

**ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION SUMMARY
INRL 581 01 / AFST 581 01 - SPRING 2007****VIEW BY RESPONDENT - SEVERINE AUTESSERRE**

PRINT PAGE

EVALUATION # 1

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

Honestly, this may be the best course I've taken in graduate school. Severine was very organized, led discussion well, gave interesting and appropriate amount of work and reading, and consistently looked for feedback in order to improve the course throughout the semester. I'm really glad I had the opportunity to take this course while she was here at Yale. The only suggestion I can think of would be to change the grading emphasis for the class to weigh participation more and the final paper less. 60% of the final grade for the paper alone I think is disproportionate. 40% would have been better for the paper with more weight put on the responses and in-class work.

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

Severine had many strengths. She was clearly well-organized and committed to the course, put lots of thought into each reading, was very knowledgeable about the field, fostered good discussion in class and was not overbearing with her own opinions, kept discussion going and fostered a learning environment in which everyone felt comfortable participating, and got along well with the students.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

As the professor for this course is a post-doc who will no longer be at Yale, other students here unfortunately won't have the opportunity to take her course. Otherwise, I would highly, whole-heartedly recommend it. The course surveys the most important literature and arguments on the causes and origins of civil conflict in Africa as well as current efforts by the rest of the world to intercede in conflicts through peace accords and transitional processes.

QUESTION 4

For each of the categories below, please select one option that best describes this course.

a . Work Load

light appropriate heavy

b . Pace

slow appropriate fast

c . Difficulty

easy appropriate hard

d . Preparation for Departmental Requirements

not helpful somewhat helpful very helpful not applicable

QUESTION 5

What is your overall assessment of this course?

poor below average good very good excellent

QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

Severine said the first week of class that she chose the readings based partly on providing a good overview of the literature in the field but also based on her field experience in Central Africa where she worked with practitioners who would often tell her that they didn't know how to understand the conflict or how to address it. She wanted us to have an understanding so that if we were ever in that position, we would have a place to start. I think that is definitely true for me as someone who has spent years in Africa and plans to go back. I feel that I have a much better basis and theoretical framework for thinking about the reasons conflict starts or continues and how to think about interventions that may address it. The course was important to my research as well but I think the practical knowledge in my case is more important.

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain

why).

1: Mamdani's Citizen and Subject, Barnett's Eyewitness to a Genocide (though looking over the syllabus again, all the readings were good)2: Hard one--Kaplan's Ends of the Earth and Paluck's Dissertation maybe3: Week 10 (Post-Conflict reconstruction 1: State building) and Week 12 (Challenges of Peace Implementation), probably because these were topics I was most interested in4: There were no "worst"--they were all good! If I had to pick the least strong ones, I would say the first two weeks because we were all getting used to each other and the readings and people weren't writing responses yet which I think helped to spur discussion

EVALUATION # 2

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

Course Strengths:1. provides systematic coverage of understanding civil wars and peace settlements2. covers many of the major theoretical debates3. grounds those theoretical perspectives within case studies4. looks not only at civil war but also peace-settlements5. focuses on AfricaWeaknesses:1. little or no discussion of the religious causes or manifestations of violence in civil wars2. little or no discussion of religion as a peace-building strategy(in the first instance, religion is so often a way of exoticizing Africa, so i understand why it is tempting to ignore religious dimensions of violence in these conflicts, but i think an honest assessment should be made) (in the second instance, the reality of so many African communities makes religion an important aspect of peace-building, it should be discussed more)

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

Instructor Strengths:1. Organized syllabus2. Good grasp of theories of civil war causation, and how particular arguments may be classified within a particular school of thought or camp3. Available to students4. Punctual5. Provides a structured, instructor-led seminar environmentWeaknesses:1. At times too committed to accomplishing a preconceived agenda for the classroom discussion time, although I usually appreciated this because it keeps everyone engaged with the material (prevents laziness!)Improvements:1. Can't think of anything right now, I really enjoyed this class!

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

An excellent and thorough course on the causes and dynamics of civil wars in Africa, and an analysis of peace-building strategies. I would definitely recommend this class to others, as it is well organized, contributes to knowledge of civil wars and African history, and is structured in such a way that students and instructor alike must remain engaged with the material throughout the course.

QUESTION 4

For each of the categories below, please select one option that best describes this course.

a . Work Load

light appropriate heavy

b . Pace

slow appropriate fast

c . Difficulty

easy appropriate hard

d . Preparation for Departmental Requirements

not helpful somewhat helpful very helpful not applicable

QUESTION 5

What is your overall assessment of this course?

poor below average good very good excellent

QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

No response

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain

why).

Two most interesting reads: 1. Mamdani's book, Citizen and Subject 2. Collier&Sambanis book, Understanding Civil War Two least interesting reads: (I've forgotten them, they weren't interesting! ... okay) 1&2. the readings for week 6 - identity and violence (De Wall and Marshall-Fratani in particular were not terribly engaging, might there be better readings that convey the same issues? the piece by Sanders was interesting though troubling in that it was the only piece on possibly-religious motivations/rationalizations for conflict) Two best class sessions: i don't remember really, other than to say that i really enjoyed our discussions during most class sessions. what i liked about them was that they were structured, did not stray from the readings, and followed a clear pattern each week - thus when i was reading i would always try to identify the main claims, strengths of the arguments, and weaknesses of the argument, and how these claims compared to other approaches or authors that we had read previously. i do remember enjoying the discussion of Barnett's book and the determinants of third party intervention in African civil wars - i think the fact that it was a book and not several articles also made it more enjoyable - i sometimes found it difficult or scattered to discuss several articles as opposed to when we read a book. Two worst class sessions: again, i can't really recall any that were bad. in general, i got more out of classes the more carefully i had read. i think it is key to have several student responders each class period so that at least several students have had to read closely enough to critically analyze the line of argument, but the summaries (i think they could be one page instead of 2) were helpful to read beforehand as well as they created talking points. Oh, two final comments! I really enjoyed Mike McGovern's visit, only because it is great to be able to query the author of a paper, such as the ICG paper we read, especially when that author has such first-hand experience in the policy-writing and field-work side of things. And finally, I don't think the visit by the social science librarian was all that helpful. It may have been helpful for others, however, so I wouldn't rule such things out by my feedback alone. In general, however, I find that such visits can be made on an individual basis as long as students have the contact of a librarian who they know is willing to help them. Thanks for an excellent class - easily one of the top five seminars I've taken during four years here at Yale.

EVALUATION # 3

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

Great readings, great classes, really enjoyed it, but I wish conversation would have been allowed to travel beyond what we had scheduled to talk about - Felt constrained about what we could and could not discuss.

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

Very committed to the class, but sometimes too controlling of the discussion.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

No response

QUESTION 4

For each of the categories below, please select one option that best describes this course.

a . Work Load

light appropriate heavy

b . Pace

slow appropriate fast

c . Difficulty

easy appropriate hard

d . Preparation for Departmental Requirements

not helpful somewhat helpful very helpful not applicable

QUESTION 5

What is your overall assessment of this course?

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QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

No response

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain why).

No response

EVALUATION # 4

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

great class, great overview of the literature, very helpful

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

I appreciated the organization of the class; Severine was always prepared, and the amount of work that she obviously put into the course was very much appreciated.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

definitely!!

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QUESTION 5

What is your overall assessment of this course?

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QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

The course was very helpful for me to get a feel of the existing literature, and of course, I always gain a new way of looking at things from the comments of my peers.

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain why).

No response

EVALUATION # 5

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

Some of the discussions could have been more free form, according to the interests of the students, as opposed to following a prescribed formula for the session.

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

Strengths: Extremely organized and knowledgeable. Weaknesses: Inflexibility in some moments during discussion.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

I would recommend the class because it addresses the issues in detail. It is a class about the origins and form of civil wars in Africa, and about policies for ending civil wars.

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QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

I had never considered civil war, specifically, in the detail given in the course. It will likely contribute somewhat to my thesis, although somewhat indirectly.

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain why).

1. Mahmood Mamdani - Citizen and Subject; Jeremy Weinstein - Inside Rebellion
2. The Hamitic Hypothesis; "The New Barbarism" book.
3. Session on Weinstein - the theory was very powerful and engaging; session on "New Barbarism," because it provoked a lot of discussion and some very frank responses.
4. Session on transitional justice, because it was too brief to cover the material in any real detail.

EVALUATION # 6

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

The scope of the class was excellent, as was the selection of readings, the instructor, and the structure of the class. The participation of the students in the class also contributed significantly to the sessions. My three recommendations would be (i) to increase the size of the class by about two students, (ii) to have an additional optional hour a week that meets on a separate day, and features talks from people working in the field, and (iii) to hold the class at a time that is unlikely to conflict with African

Studies talks. Unfortunately, since the class met on Wednesday, from 3:30-5:20, students had to miss out on talks that pertained to our areas of interest, which were held on Wednesday afternoons, at 4.

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

SÃ©verine was really good. She was really organized, and therefore managed to cover a considerable amount of material in the class, yet without making it feel rushed. She was clear, and straightforward in her explanations, which helped ensure that we always followed her. She was incredibly well versed in the area, so there was a real feeling of learning from a pro. Plus, she was friendly, and approachable.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

The class is a solid, concise introduction to how civil wars in Africa have been analyzed, understood, and dealt with. It looks at the major causes of civil war, the reasons intervention fails (and therefore the ways in which it can be improved), and a host of other factors that are not self-evident. It studies real, current civil wars, in a very non-paternalistic way. It's frank, insightful, and incredible. It's one of the best 3 classes I have taken at Yale - so yes, I highly recommend it. 9.3/10 Everyone in the UN, the AU, and the EU, along with all world leaders should take this class.

QUESTION 4

For each of the categories below, please select one option that best describes this course.

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QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

This course has started to steer my interest away from a soci-cultural anthro bias to a conflict and conflict resolution focus.

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain why).

Best 4 readings: William Reno (1998). Warlord Politics and African States
Michael Barnett (2002). Eyewitness to a Genocide: the United Nations and Rwanda
Scott Strauss (2006). The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda
Denis Tull and Pierre Engelbert (2006). Flawed Assumptions about State Reconstruction in Africa
Least favorite: Edith R. Sanders (1969). "The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origins and Functions in Time Perspective"- actually, every reading was amazing, except the Sanders one. no best or worst class sessions.

EVALUATION # 7

QUESTION 1

Looking back on International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01, what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?

This class was well-organized, focused, and well-taught. The readings were excellent, carefully selected, and diverse, including drawing on a number of fields other than political science. Literally everything we read, I was excited to read and found thought-provoking and engaging.

QUESTION 2

Please evaluate each instructor of International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved?

Severine Autesserre

The instructor was extremely well-prepared and organized, and well-informed about all of the topics. However, at times her level of organization became a liability, i.e., she was too rigid in the lesson plan for each day to allow free-flowing discussions that often might have been enriching. She was not willing to let students push the discussion in directions other than what she had already planned. In a graduate class, instructors should trust students' judgment in pursuing topics that interest them.

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 for a fellow student? Would you recommend International Relations 581 01 / African Studies 581 01 to another student? Why or why not?

I would definitely recommend this class, as providing an excellent basis for understanding civil conflict in Africa, from an instructor who is well versed in both the "classics" and the most recent cutting edge work in the field.

QUESTION 4

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not helpful somewhat helpful very helpful not applicable

QUESTION 5

What is your overall assessment of this course?

poor below average good very good excellent

QUESTION 6

How did this course deepen your knowledge of your discipline/profession? To what extent did this course contribute to your dissertation/research?

This course gave me a stronger background to go on to do work on conflict in Africa.

QUESTION 7

What were the: 1- Two most interesting books or articles read for the class; 2- Two least interesting books or articles read for the class; 3- Two best class sessions (please explain why); 4- Two worse class sessions (please explain why).

Most interesting: Jeffrey Weinstein, "Inside Rebellion" DeWaal and Mamdani's articles on Darfur the article on autochtony in Cote d'Ivoire Mamdani, Citizen and Subject Least interesting: I honestly found everything interesting, but probably Collier/Hoeffler/Sambanis held my interest the least (though the chapter on Kenya was fascinating) The best class sessions were probably those on Weinstein's book and the second to last (I thin) session with Mamdani's article, Hugo Slim, Severine's article. They provoked some debate and conotroversy. There were a few class sessions, I don't remember which, when the instructor did not seem too engaged - and this was clear to the class. (However, this may have been because she was sick.)

Yale Online Course Evaluation

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