

Spring 2015

# African Union Seminar

Assefaw Bariagaber Dr.

**School of Diplomacy and International Relations Seton Hall University Course Syllabus (tentative)-  
African Union Seminar (DIPL 2144/DIPL 6710)  
Spring 2015**

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**I. Course Description and Objectives**

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century appears to be an exciting and a hopeful period for Africa. Unlike the 1960-1990, where various indicators pointed to Africa's persistent dismal scores in terms of economic, political, social, and cultural development, the last decade and a half point to indicators moving in the opposite direction. These include decreases in the magnitude of war (Marshall 2005; Wallensteen and Sollenberg 2001), increases in popular demand for more openness and transparency; popular resistance to extended tenure of long-time leaders, economic progress over the last few years that surpassed those in many other regions of the world (Africa, as a region, was perhaps the fastest or second fastest growing in 2013); and increases in the frequency of elections and peaceful transfers of power. This trend, which began in the mid-1990s, continued at a more rapid pace, especially after the African Union (AU) was established in 2000.

This course examines factors that gave rise to positive developments and the sense of optimism that prevails in Africa today, with emphasis on the role of the AU in the resolution and management of conflicts. That is, how does the AU see conflicts in Africa? What is its role in international affairs? How and in what ways does it manage its relationships with international organizations, such as the UN, EU, and the Arab League; and with sub-regional organizations, such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC)? How does it function as an international organization consisting of 53 states, each having different political and economic systems, and national security objectives? How does it face the challenges posed by the plurality of religious, ethnic, and other cultural markers? How does it deal with African countries that have closer ties to western countries than to each other?

Unlike some of the other courses I teach, this course is more policy-oriented. In addition, as students of Diplomacy and International Relations, you are expected and encouraged to think in terms of whether or not the issues you raise have policy relevance. Therefore, the research paper should address policy-related, conflict and conflict resolution issues, relevant to the AU and the US. The instructor hopes that, by the end of the course term, each student will have

developed an increased interest in the study of the AU, and how it navigates its way through the rough contours of international diplomacy.

## II. Required Readings:

### OAU and AU Documents

OAU Charter

[http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/OAU\\_Charter\\_1963.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/OAU_Charter_1963.pdf) African

Union: Constitutive Act

[http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAU/Constitutive\\_Act\\_en.htm](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAU/Constitutive_Act_en.htm)

Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African

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Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community

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Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

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Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-protocol-en.pdf>

### Scholarly Articles

Harbeson, J. Intimations of an African Renaissance: Recent Progress, Long-Term Challenges, in J.W. Harbeson and R. Rothchild (eds.), *Africa In World Politics: Reforming Political Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009), pp. 3-15.

Young, C. The Heritage of Colonialism, in J. W. Harbeson and R. Rothchild (eds.), *Africa in World Politics: Reforming Political Order* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009), pp. 19-38.

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### III. Course Requirements

In order to maximize the benefits of the academic as well as the cultural components of the trip, it is important that each student has some knowledge of the following topics before departure. At the academic level, relevant topics include (1) the various bodies of the AU and their functions, (2) comparison of OAU and AU institutional structures and functions, (3) US national security imperatives in Africa, (4) US national security interests in the Horn of Africa, and (5) US-AU relationships. At the cultural level, it is important to have some knowledge of (i) the political and cultural history of Ethiopia, (ii) Ethiopia and the Scramble for Africa, and (iii) Ethiopian politics in 1974-1991 and 1991-present. Admittedly, these are broad topics; however, some knowledge of these issues will help maximize the benefits to be had from the trip, particularly from the interaction with various agencies and individuals. Therefore, there will be two pre-trip meetings (exact dates will be determined and communicated later).

#### 1. Pre-trip paper presentation (20 points):

- a. First Meeting (Diplomacy Room): Course description (nature and scope, requirements, etc...); group assignment.  
Assignment of topics for presentation by students during the second meeting  
Logistical issues.
- b. Second Meeting (Diplomacy Room): Presentation by students on topics, as stated above. Each of the two students in a group must make a presentation (time divided roughly equally between the two) and will be awarded a common grade.

[The dates for the two meetings will be communicated in due time]

2. Journals (30 points):

Each group (of two or three students) is required to hand-in TWO journal entries that will describe, critically analyze and evaluate any (two) of the following: (1) lecture at Addis Ababa University, (2) lecture/briefing/presentation at the American Embassy, (3) the briefings and panel at the AU, (4) the panel by NGO representatives, (5) presentation at the UN-ECA, and (6) reflections on one of the cultural visits (Axum, Gondar, Lalibela). Therefore, it is important that you keep detailed record and summary of each of the activities conducted and the issues covered in those activities. The length of each journal entry should be no more than three double spaced-pages, with size 12 font and 1 inch margin on all sides. The due-date for the journal entries, to be mailed electronically as an email attachment, is April 1,2015. Each of the two students in a group will receive a common grade.

3. Research paper (35 points):

Each group (of two students) will write a well-developed research paper on a topic to be approved by the instructor. Ideally, the paper should focus on the AU and its activities, although U.S. and Ethiopian security interests could be raised, as necessary, in the research paper. The research paper will make an in-depth analysis of the topic selected. The length of the paper should be between 15 and 20 pages for graduate students and between 10 and 14 pages for undergraduate students. Papers must be double-spaced, with size 12 font and generous margins on all sides. The due-date for the research paper, to be mailed electronically as an email attachment, is April 15, 2015. Each of the two students in a group will receive a common grade. It is important to have sufficient and varied sources.

4. Participation (15 points):

Each student is required to attend all activities -- academic as well as cultural -- to make this trip rewarding. This can happen both through the quality and quantity of participation in the various programs and events. The instructor will maintain record of attendance and participation at all times.

Final course grade will be awarded according to the following scale:

93-100 = A  
89-92 = A-  
85-88 = B+  
81-84 = B

77-80 = B- 73-76 = C+  
 69-72 = C 65-68 = C- 61-64 = D+  
 57-60 = D 53-56 = D- Less than 53 = F

*Remarks*

1. It is important that students complete all the readings and assignments and take notes during briefings, panels, and lectures.
2. Presentations may not take longer than 12 minutes, with each student presenting roughly for about 6 minutes.
2. It is very important that the presentation, the research paper, and the journal entries are completed and emailed on time as Word attachment. The instructor will have the option of deducting significant points and/or rejecting any project not handed on time. The penalty for late submission increases with each day after the due-date (that is, only if the instructor decided to accept late submissions).
3. All completed assignments must be the specific group's endeavor. If not, it is a case of pure plagiarism, and plagiarism is an academic offence of the highest order which may result in suspension or dismissal! Please read the full text of the School and University policies on this. *To guard against any possible plagiarism, each group must submit the research paper (as well as the journal entries) electronically on the due date.* As stated earlier, the topic for research paper is selected by the students in the group, subject to the approval by the instructor. The approval process may take place during the trip or immediately after that (before March 25, 2015). The penalty for late submission increases with each day after the due-date (that is, only if the instructor decided to accept late submissions).
4. Students are expected to attend all activities and will be held responsible for materials covered during those activities. Attendance will be taken regularly. A high rate of attendance as well as quality participation will be an asset in determining borderline grades.
6. Disability Services Statement. Information on this is found at the following website: <http://studentaffairs.shu.edu/dss/>. If any of you have any form of disability that requires my attention, please see me as soon as possible.

IV. Schedule of briefings, lectures, and panels

To be provided when completed.

**Important note for graduate and undergraduate students**

The requirements for graduate and undergraduate students in terms of attendance and participation, pre-trip presentation, journal entry requirements, and final research paper are the same. However, I expect longer and more analytical research papers and more evaluative journal entries by graduate students as compared to undergraduate students. I will not assign graduate undergraduate students to the same group.

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