

## SYLLABUS

Introduction to African Politics {HIS 113} – credit units:3  
Department of History and International Studies  
Faculty of Arts  
University of Delta, Agbor, Nigeria

**Lecturer:** Dr. F.O. Forae

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 9am – 4pm

**Monday:** 1pm – 4pm, Friday: 8am – 12noon

**Meeting days, times and place:** Monday, 2:00pm – 3:00pm; Thursday, 3:00pm – 5:00pm, History and International Studies Lecture Hall

### **Attendance:**

You are expected to attend every class. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to make up for the work that you have missed. You must please notify the lecturer in advance if you are going to be absent from any class.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

Expository and descriptive methods will be used. The syllabus contains an overview of what will be covered in class. For specific information, students are referred to the class web page maintained on the University website. Assignments will be posted on the University of Delta LMS or given in the class and should be submitted through University of Delta LMS. Class attendance and doing all your assignments and tests will assist you to understand the course better.

### **Overview:**

The salience of traditional African political systems and institutions is increasingly brought to the fore in contemporary African politics, particularly since the 1960s. This is understandable due to the consequences which the wholesale introduction/grafting of European/Western models of political systems and institutions have had on African politics since Africa's independence. Knowledge of the pre colonial indigenous political systems of Africa is necessary in order to expose the salient features inherent in the traditional Africa political system in the light of Western models of politics practiced in Africa since colonial times. The applicability to and suitability of Western models of politics to African's current political realities are examined. Evaluation of ancient African political systems, institutions and practices such as consensus, the village assembly gerontocracy, Council of Elders (kingship, chiefdoms, kinship, lineages, involvement of the gods and deities in the judicial system), *communocracy*, unwritten democracy, e.tc, are undertaken vis-à-vis modern European concepts of politics such as democracy, parliamentary, liberal democracy, supremacy of the law, rule of law, constitutionalism, majoritarian rule, e.tc. Students will learn about the indigenous system of government as well as foreign models of governance. The course also focuses on the impact of modern political systems and practices on

Africa's political development process such as party politics, elections, military rule and fashioning of a political agenda, political model or political order appropriate and relevant to Africa.

### **Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are to:

- i) Define the concepts of power and authority, traditional government and modern government.
- ii) Identify the types, organs and character of traditional Africa political institutions that existed during the pre- colonial period.
- iii) Explain the functions of the traditional political systems and institutions so identified.
- iv) Discuss the functions of Western political systems, organs and institutions.
- v) Explain the relevance and suitability of traditional African and Western political systems to Africa's current political realities

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- i) Identify the various types and organs of traditional Africa political systems and institutions in existence during the pre- colonial period.
- ii) Discuss the functions of the various organs of traditional government.
- iii) Compare and contrast traditional Africa political systems and institutions and modern political system
- iv) Discuss the suitability to and applicability of the Western models of politics current political realities.
- v) Explain the relevance of traditional African political systems and practices to Africa's current political realities.
- vi) Explain the relevance of Western political systems to Africa's current political realities.

### **Course Contents:**

The concept of traditional government defined, the concept of Western system of government defined, types of traditional form of government, types of Western system of government, features/characteristics of traditional Africa political systems and institutions, traditional Africa political system vs. Western political system, merits and demerits of traditional Africa political system, merits and demerits of Western political system, role of deities and gods in the administrative and judicial systems, the relevance of the judiciary, legislative and parliamentary organs to, Africa's political realities, the usefulness of traditional Africa's political system and practices such as consensus, gerontocracy, village assemblies council of elders, gods and deities to Africa's political realities, the role of Africa's political leadership in creating a viable and stable political order.

## Lecture Schedule

Week	Content	Lecture notes/slides
1	Traditional government/political system, institutions, power and authority defined. Western system of government, political Institutions defined.	
2	Types, organs and functions of traditional political Institutions.	
3	Types, organs and functions of Western system of government/political institution.	
4	Features/characteristics of traditional Africa political system	
5	Features/characteristics of Western/modern political Systems	
6	Comparison of traditional political institutions/systems and western political systems/institutions.	
7	Advantages and disadvantages of African traditional political systems/institutions	
8	Advantages and disadvantages of Western/modern political systems/institutions.	
9	Roles/functions of tribal gods, deities and ancestors in the judicial and administrative aspects, of government.	
10	Test	
11	Relevance and suitability of Western political systems and practises e.g. party politics, elections, parliamentary system etc to current Africa's political realities	
12	Usefulness of traditional African political systems to her current political realities.	
13	African political leadership and the evolution of a viable and stable political order for Africa.	
14	Revision	
15	Semester Exam	

## Examination Schedule

- Attendance
- Assignments
- Class tests
- End of Semester Exam

### Grading:

- Assignments: 15% of grade
- Tests: 10% of grade
- Attendance: 5% of grade

- Semester Exam: 70% of grade

### **Texts and References**

Vaughan, O. (2010). *Indigenous Structures and Governance in Africa*, Ibadan: Heineman.

Mengisteab, K. (2013). *African Traditional Institutions of Governance*, Ibadan: Heineman.

Cheeseman, N.(2015). *Democracy in Africa: Failures and the Struggle for Political Reform*. Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, I. (2018). *African Politics: A Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University of Delta shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behaviour conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Students' Conduct is described in detail in the Students 'Information Handbook and the University of Delta website.

#### **Academic Honesty**

“All students enrolled at the University of Delta shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behaviour conducive to a positive learning environment”. It is the policy of the University that no form of plagiarism or cheating will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of another's work and claiming it as one's own, this means ideas as well as texts or codes whether paraphrased or presented verbatim (word for word). Cheating is defined as obtaining unauthorised assistance on any assignment, test or examination. There should be proper and accurate citation of sources. Offenders of plagiarism or cheating will receive 'O' grade and warning in the first instance. 'F' grade will be received in subsequent instance in the course and possible disciplinary measures for academic dishonesty.