Aid, Politics, and Violence in Africa
POLS UN 3810

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Colloquium, Fall 2018
Tuesdays, 4:10 - 6 p.m.
Barnard College, Columbia University

Office Hours: Mondays, 5 - 7 p.m.
You can schedule an appointment during my office hours by clicking here. Walk-ins are of course welcome – on a first come, first served basis. However, I give priority to people who have scheduled an appointment, so you are better off doing that if you do not want to wait.

“If I knew someone was coming over with the express intention of doing good, I would flee”
(Henry David Thoreau)

Substance of the Course

International emergency aid often takes place in violent contexts. Beyond the claim that humanitarian aid is and should be neutral, what exactly are the relationships between aid, politics, and violence? What are the political and military impacts of humanitarian and development assistance? Aid is aimed at healing suffering, but it can also fuel violence or be an instrument of war. Should humanitarian aid promote the imperatives of conflict resolution and democratization? If so, does it compromise humanitarian ideals? Does aid perpetuate subtle forms of domination?

This colloquium adopts a critical, social science approach to humanitarian and development assistance (it is not a class on how to design and implement aid programs, but rather a class on how to think about aid). It uses topics related to aid in Africa as a lens for understanding the political implications of aid in complex emergency situations. It focuses mostly on African countries, but it includes some non-African cases for comparative purposes, to elucidate the important theories on the subject. Readings include both highly theoretical works and case studies. Guest speakers will be invited for several class sessions to interact with students and explain how the debates studied in class play out in the “real” world.

Throughout the course, students will develop their knowledge of international relations theories. They will acquire a broad understanding of the concepts, theoretical traditions, and debates in the study of development and humanitarian aid. The course also will introduce students to new issues in the field, such as the securitization of emergency aid, the attention to the everyday in the anthropology of aid, and the interplay between aid and micro-level politics. Furthermore, by the end of the semester, students should have an in-depth understanding of specific cases, notably Sudan and South Sudan, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Class discussions and written assignments will help students develop their research and analysis skills as well as their ability to understand, criticize, and create scholarly arguments. In addition, this class puts a lot of emphasis on developing students’ leadership and oral presentation skills. We will do so through various activities, including class discussions, oral presentations, role play, and student-led discussions.
Grading and Requirements

1. Readings: Assignments are on the attached list. The required readings are available at the Columbia University Bookstore. In addition, all these books are on reserve at the library, under course number POLS BC 3810. Whenever authorized by copyright laws, I have placed specific book chapters on electronic reserves for the class (accessible through Coursework). And if you want to purchase the books but don’t have the means to do so, look at https://www.columbiaspectator.com/spectrum/2018/06/12/on-avoiding-book-culture-how-and-where-to-get-cheap-textbooks/.

2. Class participation (15% of the final grade). The class participation grade will be based on 1- participation in the discussion during each session; 2- brief oral presentations on topics assigned by the instructor; 3- the oral presentation and discussions during weeks 11 and 12 (see the last page of this syllabus), and 4- quality of the feedback provided to your peer partner throughout the semester (grade given by the peer partner).

3. Two reviews of the readings, two pages single-spaced each (40% of the final grade). The review should briefly summarize the argument all of the required readings assigned for that week, and it should use the rest of the space to assess the required readings critically, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. The summary of the required readings should be half a page maximum in total, so that the bulk of the review (the 1.5 pages remaining) can be devoted to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various required texts. Reviews should be submitted by the beginning of the class during which we will discuss the required readings that the review focuses on (meaning, Tuesday, 4:10 p.m.). Please bring a hard copy to class and upload an electronic copy on coursework. Reviews can be submitted on any week until week 10. No need to sign up or give me advance notice, just submit reviews for two different sessions of your own choosing. But please keep in mind that 4:10 p.m. is a hard deadline—I won’t accept any late reviews (even reviews submitted later on Tuesdays)—and the last opportunity to submit a reading review is on November 12.

   Side note: Book reviews are tremendously important for authors and readers. So I encourage you to post relevant sections of your book reviews online (on Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, Bookbub, and/or whatever site you prefer). This would help raise the profile of the various books that we read this semester, be a kind gesture to their authors, and hopefully help potential readers decide whether or not to buy the book.

4. A research paper (45% of the final grade), 25 to 30 pages double-spaced. Ancillary material due throughout the term: research question due on week 3 (10% of the final grade); 1-page outline due on week 8 (10% of the final grade); final paper due on week 13, i.e. December 3, the last day of class (25% of the final grade). The research paper should build on the material studied in class. It should apply the theories and concepts studied to specific debates or cases of interest to the students. Please give me a hard copy in class and upload an electronic copy on coursework.

All material must be typed.

No late review will be accepted. For the research paper & ancillary material, late submissions will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline unless you contact me beforehand to request an extension. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or another crisis situation (please bring any form of documentation available).
Please inform me beforehand if you expect to miss particular class meetings because of a religious holiday that forbids work, an illness, or a family emergency. Please plan to write an additional review of the readings on the readings assigned for that day (in addition to the two reviews assigned throughout the course), post it online (on Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Wikipedia, and/or whatever site you prefer), and email me a link to your posted review. (No need to give me a printed copy). This extra review will make up for missed participation and will count towards your participation grade.

Barnard Honor Code: We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

Here are some very helpful websites for all your questions on intellectual property, citing and documenting sources, avoiding disasters, etc. (And of course don’t ever hesitate to ask me if you have any doubts):

- [http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess](http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess) (the tutorial is fun and very useful)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01) (another very helpful site on avoiding plagiarism)
- [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources) (very detailed information about how and why to cite sources)

Conversion Scale

- A+: 99 - 100
- A: 93 - 98.99
- A-: 90 - 92.99
- B+: 87 - 89.99
- B: 83 - 86.99
- B-: 80 - 82.99
- C+: 77 - 79.99
- C: 73 - 76.99
- C-: 70 - 72.99
- D: 60 - 69.99 (there is no D+ or D-)
- F: below 60

Electronic Etiquette

Please do not use your cell phones during class for any reason. This will allow more focused discussion and intellectual exchange.

Please use laptops only if this will facilitate bringing readings to class. In other words, the use of laptops (or ipads, etc) in the classroom is only permitted for taking notes on class lectures and discussions. Students are forbidden to use laptops in the classroom to browse the Internet or work on something other than the material discussed in class. Any student who wants to use a computer should give me a written document promising never to use his or her laptop in class for something other than taking notes on class lectures / discussion. Students caught doing otherwise will be given a participation grade of F and will be forbidden to continue to use their laptops during future class sessions.
I aim to be responsive to emails from students. However, please do not expect an answer to your question any sooner than 48 hours (not including weekends) after it is sent. Last-minute email questions and requests are bad for everyone involved. Please also use office hours rather than email if you have any substantive questions.

**Additional Requirements for Seniors**

All Seniors who have designated this course as the Colloquium to fulfill their Senior Capstone requirement must also complete the following:

1. Provide constructive criticism and feedback to your designated peer partner(s). You and your partner should hold meetings to discuss your assignments, e.g. research questions, paper outlines, rough drafts.

2. Present your main findings in class at the end of the semester. A portion of the class participation grade will reflect the quality of your mentoring and final presentation.

3. Attend at least one of the Senior overviews of the library and online resources hosted by the instructor or another member of the Political Science Department.

4. Generate a poster that summarizes your research question, argument, and findings. The poster is due on the last day of classes (December 3), and it will be displayed at the Senior end-of-year Departmental party in May 2020. The poster will not be graded, but is required to receive a "Pass" for your Senior requirement and will factor into Departmental considerations for Senior Project Distinction. For guidelines, information, and advice on the poster, please see http://polisci.barnard.edu/node/33896.

5. Attend at least one of the workshops offered by the Barnard Speaking Program on how to deliver good oral presentations.

**Course-Specific Library Resources**

Personal librarian for our class: Jennie Correia (jcorreia@barnard.edu; https://library.barnard.edu/profiles/Jennie-Correia)

Library research guide: [https://barnard.libguides.com/POLS-X3810-001](https://barnard.libguides.com/POLS-X3810-001)

**Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities who wish to take this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Disabled students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disabilities Services.

**Wellness**

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them.
Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites: http://barnard.edu/primarycare or http://barnard.edu/counselinghttp://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about (Stressbusters Support Network). For more information, call ext. 4-3062 or visit http://barnard.edu/wellwoman.

Pre-requisite

POLS V 1601 (International Politics) or equivalent. Many readings are difficult and/or quite theoretical, so you need to have some background in international relations theories if you wish to take this class.

Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course will learn how to:

1. Apply the major theories of international relations to the study of humanitarian and development aid
2. Integrate and apply conceptual tools and theories from various disciplines, in particular political science, in order to analyze issues related to humanitarian and development aid
3. Develop rigorous and convincing political science arguments
4. Demonstrate knowledge of several salient topics and cases in the field of humanitarian and development aid in Africa
5. Express themselves effectively orally and in writing
6. Perform advanced independent research on political science, human rights, and/or African studies topics
Week 1 (September 3) – Introduction

Required reading, to be completed before the first class meeting: Please read the first 5 pages of this syllabus very carefully, and browse the rest of this syllabus. Please come to class prepared to ask any clarifying questions you need.

*Please remember to fill out and submit your Student Form on Coursework.*

**Recommended**


**Aid and Politics**

Week 2 (September 10) – State-led development


*In-class methods training, part I: How to write a research paper*

**Recommended**


Week 3 (September 17) – Humanitarianism: Historical Background and Political Science Perspectives


*Research question due to the instructor (and to your peer partner if you are taking this colloquium as your capstone requirement). Maximum length: 50 words. Please do not write anything longer than that: I will stop reading after 50 words.*

**Recommended**

Week 4 (September 24) – Development as the Negation of Politics


*Guest Speaker: Jennie Correia, Barnard librarian for Social Sciences, on how to find good research resources on aid in Africa.*

**Recommended**


**Aid and Violence: Dilemmas of Aid in Conflict Zones**

**Week 5 (October 1) – Pathologies of international and non-governmental organizations**


**Recommended**


Easterly, William. 2006. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Penguin Press HC.


**Weeks 6 (October 8) – Humanitarianism in Practice**


*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*


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Documentary screening: Heart of the Congo

Recommended


Listen-Hearing-People-on-the-Receiving-End-of-International-Aid.pdf)


Look also at the videos posted on MSF TV (www.msf.tv)

Weeks 7 (October 15) – Research and Writing


*Please do not write a reading review for this week.*

*In-class methods training, part II: How to write a research paper*
Draft paper outline due to your peer partner. Your outline should be no longer than one page. Don’t forget to write your revised research question at the top of the document. (Your research question, including any material you need to situate your question and introduce your topic, should be a maximum of 50 words long.)

Recommended


Here are a few very useful websites, full of advice for research and writing:
- http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc)
- http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors (common errors to avoid)
- http://library.columbia.edu/locations/undergraduate/seedtexts.html and http://library.columbia.edu/research/citation-management.html (Various sources and resources on citations, bibliographies, and footnotes)

In case you need any additional guidance on how to write a literature review, look at:
- Raul Pacheco-Vega, “How to undertake a literature review” (blog post posted at http://www.raulpacheco.org/2017/04/how-to-undertake-a-literature-review/)

Week 8 (October 22) - Development and Violence


Paper outline due to the instructor. Your outline should be no longer than one page. Remember to write your (revised) research question at the top of the document. (Your research question, including any material you need to situate your question and introduce your topic, should be a maximum of 50 words long.)

Recommended

Baron, Patrick; Diprose, Rachael; and Woolcock, Michael. 2007. Local Conflict and Development Projects in Indonesia: part of the problem or part of the solution? World Bank working paper.


**Week 9 (October 29) – Humanitarian Aid as an Instrument of War**


Terry, Fiona. 2002. *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Introduction and chapter 5 (also browse chapter 1 if you have time, it is very useful).

*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*

In-class training: How to prepare and deliver a good oral presentation

**Recommended**


Berman, Ali; Felter, Joseph; and Shapiro, Jacob. 2015. “Aid for Peace: Does Money Buy hearts and Minds?” *Foreign Affairs*, January 2015.


**Going More In Depth…**

**Week 10 (November 12) – Resolving Humanitarian Crises: Role Play on Congo**

Background reading for the role-play:


*Note: the whole book is available as an e-book through the Columbia library website.*

2017 debate in Foreign Affairs online:
- Severine Autesserre, “What the Uproar Over Congo’s Elections Misses”
- Jason Stearns, Koen Vlassenroot, Kasper Hoffmann, and Tatiana Carayannis, “Congo’s Inescapable State”

Assignment in preparation for the role-play: prepare a 1-page memo on your actor’s position during the negotiations (bullet points are fine).

Recommended


Weeks 11 and 12 (November 19 and 26) – Brainstorming on Students’ Research Papers

On November 19, senior students who have chosen this class as their capstone requirement will give a 10-minute presentation of their papers followed by Q&As. Such students are strongly encouraged to use powerpoint slides to illustrate their presentation, and to complete a one-on-one training session with the Speaking Program in order to prepare for their oral presentation.

On November 26, every other seminar participant will do a 3 to 5-minute presentation of his / her research paper (topic, puzzle, main argument).

Each student will also send his/her draft paper to his/her peer partner by November 15, and copy me on the message. Each student will be responsible for preparing constructive criticism of his/her peer partner’s paper, and present his/her feedback during the class on November 19. After all the capstone students have presented their papers, we will break into small groups and each student will get constructive criticisms from his/her peer partner.

Week 13 (December 3) – Conclusion

Group work on the main contributions of the class.

Depending on the interests of the students, the class may have a guest speaker this day: Philippe Rosen, Senior Director of Global Human Resources at The Hunger Project, on “Careers in Development and Humanitarian Aid.”

Final papers & posters due!