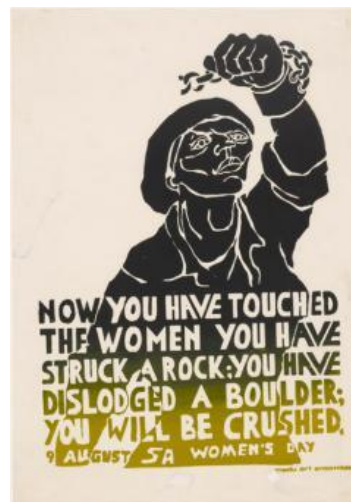


GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN AFRICAN HISTORY¹



A reenactment of the 1929 Igbo Women's War and poster for South African Women's Day in 1981

Course description and objectives

This course will look at how different African societies and cultures have viewed, practiced, and performed gender and sexuality since the 18th century until today. You will see how the peoples of the African continent and their ideas surrounding gender and sexuality have evolved and adapted in response to a myriad of forces: internal social, economic, and political changes; shifts in patterns of slavery/the global slave trade; the rise of nationalism and the advent of post-independence societies and states; and the emergence of transnational feminisms and women's movements.

By incorporating fiction and academic works that foreground the testimonies of local individuals into class assignments, I hope to allow African voices themselves to inform you about local views on gender and sexuality. Whenever possible, I will pull primary sources cited in secondary works and put them into a separate primary source packet so that we can analyze them apart from these secondary sources and then return later to the author's assessment of these documents. In doing so, I hope to render the voices of women and men who engaged in these movements more alive and accessible to you. You will also observe through this course how academic approaches to the study of gender and sexuality on the continent have shifted over time. My hope is that you will walk out of the classroom with a deeper understanding of how African societies have historically performed and perceived gender and sexuality and how practices and expressions of gender and sexuality can influence events while simultaneously being shaped by them. Along the way, you will improve your written and oral communication skills while honing your ability to critically assess primary and secondary source material and incorporate these sources into arguments regarding past events.

¹ This syllabus would be for an upper-level undergraduate or graduate course.

Central questions that we'll explore in this class

- How have definitions of gender and appropriate sexuality changed in different parts of the African continent over time? How do these definitions vary by region and/or community?
- What were the implications of colonization and decolonization for local notions of womanhood, gender roles, masculinity, and sexual practices? How was colonialism justified through references to sexuality and gender and what consequences did these justifications have for societies on the African continent?
- What are the major issues concerning gender and sexuality on the African continent today? What are the historical origins of these current issues?

How does this course work?

You are expected to complete all readings for the week prior to coming to class. Since I will be conducting this class as a seminar it is imperative that you come to class ready to contribute to discussions and group activities based on the readings.

The capstone of this class will be a ten to fifteen page research paper on the subject of your choice related to the broader course topic (gender and sexuality in modern African history). By week six of the course, you will need to turn in a research proposal and bibliography which will be worth 10% of your total final grade. You will then be graded on an in-class presentation of your research in week fourteen (5% of final grade) and on the final ten to fifteen page research paper (25% of final grade). I recommend that you consult with me early in the semester regarding your research topic. One of our meetings in week eight will also be devoted to discussing research and writing strategies along with how to locate sources for your papers.

What books do I need to buy for this class?

All books for this course are available at the SBX on High (Student Book Exchange; here's the website with directions- <https://www.sbx-osu.com/>). They are the following:

Getz, Trevor R., and Liz Clarke. *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

There will also be articles and book excerpts, all of which will be included in the reading packet.

How is my grade calculated?

Weekly reviews of readings and participation in online discussion forum	20%
In-class discussion/activity participation	20%
Take home essay midterm	20%
Research proposal and bibliography for research paper	10%
Presentation of final research project	5%
Final research project	25%

Weekly reviews of readings/online discussion forum contributions

You will be responsible for submitting a one to two page summary of each week's readings prior to our meeting to discuss these works. These reviews should identify the major argument of the readings, the sources that the authors used to construct this argument, and whether or not you find it compelling and why. It may be helpful for you to bring your review with you each week to class to help inform your contributions to the discussion. You should also share two points that you make in your review on the class's online discussion forum and read your classmates' comments on this same forum prior to coming to class.

Participation in course discussions/activities

It is of the utmost importance that you come to class prepared to discuss readings. I will lecture briefly on the week's topic and then we will spend most of each class session collectively dissecting the week's readings. For this reason, please come to class ready to discuss the major arguments that the author of each reading makes and how you believe the work fits into the broader themes of this course.

Midterm exam

Halfway through the semester there will be a take home essay exam. For this test, you will have to answer two out of three long essay prompts (each answer should be approximately 2-3 pages double-spaced). I will provide more information on the test as well as a practice exam question as the midterm approaches.

Final paper

By the end of this class, you will compose a ten to fifteen double-spaced research paper on a topic of your choice related to the course topic and themes. For this assignment, you will have to read secondary literature extensively to find a gap in what previous scholars have written about a subject or to develop an argument or approach to a topic that they have not already employed. You will then come up with an original argument based on your reading of secondary sources or primary sources, if these are available. We will come together to discuss and work on this assignment throughout the semester. I will circulate a handout with more details regarding this assignment on the first day of class.

Course schedule

Week One: Introduction

Readings:

Obono, Oka. "Introduction." In *A Tapestry of Human Sexuality in Africa*, edited by Oka Obono. Auckland Park, South Africa: Fanele, 2010.

Cornwall, Andrea. "Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa." In *Readings in Gender in Africa*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, 1-19. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. (Available as e-book through the library)

McCall, John. "Social Organization in Africa." In *Africa*, edited by Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara, 175-188. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Week Two: Gender and Sexuality in the "Pre-colonial" Era

Readings

Smith, Bonnie G. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*. Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, 2008. Entries on "North Africa 1500-1900," "East Africa, 1500-1900," and "West Africa, 1500-1900," and "Southern Africa, 1500-1900." (e-book)

Hanson, Holly. "Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda: The Loss of Women's Political Power in Nineteenth-Century East Africa." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 219-232. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. (e-book)

Amadiume, Ifi. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Books, 1997. 42-50, 69-88. (e-book)

Week Three: Slavery, Abolition, and Gender

Readings:

Wright, Marcia. *Strategies of Slaves and Women*. New York: Lilian Barber, 1993. 1-47, 125-175. (e-book)

Cooper, Barbara. "Reflections on Slavery, Seclusion and Female Labor in the Maradi Region of Niger in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." In *Readings in Gender in Africa*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, 156-163. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. (e-book)

Robertson, Claire and Martin Klein. "Women's Importance in African Slave Systems." In *Women and Slavery in Africa*, edited by Claire Robertson and Martin Klein, 3-25. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983. (e-book)

Week Four: Gender and Colonialism

Readings:

Gengenbach, Heidi. "What My Heart Always Wanted." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 19-47. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. (e-book)

Urban-Mead, Wendy. "Dynastic Daughters: Three Royal Kwenya Women and E. L. Price of the London Missionary Society." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 48-70. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. (e-book)

Getz, Trevor R., and Liz Clarke. *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Week Five: African Gender and Sexuality in Colonial Imaginings

Readings:

Excerpts from Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, and Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935* (in reading packet)

Clancy-Smith, Julia. "The Colonial Gaze: Sex and Gender in the Discourses of French North Africa." In *Franco-Arab Encounters*, edited by L. Carl Brown and Matthew Gordon, 201-228. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1996.

Musisi, Nakanyike. "The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 95-115. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Week Six: Gender/Sexuality and Responses to Colonialism

Readings:

Allman, Jean. "Rounding up Spinsters: Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante." In *Readings in Gender in Africa*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, 201-209. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. (e-book)

Selections from Mtera, Marc, Misty L. Bastian, and Susan Kingsley Kent. *The Women's War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria* (in reading packet)

**Research proposal and bibliography due*

Week Seven: Gender, Sexuality, and Power during the Colonial Era

Readings:

Excerpts from Achebe, Nwando. *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe* (in reading packet)

Hawkins, Sean. "The Woman in Question: Marriage and Identity in the Colonial Courts of Northern Ghana, 1907-1954." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 116-143. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. (e-book)

Mianda, Gertrude. "Colonialism, Education, and Gender Relations in the Belgian Congo." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 144-163. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. (e-book)

Week Eight: Gender and Religion/Science under Colonialism

Readings:

Miescher, Stephan. "The Making of Presbyterian Teachers: Masculinities and Programs of Education in Colonial Ghana." In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, edited by Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, 89-108. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

Musisi, Nakanyike. "Colonial and Missionary Education: Women and Domesticity in Uganda, 1900-1945." In *African Encounters with Domesticity*, edited by Karen Hansen, 172-194. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992. (e-book)

Thomas, Lynn. "Imperial Concerns and 'Women's Affairs': State Efforts to Regulate Clitoridectomy and Eradicate Abortion in Meru, Kenya, c. 1910-1950." *Journal of African History* 39 (1998): 121-145.

Week Nine: Gender/Sexuality and Nationalisms

Video:

Select scenes from *Battle of Algiers* and *Flame*

Readings:

Schmidt, Elizabeth. "'Emancipate your Husbands!': Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58." In *Women in African Colonial Histories*, edited by Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger, 282-298. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Geiger, Susan. "Tanganyikan Nationalism as 'Women's work': Life Histories, Collective Biography and Changing Historiography." *Journal of African History* 37 (1996): 465-478

Obeng, P. "Gendered Nationalism: Forms of Masculinity in Modern Asante of Ghana." In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, edited by Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, 192-208. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

*Class debate on colonization, decolonization, and gender roles

Week Ten: Gender, Sexuality, and Urbanization/Labor

Readings:

Lindsay, Lisa. "Working with Gender: The Emergence of the Male Breadwinner in Colonial Southwestern Nigeria." In *Africa After Gender?*, edited by Catherine Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher, 241-25. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

Cooper, Frederick. "Industrial Man Goes to Africa." In *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, edited by Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, 128-136. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003.

Week Eleven: Gender and Sexuality in the Post-Independence Era

Readings:

Sa'dāwī, Nawāl, and Sharīf Ḥatātah. *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*. London: Zed Press, 1980.

Denzer, Laray. "Gender and Decolonization: a Study of Three Women in West African Political Life." In *Readings in Gender in Africa*, edited by Andrea Cornwall, 217-223. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. (e-book)

Week Twelve: Current Issues in African Gender and Sexuality

Video

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*, Ted Talk available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Readings

Excerpts from *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, eds. Edwin Cameron and Mark Gessiver (in reading packet)

Hunter, Mark. "Providing Love: Sex and Exchange in Twentieth-Century South Africa." In *Love in Africa*, edited by Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas, 135-152. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

*Final projects due