



HIST 283: Gender, Sexuality and the Making of the Self in Modern Africa

Professor: Emily Callaci

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Office: 5116 Mosse Humanities Building

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30pm

Course Time: Mondays 3:30-5:30pm

Class Location: Mosse Humanities Building, Room 5257

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

From warriors to priestesses, from concubines to clergymen, and from “boy wives” to “modern girls,” Africans throughout history have embodied and innovated a wide range of gendered identities. This course invites students to examine the ways that Africans throughout history have drawn on ideas and influences from their past and present, home and abroad, to define gender, sexuality and power. We will explore how gender roles have shaped and been shaped by historical processes including the slave trade and its abolition, colonial conquest, urbanization, the spread of Christianity, wage labor, mass consumerism, nationalist movements and the articulation of global feminisms. Course materials include works of fiction, life histories, photographs, political cartoons, poems, songs and works of art.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Most texts for this course will be available online through the Learn@UW website. Additionally, you are required to have on hand hard copies of the following three texts, which are available for purchase at the University Book Store:

1. Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001)
2. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *The River Between*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1965)
3. Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*, (New York: George Braziller, 1979)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Social norms of gender and sexuality are neither determined by biology, nor fixed and unchanging across time and space. The central goal of this course is for you to understand how, in Africa and beyond, gender and sexuality are rooted in history. By examining evidence and experiences from various African contexts, this course offers an opportunity to think more broadly about how norms of gender and sexuality change over time, and the ways in which they vary across cultures.

This course is thematic in nature and will not make you into an expert in any one region or time period in African history. Instead, the goal is to teach you to think critically and historically about gender and sexuality in Africa, and to offer you a set of analytic tools that you can take with you into future areas of study. We will visit many regions of the continent and move roughly in chronological order, focusing most of our attention on the twentieth century. In order to highlight the dynamic nature of this topic, I have selected readings that capture moments of change, in which African individuals and communities perceived, challenged, or debated gender norms.

In this class, you will also learn to think like an historian by analyzing primary sources and using them as evidence to make historical arguments. We will do this as a group, in the classroom. You will also have an opportunity to develop and apply these skills on your own through an essay about a primary source of your choice. We will discuss methods of analysis together in class and travel to the Africana Studies collection of the library to learn about some of the historical sources available there. You will have three formal opportunities to receive guidance and feedback on your research project before turning in the final essay: first, through a proposal; second, through a brief research update; and finally, through a presentation of your research on the final class session. Additionally, I encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss any aspects of the course or your project. If you are not available during my office hours, please don't hesitate to arrange another time to meet with me.

EVALUATION METHODS:

Weekly discussion question or comment: By 7pm on the evening before class, students are required to submit a comment or question to the course website. Students are encouraged to build upon questions and comments of their peers, so that the discussion board looks more like a conversation than a question list. Questions and comments should be succinct: 100 words at most. These weekly comments are ungraded, but required.

Short papers: Students are required to compose two short essays, roughly 3 pages in length, on topics discussed in the course. More detailed guidelines will be available on the class website.

Class Participation: This class will run in a seminar format. Our collective learning will depend on the full participation of all members of the group. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Proposal: Early in the semester, students should submit a page-long statement proposing a topic for their primary source analysis. This proposal will identify the primary source you have chosen, raise questions about that source, and map out a strategy for exploring one or more of those questions. That strategy should include consulting several secondary sources.

Research Update: Please provide a one-paragraph summary of your primary-source research project to date. This summary should include your thesis statement.

Presentation: On our final class session, students will each make a brief presentation—no more than five minutes—on their research projects.

Primary Source Essay: This assignment is the culmination of each student's semester-long exploration of a primary source and will be 7-10 pages long.

Due dates:

Every Sunday by 7pm: Blog comment or question

September 24: Short Essay #1

October 8: Research Proposal

November 5: Short Essay #2

November 19: Research Update

December 10: Class Presentation

December 17: Primary Source Essay

Grading

Weekly Blog comment or question: 10%

Paper #1, 3 pages: 15%

Paper #2, 3 pages: 15%

Proposal and bibliography, 1 page: 5%

Research summary, 1 page: 5%

Research presentation in class: 5%

Final research essay, 7-10 pages: 25%

Class participation: 20%

RESOURCES AND POLICIES

We will spend time in class discussing writing, style, and citation methods. In addition, I encourage you to make use of the resources and services available at the Writing Center. More information about this can be found here:

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

The University of Wisconsin takes matters of academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism in particular is a very serious offense that can pose a real threat to your success and to the integrity of our broader learning community. I will strictly enforce the university policies on academic honesty. The rules about plagiarism can sometimes be confusing. If you are unsure about them, please be on the safe side and check. You can start here: http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

If you are still unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, and whether you are committing plagiarism, please come speak to me during office hours. It is better to be safe than sorry! More detailed information about student codes of conduct may be found here:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>.

Finally, I encourage you all to come to my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or your progress in it. These hours are set aside specifically for your benefit. I hope to see you there!

QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSOR CALLACI/EMAIL PROTOCOL:

I read and respond to student emails in the evenings. You can expect a response to your emailed question within twenty-four hours. Before sending your questions, please review the syllabus first to make sure the question has not already been answered there. If your question has not been answered in the syllabus, please then refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions” section on the Learn@UW page, under the “Forums” tab. If you find that your question has not been addressed in either of these two places, you may ask your question in an email. I ask that you please compose all emails in a professional and courteous tone.

When you send me a question that is of relevance to the entire class, I will post your question, without your name, to the Frequently Asked Questions forum. I will then respond to your question in that forum, so that everyone in the class can benefit.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1, September 10: Introductions and Storylines

Readings:

1. Monica Arak de Nyeko, "The Jambula Tree," in *African Love Stories*, ed. Ama Ata Aidoo, (Banbury, UK: Ayebia Clarke, 2006), 164-177
2. Nelson Mandela, "Country Childhood" in *Long Walk to Freedom*, (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1995), 7-31
3. "Hawa," in John Chernoff's *Hustling is Not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 121-156

Week 2, September 17: Gender and Social Organization in Africa: Key Concepts

What is gender?

Readings:

1. Judith Lorber, "'Night to his Day: The Social Construction of Gender,'" in *Paradoxes of Gender*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 13-36
2. John McCall, "Social Organization in Africa," in *Africa*, eds. Phyllis Martin and Patrick O'Meara, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 175-188
3. Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*, (London: Zed Books, 1987), 25-41 (e-book)
4. Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 21-47
5. Richard Reid, "Arms and Adolescence: Male Youth, Warfare and Statehood in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Africa," in *Generations Past: Youth in East African History*, eds. Andrew Burton and Helene Charton-Bigot, (Athens: Ohio University Press), 25-46

Week 3, September 24: Elite Women, Power and Social Organization in Precolonial Africa

Were women in positions of political authority acting like men, or did they wield power as female gendered women?

Readings:

1. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (2008), "East Africa, 1500-1900," and "West Africa, 1500-1900," and "Southern Africa, 1500-1900." (e-book)
2. Holly Hanson, "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*, eds. Jean Allman, Nakanyike Musisi and Susan Geiger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 219-232 (e-book)

3. F.E.S. Kaplan, "Introduction," *Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses and Power: Case Studies in African Gender* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1997), xxix-xxxix
4. Edna Bay, "Belief, Legitimacy, and the Kpojito: An Institutional History of the 'Queen Mother' in Precolonial Dahomey," *Journal of African History* 36 (1995), 1-27
5. Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan, "Images of the Queen Mother in Benin Court Art," *African Arts* 26, v. 3 (1993), 54-63.
6. Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*, (London: Zed Books, 1997), 42-50, 69-88 (e-book)

Class trip to Africana Library, 4:45-5:30

DUE: Short Essay #1

Week 4, October 1: Gender, Slavery and Abolition

What is the relationship between slavery and the family in nineteenth century Africa?

Readings:

1. Marcia Wright, *Strategies of Slaves and Women*. (New York: Lilian Barber, 1993), 1-47, 125-175 (e-book)
2. Barbara Cooper, "Reflections on Slavery, Seclusion and Female Labor in the Maradi Region of Niger in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *The Journal of African History* 35, (1) 1994
3. Claire Robertson and Martin Klein, "Women's Importance in African Slave Systems," in Claire Robertson and Martin Klein, eds, *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 3-25 (e-book)

Week 5, October 8: Colonialism, Christianity and the Reconfiguration of Gender Roles

In becoming Christians, did Africans adopt new gender roles, or transform older ones?

Readings:

1. Stephan Miescher, "The making of Presbyterian Teachers: Masculinities and Programs of Education in Colonial Ghana" in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa Lindsay & Stephan Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 89-108
2. Meredith McKittrick, "Forsaking Their Fathers? Colonialism, Christianity and Coming of Age in Ovamboland, Northern Namibia", in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, 33-47
3. Nakanyike Musisi, "Colonial and Missionary Education: Women and Domesticity in Uganda, 1900-1945," in Karen Hansen, ed., *African Encounters with Domesticity*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992, 172-194. (e-book)
4. Ngugi, *The River Between*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1965), 1-44.

DUE: Statement of Research Topic

Week 6, October 15: The Female Circumcision Crisis in Central Kenya

What motivated some families to pursue circumcision for their daughters, and others to reject the practice in colonial Kenya?

Readings:

1. Finish *The River Between*
2. Jomo Kenyatta, "Initiation of Boys and Girls," Chapter VI of *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*, (1938), 130-154
3. Lynn Thomas, "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 7, October 22: Colonialism and gender

In what ways were colonial interventions gendered?

Readings:

1. Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors*, 48-99
2. Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*, (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 1-100

Week 8, October 29: Gender, Work and Urban Migration

To what extent did new modes of work lead to the reconfiguration of gender roles in urban colonial Africa?

Readings:

1. Frederick Cooper, "Industrial Man Goes to Africa," *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, 128-136
2. Lisa Lindsay, "Working with Gender: The Emergence of the Male Breadwinner in Colonial Southwestern Nigeria," in *Africa After Gender?*, eds Catherine Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 241-250 [course packet]
3. Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*, 101-224

Week 9, November 5: Gender and National Politics

What do gender and sexuality have to do with nationalism?

Readings:

1. Lynn Thomas, "'Ngaitana (I Will Circumcise Myself)': The Gender and Generational Politics of the 1956 Ban on Clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya," *Gender and History* 8, 3 (1996), 338-363.
2. P. Obeng, "Gendered Nationalism: Forms of Masculinity in Modern Asante of Ghana," in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, 192-208

3. Luise White, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23, no.1 (1990), 1-25
4. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Emancipate your Husbands!': Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58," in J. Allman et al, *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 282-298

DUE: Short Essay #2

Week 10, November 12: Gender, Modernity and "Development"

Does "development" mean the same thing for women and for men?

Readings:

1. Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors*, 100-269
2. Andrew Ivaska, "Anti-mini Militants Meet Modern Misses; Urban Style, Gender and the Politics of 'National Culture' in 1960s Dar es Salaam, Tanzania," in Jean Allman, ed., *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 104-118

Week 11, November 19: Modernity, Polygamy, and Companionate Marriage

What is at stake, and for whom, in debates about legal definitions of marriage in postcolonial Africa?

Readings:

1. Mariam Ba, *So Long a Letter*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1989)
2. Wambui wa Karanja, "'Outside Wives' and 'Inside Wives' in Nigeria: A Study of Changing Perceptions in Marriage," in David Parkin and David Nyamwaya, eds., *Transformations of African Marriage*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 247-61

Film: *Faat Kine* (Ousmane Sembene). Screening times will be announced. This film will also be available at the AV center at the library, for those who cannot make the screening.

DUE: Research Update

Week 12, November 26: African Homosexuality

Is homosexuality un- Africa?

Readings:

1. Marc Epprecht, *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2004), 1-47
2. Marc Epprecht, "Male-male sexuality in Lesotho: Two Conversations," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 10, no. 3 (Spring 2002), 373-389
3. Kendall, "When a Woman Loves a Woman" in Lesotho: Love, Sex and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia" in Roscoe and Murray, eds, *Boy*

Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 223-241

4. Stephen O. Murray, "A Feeling Within Me: Kamau, a Twenty-Five year Old Kikuyu," *Boy Wives and Female Husbands*, 41-62.

Week 13, December 3: Love, Sexuality, and the AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa

How has the AIDS epidemic in South Africa been shaped by economic change, gender roles and changing notions of sexual intimacy?

Readings:

1. Mark Hunter, "Providing Love: Sex and Exchange in Twentieth-Century South Africa," from *Love in Africa*, eds. Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 135-152
2. Mark Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Rights and Gender in South Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 106-202 (e-book)

Week 14, December 10: Presentations

Class presentations and final thoughts

DUE, December 17, 2012: Primary Source Essay