select a story from the 2023 newsletter; you are welcome to write about an event that has happened in 2024:
  - In 1-2 paragraphs, summarize the “who, what, where, when, how, and why” of the news event.
  - In 1-2 paragraphs, explain why this particular event is important. Why does it matter? Who is impacted by it?
  - Your homework assignment should be ~2 pages, 1.5 spacing, normal margins and font. Be sure to cite your sources using Chicago Author-Date style.

Thursday, August 22: A very brief overview of the African colonial state and its legacies

- Recommended readings
  - Note: The recommended readings for today are long and detail-rich. Please read (and skim) as much as you can, and we’ll be sure to cover the main points in class.
  - Chapters 2 and 3 of Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. 1996: Princeton University Press.
  - Young, Crawford. 1994. “Chapter 4: Constructing Bula Matari.” In *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, 77-140. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Other readings and resources (which we likely will not have time to cover in class, but may be of interest)
  - Táíwò, Olúfémí. 2023. “The Idea of ‘Precolonial Africa’ Is Vacuous and Wrong.” *Aeon*, January 13, 2023. Available at: <https://aeon.co/essays/the-idea-of-precolonial-africa-is-vacuous-and-wrong>.
  - Òní, Oláolúwa. 2023. “In Defense of Precolonial Africa.” *African Arguments*, April 6, 2023. Available at <https://africasacountry.com/2023/04/in-defense-of-precolonial-africa>.

- Fanon, Frantz. 2004. "On Violence." In *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox, 1-62. New York: Grove Press.
- The film, *The Battle of Algiers*.

Tuesday, August 27: A very brief overview of independence movements and their legacies

- Today's lecture will look at independence movements in different African countries. If you would like to learn more, the following two books are good resources:
  - Mamdani, Mahmood. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
  - Meredith, Martin. 2011. *The Fate of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence*. New York: Public Affairs.
- **Homework 2:** Research the history of independence in your country. Similar to Homework 1, summarize the "who, what, when, where, how, and why": Who were the main actors mobilizing for independence, what were their demands, when and where did independence politics occur, and how and why was independence secured and important political decisions made. Your homework assignment should be 4 pages, 1.5 spacing, normal margins and font. Be sure to cite your sources using Chicago Author-Date style.

Thursday, August 29: A very brief overview of the wave of democratization in the 1990s & **Geography quiz**

- No readings for today; study for the geography quiz that we will take at the beginning of class
- Again, today's lecture will provide a brief background on democratization in the 1990s. If you would like to learn more about this period, some useful resources are:
  - Ake, Claude. 2001. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
  - Bratton, Michael and Nicolas van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tuesday, September 3: Personal rule, big man politics, and neo-patrimonialism

- Required readings
  - Ekeh, Peter. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1): 91-112.
  - "W(h)ither the State?" and "Recycled Elites," in Chabal, Patrick and Jean-Pascal Daloz. 1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Recommended readings
  - Achebe, Chinua. 1994. *No Longer at Ease*. First Anchor Books Edition ed. United States: Anchor Books. (Originally published in 1960).
  - Wrong, Michela. 2010. *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*. Harper Perennial.

Thursday, September 5: No class today; Professor Turnbull will be at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association

Tuesday, September 10: Critical reflections on the neo-patrimonial framework

- Note: **There is a lot of reading for today.** Please begin reading several days ahead of class; you are encouraged to use our class time on 9/5 to read for class on 9/10.
- Required readings
  - Mkandawire, Thandika. 2015. "Neopatrimonialism and the Political Economy of Economic Performance in Africa: Critical Reflections." *World Politics* 67 (3): 563-612.
  - Pitcher, Anne, Mary H. Moran and Michael Johnston. 2009. "Rethinking Patrimonialism and Neopatrimonialism in Africa." *African Studies Review* 52(1): 125-156.
  - Gallo, Andrea. "In Louisiana, More than a Third of Ex-Lawmakers Continue to Try to Influence their Old Colleagues." *ProPublica*, December 19, 2018. <https://www.propublica.org/article/in-louisiana-more-than-a-third-of-ex-lawmakers-continue-to-try-to-influence-old-colleagues>.
- Recommended readings
  - Apata, Gabriel O. 2019. "Corruption and the Postcolonial State: How the West Invented African Corruption." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 37(1): 43-56.

Thursday, September 12: Making sense of electoral clientelism

- Required readings
  - Klaus, Kathleen, Jeffrey W. Paller, and Martha Wilfahrt. 2023. "Demanding Recognition: A New Framework for the Study of Political Clientelism." *African Affairs* 122 (487): 185-203.
  - Omobowale, Ayokunle Olumuyiwa and Akinpelu Olanrewaju Olutayo. 2007. "Chief Lamidi Adedibu and Patronage Politics in Nigeria." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (3): 425-446.
- Recommended readings
  - Kramon, Eric. 2018. *Money for Votes: The Causes and Consequences of Electoral Clientelism in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
  - Mueller, Lisa. 2018. "Personal Politics without Clientelism? Interpreting Citizen-Politician Contact in Africa." *African Studies Review* 61 (2): 28-54.

Tuesday, September 17: Legislative politics

- Required readings
  - Opalo, Kennedy. 2014. "The Long Road to Institutionalization: The Kenyan Parliament and the 2013 Elections." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (1): 63-77.
  - Lindberg, Staffan I. 2010. "What Accountability Pressures do MPs in Africa Face and How Do They Respond? Evidence from Ghana." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48 (1): 117-142.

Thursday, September 19: No class today; Professor Turnbull will be away for a talk at the University of Michigan



Tuesday, September 24: Identity politics and democracy

- Required readings
  - Ake, Claude. 1993. "What is the Problem of Ethnicity in Africa?" *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 22:1-14.
  - Sishuwa, Sishuwa. 2021. "Roots of Contemporary Political Strategies: Ethno-Populism in Zambia during the Late Colonial Era and Early 2000s." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 47 (6): 1061-1081.
- Recommending readings
  - Muiga, Kamau. "Colonialists didn't fail to root out Africa's tribal politics. They created it." *African Arguments*, August 6, 2019.  
<https://africanarguments.org/2019/08/06/colonialism-tribal-ethnic-politics-africa/>

Thursday, September 26: Political parties

- Required readings
  - Dendere, Chipo. 2021. "Financing Political Parties in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 59 (3): 295-317.
  - Chapter 4: Political Parties and Electoral Competition, in Bleck, Jaimie and Nicolas Van de Walle. 2019. *Electoral Politics in Africa Since 1990: Continuity in Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- **Homework 3:** Research the political parties in your assigned country; if there are no political parties in your country, which actors are mobilizing for democracy (such as civil society organizations, religious organizations, social movements, etc.)?. Write up a 4 page report (1.5 spacing, normal margins and font, Chicago author-date citation style) which answers the following:
  - What are the main parties and when were they formed? Who are the key elites in these parties?
  - What are the different party platforms? What is their stance on key issues such as the economy, security, foreign policy, etc.?
  - Who are the main supporters of these parties?
  - Which parties have been in power and for how long? Has there been an alternation in power?

Tuesday, October 1: Elections

- Required readings
  - Chapter 5: Candidates and Electoral Campaigns in Bleck, Jaimie and Nicolas Van de Walle. 2019. *Electoral Politics in Africa Since 1990: Continuity in Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - Ofosu, George Kwaku. 2019. "Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?" *American Political Science Review* 113 (4): 963-979.

Thursday, October 3: Election violence

- Required readings
  - Kanyinga, Karuti. 2011. "Stopping a Conflagration: The Response of Kenyan Civil Society to the Post-2007 Election Violence." *Politikon* 38(1): 85-109.
  - Wahman, Michael. 2024. "How Strategic Violence Distorts African Elections." *Journal of Democracy*, 35, 2: 108-121.

- Recommended readings
  - Söderberg Kovacs, Mimmi and Jesper Bjarnesen, eds. 2018. *Violence in African Elections: Between Democracy and Big Man Politics*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Tuesday, October 8: How do citizens respond to election violence?

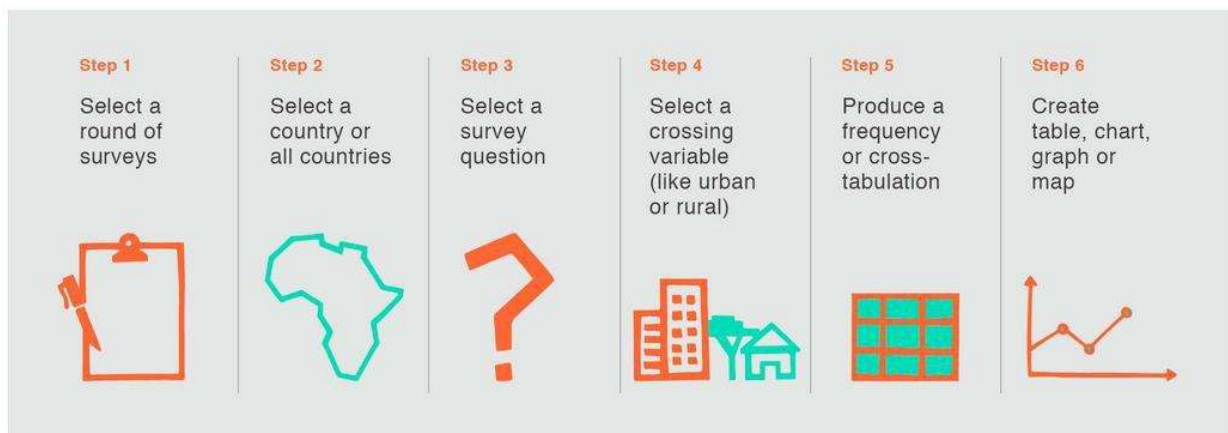
- Required readings
  - Davis, Justine and Megan Turnbull. 2023. “Nigerian Youth Engagement in Violent Electoral Environments: Political Apathy or ‘Constrained Optimism’?.” *African Affairs* 123 (491): 133-164.
  - de Kadt, Daniel, Ada Johnson-Kanu, and Melissa L. Sands. 2023. “State Violence, Party Formation, and Electoral Accountability: The Political Legacy of the Marikana Massacre.” *American Political Science Review* 118 (2): 563-583.

Thursday, October 10: Military coups

- Required reading and listening:
  - Opalo, Ken Ochieng’. 2024. “The Truth About Africa’s Coups.” *Journal of Democracy*, 35, 2: 93-107.
  - Listen to Episode 200: Military Coups in Africa on the Ufahamu Africa Podcast, available at: <https://www.ufahamuafrika.com/2024/06/01/ep-200-military-coups-in-africa-with-the-global-stage-podcast/>

Tuesday, October 15: Afrobarometer Activity Day 1

- Before coming to class, pick out a country and survey round(s) (year(s)) and browse through the questionnaire. Make a note of questions you find interesting that are broadly related to democracy. You can find the questionnaires here: <https://www.afrobarometer.org/surveys-and-methods/questionnaire/>
- In class activity: analyzing Afrobarometer data
  - Go to the Analyze Online page for Afrobarometer: <https://www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/>
  - Follow the steps below; you are encouraged to use class time to explore the data. Keep notes of what you find interesting and what you are learning with the online analyses.



Thursday, October 17: Afrobarometer Activity Day 2

- We will use class time to work on the Afrobarometer assignment

Tuesday, October 22: Political protest

- Required readings
  - Dendere, Chipu. 2019. "Tweeting to Democracy: A New Anti-Authoritarian Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe." *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 38: 167-191.
  - Nyabola, Nanjala. 2024. "The World is Scrambling to Understand Kenya's Historic Protests – This is What Too Many Are Missing." *The Guardian*, July 1, 2024, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jul/01/kenya-protests-finance-bill-government-debt>
- Recommended readings
  - Muller, Lisa. 2018. *Political Protest in Contemporary Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
  - Branch, Adam and Zachariah Mampilly. 2015. *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change*. African Arguments.

Thursday, October 24: Final paper workshop

- No readings for today; come to class with your final paper outline. We will use class time to start researching and working on final papers.

Tuesday, October 29: Judicial politics

- Required readings
  - Shen-Bayh, Fiona. 2022. *Undue Process: Persecution and Punishment in Autocratic Courts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Selections TBD.

Thursday, October 31: Post-conflict politics

- Required readings
  - Davis, Justine. 2024. "Parochial Altruism in Civil Society Leaders: Legacies of Contested Governance." *Journal of Politics* 86 (3): 819-834.
  - Ebiede, Tarila Marclint and Ukoha Ukiwo. 2012. "Beyond Amnesty: The Challenges of Democracy and Sustainable Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta." *Niger Delta Research Digest* 6 (2): 109-133.

Tuesday, November 5: No class; Election Day

Thursday, November 7: Democratic deepening and resilience

- Required readings
  - Dionne, Kim Yi. 2024. "Why Malawi's Democracy Endures." *Journal of Democracy*, 35, 2: 122-135.
  - Dulani, Boniface and John Tengatenga. 2020. "Big Man Rule in Africa: Are Africans Getting the Leadership They Want?" *The African Review* 46 (2): 275-291.
  - Posner, Daniel and Daniel Young. 2007. "The Institutionalization of Political Power in Africa," *Journal of Democracy* 18 (3): 126-140.

- **Homework 4:** Research the state of democracy in your country. Your assignment should be 4 pages, 1.5 spacing, normal margins and font; be sure to use Chicago author-date citation style. Your assignment should answer the following questions:
  - How would you describe the political regime of your country, and why? What features put the country into a particular category? For example, participatory democracy, liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral authoritarianism, authoritarian? It may be helpful to review different regime types and definitions from organizations such as Varieties of Democracy, or V-Dem.
  - Since the mid-1990s, would you say democracy has weakened? Improved? In some areas, but not others? Where has democracy strengthened or weakened? Be sure to explain how and why.

Tuesday, November 12: Final paper writing session

Thursday, November 14: Final paper writing session

Tuesday, November 19: Final paper writing session

Thursday, November 21: Last day of class! Wrap up session