

PSCI4611 A
Africa's International Relations
Tuesdays: 11:35 am - 2:25 pm
Location: Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

I) General information

Instructor: Dr. Isaac Odoom

Student Hours: Tuesdays 2:40pm to 4:40pm in person (or by appointment)

Email: isaac.odoom@carleton.ca

II) Course description

This course examines Africa's international relations with a focus on diplomacy, regional cooperation, and Africa's engagement with global actors. The course emphasizes African agency in international politics and explores how African states and institutions navigate regional and global governance, security, development, and diplomacy.

The course includes a Carleton University Experiential Learning Fund (CUEL)–supported experiential learning component. Students will participate in off-campus visits to selected African diplomatic missions in Ottawa and to Global Affairs Canada, followed by a parliamentary-style Mock AU/ECOWAS Summit held on campus. These activities are designed to connect theory with diplomatic practice.

III Course Format

This is a seminar-based course emphasizing discussion, student engagement, and applied learning. Attendance and active participation are mandatory.

A central component of the course is experiential learning, which includes:

- Visits to selected African embassies/high commissions in Ottawa
- A briefing session with Global Affairs Canada
- A Mock AU/ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit conducted in a parliamentary-style setting

Participation in off-campus activities is a required component of the course. Further logistical details will be provided in advance.

Instructor will start the class with a general overview of the themes for the week. Next will be roundtable discussion where each student gives a 3- minute reflection on all required readings for the week. This will be followed by student presentations and (small group) discussions.

V Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze Africa's international relations from historical and contemporary perspectives
- Apply international relations theory to real-world diplomatic practice
- Evaluate the role of regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS
- Develop skills in negotiation, policy analysis, and enhance communication skills through group discussions, presentations, and written assignments, promoting clear articulation of ideas and engagement in diplomatic discourse.

VI Texts

There is no required textbook to purchase for the course. All the course materials can be found on ARES via Brightspace free of charge.

VII Evaluation at a glance

Evaluation of the following course requirements will determine students' grades

Component	Weight	Due Date
1. Attendance and Participation	25%	Throughout the term. Active participation in weekly seminars, off-campus diplomatic visits, and the Mock AU/ECOWAS Summit.
2. Critical Reflection Papers (2X20%)	40%	Feb 25, and April 1
3. Case Analysis and Facilitation Presentation	15%	Student chosen date
4. Final Course Report	20%	April 23
Total	100%	

VIII Evaluation in detail

1. **Attendance and Participation (25%)**

This is a seminar-based course and requires regular, active engagement. Attendance and participation are mandatory and assessed cumulatively based on:

- attendance at weekly seminars,
- quality of contributions to class discussions and small-group activities, and
- evidence of preparation (familiarity with required readings and readiness to engage).

Students are expected to complete readings in advance and come prepared with questions or points for discussion. Active listening and asking thoughtful questions are valued as much as making comments.

Students who are absent without a valid excuse will receive zero (0) for participation for that seminar.

Experiential Learning Participation: Mock AU/ECOWAS Summit

The Mock AU/ECOWAS Intergovernmental Summit is a required experiential component of the course and forms part of the attendance and participation grade. Students are expected to engage substantively in:

- preparatory sessions,
- negotiations and plenary discussions during the summit, and
- collaborative interaction with peers.

Students who demonstrate exceptional preparation and engagement during the simulation may receive bonus marks toward their participation grade.

2. Critical Reflection Papers (2 x 20% = 40%)

Students will complete two critical reflection papers. These reflections are designed to assess students' ability to engage meaningfully with course readings, class discussions, and experiential learning activities.

Critical Reflection 1: Reading in Context (20%)

This is due one week plus one day after the selected topic's class (i.e., the following Wednesday by 11:59 pm). First entry should be submitted no later than Feb 25. To receive early feedback, students are encouraged to choose to write on an earlier topic in the semester before the winter break.

Students must select one required course reading and critically reflect on it in relation to a specific class discussion, debate, or disagreement.

The reflection should:

- Identify the central argument of the chosen reading (briefly)
- Explain how the reading shaped, challenged, or failed to explain a specific issue discussed in class
- Draw explicitly on class discussion, examples, or questions raised during the seminar
- Offer the student's own critical assessment of the reading's strengths and limitations

Note: This reflection must demonstrate clear engagement with in-class discussions.

Submissions that read as generic summaries or are disconnected from class conversations will not receive a passing grade.

Critical Reflection 2: Theory Meets Diplomacy (20%)

Due: After the Diplomatic Engagement Phase (April 1).

This reflection asks students to connect course theory to diplomatic practice. Students must use one course concept or reading to analyze an observation from:

- an embassy or high commission visit, or
- the Global Affairs Canada briefing.

The reflection should:

- Clearly describe the observation or experience
- Explain how course theory helps interpret what was observed
- Reflect on whether practice confirmed, complicated, or contradicted the theory
- Demonstrate critical thinking and analysis

For reflection 1, students can choose to prepare their reflection on any of the weekly seminar topics, **but they are not allowed to do a reflection paper for the same week as their presentation.**

Reflection papers should be between 900-1000 words in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 font, 1" margins). Students will choose their own referencing style, however, consistency is required. Please indicate referencing style (APA, MLA, etc) and list of sources at the end of your paper.

3. Case Analysis and Facilitation Presentation (15%)

Students will work in groups of 2–3 to prepare and lead a case-based discussion related to the week's topic. Each group will select a case study in consultation with the instructor at least one week in advance.

The purpose of the presentation is not to summarize the readings, but to use a concrete case in Africa to interrogate, challenge, or extend the arguments made in the assigned materials.

Presentations must:

- Clearly explain why the case matters for understanding Africa's international relations
- Identify a central analytical problem or tension raised by the case
- Explicitly connect the case to at least one course concept or reading for the week
- Pose two or three discussion questions or class activities that push the class beyond the readings.

Presenters should assume that all students have completed the required readings. Any summary should be brief and only serve to frame the discussion.

The presentation will use visual aid (PowerPoints, audio/video etc) and will not be longer than 20 minutes, followed by discussion. It is the responsibility of the group to manage the duration of the presentation and the discussion. A single grade will be assigned for the presentation and will be attributed to all students in that group. All presenters should have an equal share in leading the presentation and discussion.

Presenters must submit an electronic copy (ppt or pdf version; not a link) of the final power point presentation or handout via email (isaac.odoom@carleton.ca) by 8am on the day of the presentation.

Instructor will assign topics/date of presentation to students guided by students' selections. Student may be given an option to pick their top preferred Topic/Date of presentation in class.

Additional information about the presentation will be provided to students.

4. Final Integrative Course Report (20%)

Students will complete a take-home final course report that synthesizes their learning across the semester. The details and additional instructions will be handed out on April 7, 2025, and the report is due on April 23, 2025.

LATE PENALTIES AND REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Paper Submission and Late Paper Policy: All assignments must be submitted through the Brightspace assignment drop-box by 11:59 p.m. on the due date (except for the presentation notes, which are due by 8am). Late assignments will be penalized by 2% per day. Extensions can only be granted by the instructor and are normally granted for medical reasons only.

Students should note that to obtain credit in this course, students must fulfill all of the course requirements.

Previous papers/work. For this course and its assignments, using work already submitted for other courses is unacceptable. Students are invited to talk to the instructor if they have any questions related to this provision.

Statement on use of AI

Unless explicitly authorized by the instructor, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce any assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, images, summaries, videos, etc.) constitutes a violation of Carleton University's academic integrity standards. For details, refer to specific assignment instructions.

IX COURSE SCHEDULE

**The weekly reading list are subject to changes by the instructor in the course of the term.
Instructor will inform students of any changes ahead of time.**

Week 1: Jan 6

Introduction: Africa in International Relations

- Course overview and expectations
- Africa as actor, arena, and agent

Reading:

- Tim Murithi. (2013). Chapter 1: 'The evolution of Africa's international relations.' *Handbook of Africa's International Relations: Vol. 1st ed.* Routledge.
- Ayodele, O. (2023). Africa's International Relations and the Legend of 'Common Positions'. *African and Asian Studies*, 22(1-2), 63-87. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15692108-12341581>

Recommended:

- Tom Tieku (2013: Chapter 2: "Theoretical approaches to Africa's international relations" in Tim Murithi. (2013). *Handbook of Africa's International Relations: Vol. 1st ed.* Routledge.
- You should start using the Africa Map learning tool to learn the basic political geography of the continent: <https://lizardpoint.com/geography/africa-quiz.php>

Week 2: Jan 13

Colonial Legacies and Africa's IR

- Colonialism, Postcolonial order, Sovereignty, and Africa's global insertion

Readings:

- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2015). Genealogies of Coloniality and Implications for Africa's Development. *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, 40(3), 13–40.
- MAZRUI, A. A. (1983). The Reincarnation of The African State: A Triple Heritage in Transition From Pre-Colonial Times. *Présence Africaine*, 127/128, 114–127.

Recommended:

- Isaac Odoom & Nathan Andrews (2017). What/who is still missing in International Relations scholarship? Situating Africa as an agent in IR theorising, *Third World Quarterly*, 38:1, 42-60
- Thomas Kwasi Tieku, A new research agenda for Africa's international relations, *African Affairs*, Volume 121, Issue 484, July 2022, Pages 487–499, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adac022>

Week 3: Jan 20

Regional Organizations, the AU, and Africa's Peace & Security Architecture

- Overview of African Union in International System
- ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD

Readings:

- Tieku, Thomas Kwasi. 2004. "Explaining the Clash and Accommodation of Interests of Major Actors in the Creation of the African Union." *African Affairs* 103: 249-267.
- Arthur, P. (2017). Promoting Security in Africa through Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). *Insight on Africa*, 9(1), 1-21.

Recommended:

African Union (2015): *Africa Agenda 2063: The Africa We want*
https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/Agenda2063_Popular_Version_English.pdf

Week 4: Jan 27

Trade, Development, and Africa's International Political Economy

- Inter-trade in Africa and Regional Economic Communities
- The WTO, World Bank, and the IMF in Africa.

Readings:

- Samuel Ojo Oloruntoba. (2023) The political economy of the African Continental Free Trade Area and structural transformation in Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 41(4), 360–376.
- Iloh, E. C., Nwokedi, M., Onyebukwa, C. F., & Ekeocha, Q. (2020). World Trade Organization's Trade Liberalization Policy on Agriculture and Food Security in West Africa. *Regional Development in Africa*, 10.

Recommended:

Moyo, I. (2020). On Decolonising Borders and Regional Integration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. *Social Sciences*, 9(4), 32

Week 5: Feb 3

Peacekeeping, Security, and Coups in Africa

- Peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and sovereignty
- Regional responses to coups and crises

Readings:

- Tieku, T. K., & Yakohene, A. B. (2024). Exploring communities of practice from an informality perspective: Insights from the AU, ECOWAS, and UN in West African mediation theaters. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 4(1).
- Onapajo, H., & Babalola, D. (2024). ECOWAS and the challenge of preventing a resurgence of coups d'état in West Africa: An assessment of the 'Zero Tolerance' policy. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 31(1), 23–44.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2024.2353266>
- Richard Fosu (2025). Africa's power grabs are rising – the AU's mixed response is making things worse. *The Conversation Africa*. <https://theconversation.com/africas-power-grabs-are-rising-the-aus-mixed-response-is-making-things-worse-271137>

Recommended:

Suzuki, S. (2020). Exploring the roles of the AU and ECOWAS in West African conflicts. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 27(2), 173-191.

Week 6: Feb 10

International Partnership I

- Africa-EU
- Africa-United States Relations

Readings:

- Bergmann, J., Friesen, I., & Furness, M. (2025). EU-Africa Cooperation on Security, Peace and Humanitarian Aid in the Post-Cotonou Era: An Asymmetric Partnership. In *Africa, the EU and the Samoa Agreement* (pp. 92-110). Routledge.

- Qobo, M. (2022). "The Evolution of US–Africa Relations: From Idealism to *Realpolitik*." In: The Political Economy of China—US Relations. International Political Economy Series. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham
- Odota, J. (2024). 'Something for Something': The Face of Peace and Security in Africa under Trump 2.0. *Conflict Trends*, 2024(4), 33-38.

Week 7: Feb 17: Break (No classes)

Week 8: Feb 24

International Partnership II

- **Africa-Canada Relations**
- Black, D. R. (2015). *Canada and Africa in the new millennium: The politics of consistent inconsistency*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press. Chapter 1 and 5
- Akuffo, E.A. (2021). "Morality as Organizing Principle: Making Sense of Canada–Africa Relations." In: Murray, R.W., Gecelovsky, P. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Canada in International Affairs*. Canada and International Affairs. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Government of Canada (2025). *Canada's Africa Engagement Strategy* (policy document; selected sections). <https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/transparency-transparence/canada-africa-strategy-strategie-afrique.aspx?lang=eng>

Week 9: March 3

Africa and International Partnership III

- Africa-China
- Africa-Russia, and others

Readings:

- Mandira Bagwandeen, Christopher Edyegu & Oscar M. Otele (2023): African Agency, COVID-19 and Debt Renegotiations with China, *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 30(1): 1–27.

- McGrath, Jessica F (2025). Russian and Chinese influence in Africa: Power Asymmetries and the Threat to African Union Agency in Global Governance. Report of the PeaceRep: The University of Edinburgh <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/43720>
- Ding, L. (2024). The evolving roles of the gulf states in the horn of Africa. *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, 18(1), 1-14.

Recommended:

Ajala, O. (2022). The Case for Neutrality: Understanding African Stances on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 22(2).

Week 10: March 10

African Diplomacy, Multilateral Practice, and Diplomatic Protocol

- Summit diplomacy, and negotiation spaces
- Diplomatic norms, and protocols

Readings:

Anyika, V. O., & Ani, K. J. (2023). Changing Dynamics of African Diplomacy: Concluding Thoughts from Pre-colonial Era to Contemporary Times. In *Political Economy of Colonial Relations and Crisis of Contemporary African Diplomacy* (pp. 277-288). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Week 11: March 17

Diplomatic Engagement I – High Commission Visit

- Visit to selected African embassy/high commission

Week 12 March 24

Diplomatic Engagement II – Global Affairs Canada, TBC

- Briefing at Global Affairs Canada (Africa Bureau)

Week 13: March 31

Simulation Preparation and Strategy session

- Role coordination
- Drafting position statements and negotiation strategies
- Possible additional diplomatic visit (if confirmed)

Week 14: April 7

Mock AU/ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit and Course Debrief*

- Parliamentary-style simulation
- Negotiation and adoption of joint communique
- Course conclusion and debrief

*Venue for the Mock Plenary TBD

Political Science Course Outline Appendix

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

<https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC):

<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):

<https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>

Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>

Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389,

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>

ood2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>

The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances:

Students must contact the instructor(s) of their absence or inability to complete the academic deliverable within the predetermined timeframe due to medical or other extenuating circumstances. For a range of medical or other extenuating circumstances, students may use the online self-declaration form and where appropriate, the use of medical documentation. This policy regards the accommodation of extenuating circumstances for both short-term and long-term periods and extends to all students enrolled at Carleton University.

Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC)

at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Religious obligation: Contact your Instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>.

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

PETITIONS TO DEFER

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply within three working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully supported by the appropriate documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered. See Undergraduate Calendar, Article 4.3

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and

exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Permissibility of submitting substantially the same piece of work more than once for academic credit. If group or collaborative work is expected or allowed, provide a clear and specific description of how and to what extent you consider collaboration to be acceptable or appropriate, especially in the completion of written assignments.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's official withdrawal dates

OFFICIAL FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Please reference the [Academic Calendar](#) for each term's Official Exam Period (may include evenings & Saturdays or Sundays)

For more information on the important dates and deadlines of the academic year, consult the [Carleton Calendar](#).

GRADING SYSTEM

The grading system is described in the Undergraduate Calendar section [5.4](#).

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*" This can include:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*"

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when

an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

RESOURCES (613-520-2600, phone ext.)

Department of Political Science (2777)	B640 Loeb
Registrar's Office (3500)	300 Tory
Centre for Student Academic Success (3822)	4 th floor Library
Academic Advising Centre (7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre (6608)	501 Nideyinà
Career Services (6611)	401 Tory