

## WOMEN IN AFRICAN HISTORY

History 430/Women's Studies 430

Time: Tu/Th 10:30-11:45

Location: University Hall 219

Spring 2011

Professor Alicia C. Decker

Office: University Hall 308

Office Hours: Tu/Th 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

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### Course Description

African women's history is rich and deeply layered. In this course, we will examine the social, political, economic, religious, and cultural experiences of women living in Africa. Although we will look at women in the pre-colonial and slave trade eras, the focus will be on women during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much of our reading and discussion will consider not only women, but also *gender* as we think about women's interactions with men and children. This course is concerned with the historical forces shaping African women's lives, as well as with the ways in which women have been active agents in the making of their own histories. Students can expect to engage with a number of different types of texts (e.g. films, novels, scholarly analyses, and primary sources).

### Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will have a better knowledge of African history with a particular focus on women and gender. The course will allow students to develop stronger writing skills, as well as to improve on critical thinking and oral articulation.

### Required Texts [available for purchase at the university bookstore]

1. Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006)
2. Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Mba, *For Women and the Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* (University of Illinois Press, 1997)
3. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life by Africa's First Woman President* (Harper, 2009)
4. J. Nozipo Maraire, *Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter* (Delta, 1997)
5. Marc Epprecht, *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2004)
6. Course readings as PDF files available on Blackboard (BB)

### Course Policies

- Everyone has the right to participate in this class. I expect our classroom to be a dynamic space where everyone can engage in a multiplicity of academic debates. Discussions will be based on the lectures, readings, and films—**NOT** on personal opinion.

- While I actively encourage the exchange of ideas, do not **steal** the words of others. Acknowledge your sources—even ideas that have been generated by your classmates! All references must be cited.
- Students wishing to use a laptop computer to take notes must sit in the front row. If I find that you are using your computer for any other activity, you will be asked to leave the class. You then forfeit your “right” to use your computer in class from that time forward.
- Cell phones, Ipods, and MP3 devices are prohibited. Please leave them turned off and out of sight for the entire class. If I see you using them, you will be asked to leave.
- If you have a university-recognized disability that requires an accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss your needs.
- During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.
- In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: Blackboard Vista web page; by e-mail: [acdecker@purdue.edu](mailto:acdecker@purdue.edu); and by phone: 496-3001.

### **Grading Policies**

- All written work must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. Everything must be paginated and properly cited using Turabian or Chicago-style formatting. Grammar and presentation count, so please use the Writing Lab!
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class. No late work will be accepted for full credit and will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24-hours late (i.e. A becomes A-; B+ becomes B). I will not give incompletes or accept late finals.
- All assignments must be submitted in hard copy—no online attachments!
- Hold on to all graded material until you have received your final grade. If there are any grade discrepancies at the end of the semester, you must have the original document in order for me to consider a grade adjustment.
- Failure to perform in **any** of the graded components listed below may result in failure of the course.

### **Course Evaluation**

- **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance is crucial to your success in the course. If you miss more than 30% of the classes, you will automatically fail the course unless you have a documented serious illness. In addition, you are required to attend one evening film screening on March 8 at 7:00 p.m. (Place TBA). Attendance at this event is mandatory. You are expected to attend class having done the readings and ready to participate. Since this is a discussion seminar, you will be evaluated on how well you are able to engage with the course material. This means that you should come to class having thought about the authors’ main points and the relevance of the material to the course. I expect that everyone will participate actively in every class. Simply showing up does not constitute class participation! Your

contributions must be thoughtful and based on the assigned readings. Active engagement counts as **20%** of your final grade.

- **Map Quizzes:** Africa is not a country. It is a vast continent with 54 countries (as of today). To understand African history, you must understand its basic geography. Therefore, you will be given map quizzes on three separate occasions: February 10, March 24, and April 19. For help, see the following website: [www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/afrquiz.html](http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/afrquiz.html). Map quizzes count as **15%** of your final grade.
- **Media Reports:** At the beginning of the semester you will each select one African country to follow in the news. Every three weeks, you will be asked to bring in a relevant article about women and/or gender in your country. On these days, we will collectively share what we have found. Media reports will take place on January 25, February 15, March 8, April 5, and April 21. This activity is worth **5%** of your final grade.
- **Biography of an African Woman:** African women's contributions to the historical record are often neglected. In order to restore women to history, you will select one African woman to profile in a 4-5 page biographic essay. You will be required to use one book-length memoir and at least three supplemental sources (primary or secondary). Feel free to select your own heroine or select from the list on Blackboard. On February 8, you will need to submit an "idea paragraph" describing who you will write about and the four sources that you will be using. Although your paragraph will not be formally "graded," your biographic essay will be penalized by a full letter grade if you fail to do this part of the assignment on time. Your completed essay will be due on March 1 and is worth **20%** of your final grade.
- **Idea Paragraph and Bibliography:** For this assignment, you will submit a paragraph detailing the topic that you would like to explore in your final paper, as well as a preliminary bibliography containing at least **eight scholarly** sources and **two primary** sources. Please note that websites and newspaper articles *do not* count as scholarly sources. You will be graded on the thoughtfulness of your ideas, as well as the quality of your sources. You may want to make an appointment with me or the history librarian to discuss your ideas. Do not wait until the last minute to do so. This assignment is due on March 31 and is worth **10%** of your final grade.
- **Final Research Paper:** Everyone is required to write a 12-15 page historical research paper on a related topic of your choice (pending approval of your idea paragraph and bibliography). You must use at least **eight scholarly** sources and **two primary** sources. This will be turned in on the last day of class and counts as **30%** of your final grade. No late papers will be accepted!

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week One: The "Country" of Africa

Tuesday, January 11

- Course introduction

Thursday, January 13

- Keim, "Changing Our Mind About Africa" (BB)
- Keim, "How We Learn" (BB)
- Keim, "Africans Live in Tribes, Don't They?" (BB)

## **Week Two: African Women and Historical Inquiry**

Tuesday, January 18

- Hoppe, “Gender in African History” (BB)

Thursday, January 20

- Class canceled—professor at conference

## **Week Three: Women and Power in Pre-Colonial Africa**

Tuesday, January 25 [Guest lecture by Jacqueline Mougoue, Ph.D. student]

- Coquery-Vidrovitch, “Powerful Women” (BB)
- Hanson, “Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda” (BB)
- Due: Media Report #1

Thursday, January 27 [Guest lecture by Jacqueline Mougoue, Ph.D. student]

- Berger, “Fertility as Power” (BB)

## **Week Four: Women and Slavery**

Tuesday, February 1

- Robertson and Klein, “Women’s Importance in African Slave Systems” (BB)

Thursday, February 3

- Wright, “Bwanikwa” (BB)
- Primary Source by Bwanikwa, “Ten Times a Slave” (BB)

## **Week Five: Women and the “Civilizing Mission”**

Tuesday, February 8

- Beidelman, “Altruism and Domesticity” (BB)
- Primary Source by Chadwick and Chadwick, “My Students” (BB)
- Due: Idea paragraph for bibliographic essay

Thursday, February 10

- Musisi, “The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics?” (BB)
- Primary Source by Dory, Excerpt from *Leper Country* (BB)
- Due: Map Quiz #1

## **Week Six: Gendered Experiences of Colonialism**

Tuesday, February 15

- Collins and Burns, “European Colonial Rule in Africa” (BB)
- Primary Source by Kingsley, “The Crown Colony System in West Africa” (BB)
- Due: Media Report #2

Thursday, February 17

- Soremekun, “Women Under Colonial Rule” (BB)
- Primary Source by Maxeke, “Social Conditions among Bantu Women...” (BB)

### **Week Seven: Women and Anti-Colonial Resistance**

Tuesday, February 22

- Chuku, “Women and Nationalist Movements” (BB)
- Primary Source by Otieno, Excerpt from *Mau Mau’s Daughter* (BB)

Thursday, February 24

- Johnson-Odim and Mba, *For Women and the Nation* (Chapters 1-3)
- Film: “Algeria: Women at War” (52 minutes)

### **Week Eight: Women and Anti-Colonial Resistance: Case Study of Nigeria**

Tuesday, March 1

- Johnson-Odim and Mba, *For Women and the Nation* (Chapters 4-5)
- Due: Bibliographic Essay

Thursday, March 3

- Johnson-Odim and Mba, *For Women and the Nation* (Chapters 6-7)

### **Week Nine: Women and Anti-Colonial Resistance: Case Study of Zimbabwe**

Tuesday, March 8

- Maraire, *Zenzele* (pp. 1-91)
- Due: Media Report #3
- **REMINDER**: Evening film viewing of “Flame” (Location TBA at 7 pm)

Thursday, March 10

- Maraire, *Zenzele* (pp. 92-194)

### **Week Ten: Spring Break!**

### **Week Eleven: Queering African History (I)**

Tuesday, March 22

- Epprecht, *Hungochani* (pp. 1-82)
- Primary Source from Falk, “Same-Sex Life among a Few Negro Tribes” (BB)

Thursday, March 24

- Epprecht, *Hungochani* (pp. 83-130)
- Due: Map Quiz #2

### **Week Twelve: Queering African History (II)**

Tuesday, March 29

- Epprecht, *Hungochani* (pp. 131-183)
- Film: “Africa’s Last Taboo” (50 minutes) and/or “Rape for Who I Am” (26 minutes)

Thursday, March 31

- Epprecht, *Hungochani* (184-228)
- Primary Source by Mbeki, “Speech at 13<sup>th</sup> Int’l AIDS Conference” (BB)

- Due: Idea Paragraph and Bibliography

### **Week Thirteen: Feminist Activism in South Africa (I)**

Tuesday, April 5

- Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa* (pp. 1-46)
- Due: Media Report #4

Thursday, April 7

- Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa* (pp. 47-115)
- Film: "You Have Struck a Rock!" (28 minutes)

### **Week Fourteen: Feminist Activism in South Africa (II)**

Tuesday, April 12

- Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa* (pp. 116-169)
- Primary Source by Kuzwayo, "A Task which Shook My Whole Being" (BB)
- Film: "To Walk Naked" (12 minutes)

Thursday, April 14

- Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa* (pp. 170-265)

### **Week Fifteen: Women, Politics and Power (I)**

Tuesday, April 19

- Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great* (pp. 1-112)
- Due: Map Quiz #3

Thursday, April 21

- Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great* (pp. 113-220)
- Due: Media report #5

### **Week Sixteen: Women, Politics and Power (II)**

Tuesday, April 26

- Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great* (pp. 221-316)
- Film: "Iron Ladies of Liberia" (77 minutes)

Thursday, April 28

- Course wrap-up
- Due: Final Papers