

The Production of Violence in Contemporary Africa

NINT 5315 - A
Tuesday 4:00-5:50 pm

Professor Janet Roitman
Office Hours:
6 East 16th Street, Room 928

Today, the African continent evokes images of civil war, factional fighting, and large-scale regional conflicts. This violence, which touches upon almost all aspects of African polities (the nation-state, the economy, the religious sphere, the family, youth), seems to have taken the continent by storm. How did this ostensible “rise” in violent situations come to be? Many scholars and observers argue that African states have lost the ability to control populations, territory, national economies, and national borders. This argument posits the African state as a “weak” state, which is characterized by dysfunctional infrastructures and a faulty or poorly institutionalized bureaucracy. This has consequences for the state’s capacity to manage social processes and to prevent the autonomization of local populations, and militarized groups. Is this depiction of the African state warranted? And is this a useful manner of apprehending the production of violence on the continent today? Is contemporary violence caused by so-called weak states or does violence itself induce a situation in which states can no longer assure their regal functions? This course will inquire into these questions by reviewing various historical trajectories of violence. We will consider not simply the immediate causes of violence in Africa today, but also the ways in which violent situations are structured by Africa’s historical position in the rapidly changing global economy. By going a step beyond the “weak states” thesis, we are forced to ask: what is violence producing in Africa today? That question will be clarified through case studies of war economies, emergent transnational and regional networks, emergent economies, and novel forms of state practice. Through examples of these phenomena, we hope to see how Africa’s “weak” states are in fact undergoing a profound process of transformation, leading to the recomposition of nation-states on the continent. This gives insight into the specificity of the African situation as well as its interconnections with the global economy.

Course requirements:

1. This is a graduate seminar. Participation, as required by a seminar, will be the foremost requirement for this course. All students should come to class having read the required readings. Failure to participate in discussion on the basis of the required reading will have a negative impact on the final grade. Participation counts for 20% of the final grade.

2. Presentations: Each week, one or several students will be responsible for leading the seminar discussion. They will prepare a presentation of the session's topic, using both required and suggested readings or other materials they find useful. The presenters should work closely together for this exercise; it is required that they communicate with one another about the nature of their presentation. Most significantly, the presentation should give a clear, detailed summary of the readings, offer criticism of the readings, and bring something NEW to the class, based on at least one outside reading. Visual materials

are welcome as part of the presentation. The presenters will serve as moderators of the class discussion. These presentations will count for 25% of the final grade.

3. Response papers: Each student is responsible for a 1-2 page response paper for eight sessions of the 15-week seminar. Response papers should summarize the readings and offer a critical view, including questions for discussion. Response papers are due each Monday before class by 5pm. They should be posted on Blackboard to the entire class.

4. Research paper: This is a final paper (approximately 15 pages) that should involve a question that you develop through the course readings and with respect to your own research interests. All final paper topics will be approved by Professor Roitman.

Attendance and Lateness: Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. For courses that meet once a week, more than 2 absences will result in a failing final grade. If a student is more than 10 minutes late to a class, this will count as an absence. Participation is key to seminar pedagogy. In case of personal and medical emergencies, students should contact their instructors as well as the Director of Academic Advising.

Statement on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc.), which may be derived from a variety of sources (such as books, journals, Internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc.). Plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade and will be automatically referred to the Dean's office. The effective and proper use citation is an inherent part of your writing exercises. You are encouraged to make use of the Writing Center:
<http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/>

NOTE: A final paper proposal is due at the beginning of class on. The proposal should set forth a research question and should include a bibliography. Research papers can involve case studies, assuming there is sufficient literature on the case, which should be set forth in a bibliography to be submitted as part of the paper proposal. The paper topic must be approved by Professor Roitman. The final paper is due by. No late papers and no incompletes.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: The “Weak” State Thesis

J. Migdal 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, Princeton University Press, Chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, 8.

I. Zartman, ed. 1995. *Collapsed States. The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, Introduction.

Week 3: The “Criminalization” of African States Thesis

J.-F. Bayart, S. Ellis and B. Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa*, Indiana University Press, Chapters 1, 2, 4, Conclusion.

Jean-Francois Bayart, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion" *African Affairs*, no. 99, April 2000.

Week 4: Case Study: Angola

P. Le Billon. 2001. "Angola's political economy of war : the role of oil and diamond", *African Affairs*, 398.

Global Witness. 1999. *A crude awakening. The Role of the Oil and Banking Industries in Angola's Civil War and the Plunder of State Assets*
(<http://www.oneworld.org/globalwitness/>)

C Messiant. 20001. "The Eduardo dos Santos Foundation or how Angola's regime is taking over the civil society", *African Affairs*, 399, April.

Week 5: Economic Arguments: Greed and Rational Choice

P. Collier. 2001. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and their Implications for Policy" in C. Crocker, *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace, pp. 143-162.

P. Collier and A. Hoeffler. 2001. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War", Washington, The World Bank.

D. Cramer, "Homo Economicus Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War", *World Development*, 30, 11.

R. Marchal (SSRC manuscript) (**have**)

Week 5: Warlord Politics

R. Charlton and R. May. 1985. "Warlords and Militarism in Chad", *Review of African Political Economy*, 45, pp. 12-25.

W. Reno. 1998. *Warlord Politics and African States*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 7.

Week 6: Case Study: Sierra Leone

Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone*, James Currey, 1996.

Week 7: The Symbolic World of Warfare

S. Ellis. 1999. *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of African Civil War*. New York, New York University.

Week 9: Case Study: Rwanda

S. Straus, *The Order of Genocide : Race Power and War in Rwanda*, Cornell University Press, 2008.

Week 10 : Case Study Darfur : Part 1

G. Prunier, *The Ambiguous Genocide*, Chapter 3.

M. Abdul-Jalil, A. A. Mohammed, A. Yousuf, “Native Administration and Local Governance in Darfur”, in A. De Waal, ed. *War in Darfur* (Chapter 2).

J. Tubiana, “Darfur: A War for Land?” in A. De Waal, ed. *War in Darfur* (Chapter 3).

Week 11: Case Study Darfur: Part II: “Counterinsurgency on the Cheap”

J. Flint and A. De Waal, *Darfur: A Short History of A Long War*, Chapters 2-6.

G. Prunier, *The Ambiguous Genocide*, Chapter 4.

A.Haggar, “The Origins and Organization of the Janjawid in Darfur”, in A. De Waal, ed. *War in Darfur* (Chapter 5).

Week 12: The Role of Famine and Humanitarian Aid

A. de Waal 1998. *Famine Crimes. The Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry*, Indiana University Press, Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

A. de Waal, *Famine that Kills. Darfur, Sudan*, Oxford University Press, 1989 (2005).

Week 13: Film: What Are We Doing Here? **MUST PURCHASE (check with GPIA admin)**
[or Film: All About Darfur]

Week 14: Local-Global Dynamics in the Production of Warfare

T. Callaghy, R. Kassimir and R. Latham, eds. 2001. *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa. Global-Local Networks of Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Introduction.

C. Nordstrom. 2001. "Out of the shadows" in Callaghy, Kassimir and Latham, R., eds. *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa. Global Local Networks of Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: pp. 216-239.

W. Reno. 2001. "How sovereignty matters: international markets and the political economy of local politics in weak states" in Callaghy, T., Kassimir, R. and Latham, R., eds *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa. Global Local Networks of Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 197-215.

Week 15: The Emergence of New Political Forms in War

M. Duffield 2001. *Global Governance and the New Wars*, London, Zed Books.

J. Roitman. 2001. "New Sovereigns? Regulatory Authority in the Chad Basin" in Callaghy, Kassimir and Latham, eds. *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa. Global Local Networks of Power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 240-263.