

## The Politics of Africa

Dr Sharath Srinivasan (Department of POLIS)

*Contact Hours: 13 x two-hour seminars (7 classes in Michaelmas; 6 classes in Lent)*

This MPhil option course examines major topics and themes in postcolonial sub-Saharan African politics, with due regard for African heterogeneity. It explores the interaction of local and international factors that have influenced social, economic and political trajectories in Africa. Theories and concepts developed in the fields of comparative politics and international relations are assessed for their relevance to the study of Africa. The course is divided into two parts.

In **Michaelmas term**, the seminars focus on general themes in African politics. We will explore the histories and legacies of state formation in Africa, and assess theories of the state and their relevance in different parts of Africa. We will focus on key aspects of politics in Africa, including the nature of political authority and the relationship between violence, politics, economy and identity in Africa. Students will be required to read the following books in their entirety. You may wish to buy them, since they are all important books. Alternatively, these texts are available in the African Studies Library and most College libraries.

Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton University Press, 1996.

Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin Classics, 1961.

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* James Currey Publishers, 1999.

William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011

James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

In **Lent term**, students choose a module to explore a theme in African politics in more detail; modules on offer in Lent 2015 will be confirmed at the start of the 2014/15 academic year.

All students are also encouraged to attend the undergraduate lecture series in African Politics, which is not compulsory, but is useful for those who have no previous background in the subject. These lectures are scheduled for Wednesdays 11am-12pm in Michaelmas and Lent terms.

**Note:** A maximum of 15 students is allowed in each seminar group. If fewer than 7 students sign up for a Lent term module, it will probably be cancelled. *If you are interested in taking this option course you are advised to inform the MPhil office*

*before the academic year starts, because places are limited. A brief introduction to the course will be offered in early October.*