

Term Spring 2023	Course AFST 381 01/PLSC 381 01 - Government & Politics in Africa	Primary Dept PLSC	Primary Division Social Sciences	Enrolled: 34 Responded: 28
Instructors Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#1 What knowledge, skills, and insights did you develop by taking this course?

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 10

Respondent	Answer
1646400	Helped me better understand the factors that not only impact Sub-Saharan Africa but other countries as well.
1647154	I gained insight into the historical, cultural, and ideological landscapes of Africa, and how these factors combine with more traditional politics, whether driven by policy, identity, or foreign government interaction to influence the political situation on the continent.
1647428	For somebody like me who had zero background knowledge about African politics before taking this class, this course was a good introduction to some of the basic issues African countries and the African continent as a whole face today. I was exposed to some mainstream ideas and issues in African politics, like the lingering effects of colonization, oil's role in African politics, ethnic conflict, and levels of democratization on the continent. This class, as a kind of survey course, was great in introducing me to these topics. However, I did not feel that I learned very deeply about most of the topics. For that, I think, I would have to take a seminar or a more specifically-focused lecture course.
1648540	This class gave a broad description of political trends in Africa. It was particularly interesting how many of the trends that were described are antithetical to the mainstream trends we see in the rest of the world.
1650594	Insight into the history and legacy of the pre-colonial and colonial eras, understanding of current types of political systems, academic theories about democratization, development, corruption, natural resources, and conflict
1651133	I learned a lot about some of the history of politics in Africa. It was a really fun class that served as an intro to the political landscape of the continent.
1651876	Incredible course. I have learned so much about contemporary politics in Sub-saharan Africa, and specifically Nigeria.
1655653	How politics in Africa have evolved from the 1990s to the present. The ways in which current trends in African politics have roots that stretch back to the colonial period. Possible future evolutions of African politics, and by extension, African nations.
1656984	I learned a lot about African government systems and how they have impacted development. The election report we had to write was also really fun and a good research activity with freedom to write what we want about.
1658294	Through this course, I was able to acquaint myself with several foundational themes of comparative politics. I also improved my analytic and argumentative skills through the eclectic range of assignments we had this semester.
1660793	My biggest takeaway was learning some frameworks for approaching the study of African countries.
1661187	I learned about the data-driven large study side of political science and predicting elections as explained by behavior. It was very different from the law side of political science.
1661220	I learned the intricacies and the complexities of the African countries due to this class. I also think I learned how to memorize better.
1661618	A great introduction to African history, politics, and economics. Interesting assignments and a good syllabus
1661656	I've learned a lot about the history and theory of the political development in Africa from pre-colonial period to modern Africa. Methodologically, it's also quite helpful to learn how political scientists understand the study related questions.
1663704	I learned more about sub-Saharan Africa and some of its politics.
1670860	Great intro class to African Studies especially if you have little knowledge about the continent. The readings are geared to interact with both past and current events on the continent
1671236	Context on politics in Africa was great, and we explored a lot different themes

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#2 Your level of engagement with the course was:
Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 3

Average and Standard Deviation

Question Average	Dept	Div	School
4.0 ±0.9	3.9 ±1.0	3.7 ±1.1	3.8 ±1.0

Choice Label	Counts
very low	0
low	2
medium	5
high	10
very high	8

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#3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course and how could it be improved?

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 12

Respondent	Answer
1647154	This class's greatest strength is its content, particularly in the first half. It is engaging, interesting, and highly relevant to modern African issues. The mechanism by which the content was delivered, however, was often a little too slow for my liking. It was possible to only half-listen to lectures and still understand a majority of the content being discussed. Readings were discussed at length in class, so reading them typically served no external purpose, and sections generally didn't contain enough content to justify their length. On the other hand, Professor Baldwin is a genuinely wonderful person who cares deeply about her students' learning and works hard, and successfully, to ensure individual engagement, so I was never bored in class, and felt that everything we covered had a definite purpose.
1647428	Prof. Baldwin and Mel, our TF, are both fantastic people and together made a great teaching team. Prof. Baldwin is extremely kind and helpful. She scheduled the syllabus in a way that made the final exam earlier than other finals, which was really nice because it was one less class to worry about during the last week of class going into reading period. Also, she's very knowledgeable about the course content, which shows in her lectures. The biggest weakness of the course, I would say, was the readings, and relatedly, engagement in the course. The readings were often not essential and to be honest I hardly did a single reading after spring break. But maybe that wasn't a weakness of the course but just a weakness of mine or a result of my schedule.
1648540	Super high quality course. some of the film selections could be a bit better but they are informative either way.
1650594	Strengths: organized course structure, a reasonable balance in readings/materials covered over the semester, and quality of professor and TA. Weaknesses: more discussion of current events and a different book for the second part of the semester
1651133	Strength: The professor. She was a true gem and just so lovely. She used practical examples to enhance our learning and we had a couple of fun class exercises to enact some of the scenarios we were learning about and that was helpful Weakness: paper grading... grammatical errors are severely penalized
1651876	No weaknesses. I loved the course and the instructor is incredible.
1655653	Strength: well-organized: designed to be front-loaded with work, which meant that all assignments were due before finals period started for other courses. covered an enormous range of material in a short time Weaknesses: because of the range of material covered, lectures often felt frustratingly vague
1656984	So many strenghts! Professor Baldwin is fantastic, very enthusiastic about the content, is very good at explaining it to students in a manner that is understandable without becoming overwhelming, and very understanding. Another strength of this course is that the workload is very manageable, there is a reasonable amount of readings each week and typically not too much more other than exams and the paper. In addiiton, the TF, Mel, is another strength as she made section fun and the entire class was enjoyable. No weaknesses in the course (I truly appreciate hte opportunity to do an optional final to replace one of our previous grades, I believe this really helped me enjoy the class because I did not have to worry about the grade of each assignment because I knew at the end of the day that I could replace its grade if need be, I really think this should stay and be a component in all classes.)
1658294	This course is extremely well structured. Every lecture had a centralized theme and by the end, all the themes worked together in order to provide students greater insights on both pre-colonial and contemporary African politics.
1660793	Strengths: A really good baseline overview for understanding African politics at a high level Weaknesses: Lack of in-depth case studies - I felt our course was too focuses on the theoretical (which, quite frankly, I understand if the that's the goal of the course), but I would have enjoyed it more had I gotten to learn about a couple countries more in-depth.
1661187	Very strong course, no notes on improvement.
1661656	The strengths of the course is that it's highly well scheduled with the patience of intelligence of Prof. Baldwin and our TF Mel. I don't see any weakness of the class.

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#3 What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course and how could it be improved?

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 12

Respondent	Answer
1663704	The course material has interesting moments, but the lectures can be rather dull. Moreover, the attempt to cover almost the entire continent prioritizes breadth over depth, leading to a general lack of specific takeaways.
1670860	Strengths - Really enjoyed doing the readings, and the classes were short and straightforward Weaknesses - Probably a subjective view but the class mainly focused on West Africa - Nigeria particularly.
1671236	There were probably too many topics covered on such a large continent, so it was hard to fully defend explanations of political development across the continent
1682947	One of the strengths of the class was the structure of sections and lessons, I felt that they really complemented each other and I felt engaged in both classes instead of feeling a bit disjointed between the two classes.

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#4 What is your overall assessment of this course?
Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 2

Average and Standard Deviation			
Question Average	Dept	Div	School
4.3 ±0.9	4.1 ±1.0	3.8 ±1.2	3.9 ±1.1

Choice Label	Counts
poor	0
fair	1
good	4
very good	7
excellent	14

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#5 The course was well organized to facilitate student learning.
Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 2

Average and Standard Deviation			
Question Average	Dept	Div	School
4.4 ±0.8	4.1 ±0.9	4.0 ±1.0	4.0 ±1.0

Choice Label	Counts
strongly disagree	0
disagree	1
neutral	2
agree	8
strongly agree	15

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Instructors
Baldwin, Katharine (P)

#6 I received clear feedback that improved my learning.
Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 2

Average and Standard Deviation			
Question Average	Dept	Div	School
4.2 ±1.0	3.9 ±1.0	3.7 ±1.1	3.9 ±1.1

Choice Label	Counts
strongly disagree	1
disagree	1
neutral	1
agree	11
strongly agree	12

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#7 Relative to other courses you have taken at Yale, the level of intellectual challenge of this course was:

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 2

Average and Standard Deviation			
Question Average	Dept	Div	School
2.8 ±1.0	3.2 ±0.9	3.2 ±0.9	3.3 ±0.9

Choice Label	Counts
much less	1
less	10
same	11
greater	2
much greater	2

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#8 Relative to other courses you have taken at Yale, the workload of this course was:
Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 2

Average and Standard Deviation			
Question Average	Dept	Div	School
2.5 ±0.8	2.9 ±0.9	2.9 ±0.9	3.1 ±1.0

Choice Label	Counts
much less	1
less	13
same	11
greater	0
much greater	1

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#9 Would you recommend this course to another student? Please explain.

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 11

Respondent	Answer
1647154	I would recommend this class to a student who is interested in the topics which it discusses; the content is covered clearly and comprehensively, without too much work added on top of it, and Professor Baldwin is a fun lecturer. A student who lacks interest, however, will likely find the slow pace and the taking of attendance too much to bear.
1647428	If you have zero or minimal knowledge of African politics and want a survey introduction to the topic (and want to take a pretty chill course with an extremely nice professor), I would recommend this course. Also, this class has a significant but not too heavy of a workload. Good comparative government credit for political science majors. However, if you want in-depth study of African politics, I might look elsewhere.
1648540	I would absolutely recommend this course to any political science major or anyone who finds themselves interested in governance because it provides new insight into how the political economy is developing in Africa.
1650594	Yes! Fantastic introduction course to African governments and politics.
1651133	Yes, it is truly a really nice class. It is gut-y (but you need to go to class and actually listen to do well on exams)
1651876	Absolutely.
1656984	I would strongly recommend this course to any person who has an interest in politics in Africa, how African countries have developed, and what current-day politics look like. I would preface it with the fact that there is not enough time to go into all countries, and there is a focus on particular periods and countries in time but overall it is a lovely course. I would also recommend it to people who haven't taken a political science class before and are looking for a relatively low stress interesting course.
1658294	I would absolutely recommend this course to anyone interested in learning the fundamentals of political science. The course material is extremely engaging and digestible for non-majors and students in the political science major.
1660793	It really depends. This course wasn't all that I was looking for, as I was hoping for more in-depth case studies. That being said, the information learned in the course was still valuable, and I feel that I did take away some new approaches for understanding the history of these countries. Basically, the course sets the student up for further learning, rather than learning in the moment. I feel that this class would be more valuable if, let's say, it was taught as a two-semester thing. The truth is, "African Politics" is such a broad topic that it just cannot be reduced to a one semester lecture.
1661187	I would recommend, great introduction to African politics.
1661220	I would highly recommend and encourage students to take this course! It is a unique and amazing experience
1661618	Absolutely. If you are all interested about the political landscape of Africa this course is a must-take. Easy to understand concepts and interesting case studies.
1661656	Yes. I think anyone who is interested in African politics should take this class, as it will give students a systematic overview of the field and trigger interests.
1663704	Not really as currently structured. The course has interesting and engaging moments, but overall it lacked a strong emphasis on a particular message or takeaway that would have left me with a lasting impression.
1670860	Definitely take this class if you want to get a beginner's analytical view of politics in Africa. The workload is pretty light and mainly concentrated in the first half of the semester, meaning you get done with it earlier on
1671236	If they're interested in politics in sub-saharan Africa then yes, but I don't think the material was particularly challenging and I don't think the feedback was reflective of the project descriptions.

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#9 Would you recommend this course to another student? Please explain.

Instructor(s): Baldwin, Katharine (P)

Declined to Answer Question: 11

Respondent	Answer
1682947	Definitely take this class! It was super interesting as someone who had no background knowledge of African politics, and I feel like I learned a lot in a short amount of time. The class is also very well structured and I felt well supported as a student throughout the way. I liked how even though its a lecture, there are opportunities for students to be more engaged in class and in section to their comfort level. I really enjoyed this class and would definitely recommend it to others.

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#10 Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Fellow. In what ways was their teaching effective and in what ways could their teaching be improved?

Instructor(s): Pavlik, Melissa

Responses for Instructor: 18
Declined to Answer Question: 10

Respondent	Answer
1647154	Mel's sense of good humor was the glue holding this class together. Even when she was given section plans which were inadequate for the amount of time section took, she managed to promote interesting discussions both in small groups and at the larger table, often aided by a knowing wink which ensured everyone knew we were all on the same page. By guiding with a light touch, she allowed for discussions to move naturally, and for the content assigned to each section to expand and fill space organically. She also contributed greatly to the assignments by providing resources and scaffolding to allow for each student to complete their work in a satisfactory way without feeling lost at sea. I wish she had been given the opportunity to lecture more at length!
1647428	Mel was a great TF. She was very engaged in the course, willing to help students, and knowledgeable about the material, which showed when she led class discussions. She also provided useful feedback on exams and papers and did a good job helping students prepare for the exams. I thought she created a welcoming environment where people could speak up relatively easily. I would say that discussions became stilted sometimes, but I think that was less on her and more because of a lack of engagement from some students in section.
1648540	Melissa was not only incredibly knowledgeable but she also really cared about our success. I sometimes find that TAs don't engage with students as if they are peers but the reality is we are close enough in age to interact on a level that can really help our learning.
1650594	Incredible understanding of the subject matter, highly personable, and clearly structured section to be of benefit to the students rather than going with a more rigid structure.
1651133	She was really sweet and make sections fun. She was funny too and always willing to help us
1651876	Great instructor!
1655653	Mel was a great TF; up-front with our section about how she would grade our assignments and sure to always leave extensive comments on our work. She ran a well-organized section and made a real effort to get to know her students.
1656984	Melissa is fantastic as a TF, she uses humor to help make the content enjoyable during section. She is also understanding and is overall relatable. I think Melissa is a great TF and everyone would be lucky to be in a class with her as the TF!
1658294	Melissa was an amazing Teaching Fellow. She was very thorough in her feedback on assignments and was always available to clarify concepts or discuss our interests in the major.
1660793	Mel was great, and I really enjoyed section. In fact, discussions were probably my favorite part of the class, and they were well facilitated. Best of luck with her future endeavors!
1661187	She is an amazing TF and any class would be lucky to have her as their TF.
1661618	Mel is fantastic! Extremely knowledgeable and great at run discussion section. She helped so much with studying for the exams.
1661656	Mel is the most excellent TF in Yale. She is very kind and can always provide academic help in sections and lectures.
1663704	Mel was very helpful throughout the semester and ran a great section. Using our time for exam prep in particular was very helpful
1669138	A wonderful human being and a great source of information. She made section engaging and was not afraid to push us in our conversations.
1670860	Great TF! She was really engaging during section and was especially helpful in compiling study material for the exams
1671236	Strengths: approachability, facilitation Weakness: not very challenging

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Instructors				
Baldwin, Katharine (P)				

#10 Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Fellow. In what ways was their teaching effective and in what ways could their teaching be improved?
Instructor(s): Pavlik, Melissa

Responses for Instructor: 18
Declined to Answer Question: 10

Respondent	Answer
1682947	Melissa was an incredible TF. I thought she did a great job at supporting all the students and catering the sections so that they were a useful time to apply the knowledge in class and feel more comfortable with what we learned in class. She set clear expectations and gave helpful feedback in class and in our written work. I really enjoyed my time as Melissas student.

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Instructors
Baldwin, Katharine (P)

#11 What is your overall assessment of the Teaching Fellow?

Instructor(s): Pavlik, Melissa

Responses for Instructor: 24
Declined to Answer Question: 4

Average and Standard Deviation

Question Average	Dept	Div	School
4.8 ±0.4	4.5 ±0.9	4.3 ±1.0	4.3 ±1.0

Choice Label	Counts
poor	0
fair	0
good	0
very good	4
excellent	20

