WOMEN IN AFRICAN HISTORY

History 430/Women’s Studies 430
Time: Tu/Th 1:30-2:45
Location: University Hall 301
Spring 2013

Professor Alicia C. Decker
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Office Hours: Tu/Th 3:00-4:00
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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, most of our 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.

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 at bookstore or on reserve at Hicks Library]
- Beverly Mack and Jean Boyd, One Woman’s Jihad: Nana Asma’u Scholar and Scribe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000)
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, This Child Will Be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life by Africa’s First Woman President (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009)
- Buchi Emecheta, The Slave Girl (New York: George Braziller, 1977)
- Course readings as PDF files available on Blackboard [BB]

Course Policies
- Students wishing to use a laptop computer may be asked to 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 during class. If I see you using them, you may be asked to leave.
- Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another’s words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.
• If you have a university-recognized disability that requires an accommodation, please make an appointment with Dr. Decker to discuss your needs.
• 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. Changes in this course will be announced on the Blackboard web page or by e-mail.

Grading Policies
• All written work must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font. Everything must have page numbers and be properly cited using Chicago-style formatting. Grammar and presentation count, so please use the Writing Lab!
• Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will be penalized by one letter grade for every 24 hours late unless you have an excused absence.
• All assignments must be submitted in hard copy—no online attachments!
• Keep 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.

Course Evaluation
• Participation: Because this is an upper-division seminar, you will be expected to come to every class on time and prepared to participate in a lengthy, in-depth conversation about what you have read. To facilitate discussion, you will be expected to post one discussion question per reading on Blackboard by 9:00 am on the day the reading is assigned. These questions should be analytical in nature and will be included in your participation grade. Participation counts for 50% of your final grade (500 points total).
• Map Quizzes: Africa is not a country. It is a vast continent with 55 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 12, March 26, and April 16. Each quiz will be worth 50 points (150 points total). Map quizzes count for 15% of your final grade.
• News Round-Ups: We are able to discern important historical processes in current events. For this reason, you will be expected to provide a ten-minute “round-up” of key news stories that affect African women and/or gender relations on the continent. On your assigned day, you (and potentially a partner) will be asked to present the news, covering approximately five stories from different parts of Africa. Your news items should be no more than one week old. This activity counts for 50 points or 5% of your final grade.
• Book Reviews: You will be required to complete two 5-page analytical book reviews. One must focus on either The Slave Girl or Singing Away the Hunger (due March 19) and the other must focus on This Child Will Be Great (due April 29). Although you will need to spend a bit of time summarizing the book, most of your essay should focus on analysis. Why is the book important? What does it teach us about African women’s history? How does it relate to larger themes of the course? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the text? Book reviews will be worth 150 points each (300 points total) or 30% of your final grade.
Course Schedule

Week One: Introduction to African Women’s History
Tuesday, January 8

Thursday, January 10
- Philips, “What is African History?” [BB]
- Sheldon, “Writing about Women” [BB]

Week Two: Women and Political Power in Pre-Colonial Africa
Tuesday, January 15
- Hanson, “Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda” [WIACH]
- Musisi, “Women, ‘Elite polygyny,’ and Buganda State Formation” [BB]

Thursday, January 17
- Achebe, “‘And She Became a Man’” [BB]
- Sweetman, “Yaa Asantewa of Asante” [BB]

Week Three: Women as Spiritual Leaders, Healers, and Prophets in Pre-Colonial Africa
Tuesday, January 22
- Berger, “Fertility as Power” [BB]
- Beach, “An Innocent Woman, Unjustly Accused?” [BB]

Thursday, January 24
- Mack and Boyd, One Woman’s Jihad (Chapters 1-6)

Week Four: Women and Slavery in Pre-Colonial Africa
Tuesday, January 29
- Mouser, “Women Slavers of Guinea-Conakry” [BB]
- Brooks, “A Nhara of the Guinea-Bissau Region” [BB]

Thursday, January 31
- Keim, “Women in Slavery among the Mangbetu” [BB]
- Robertson, “Post-Proclamation Slavery in Accra” [BB]

Week Five: Women as Explorers, Travelers, and Missionaries in Africa
Tuesday, February 5
- Romero, “Introduction” [BB]
- Hinderer, “Nigeria, 1853” [BB]
- Murray, “Kenya, 1954” [BB]

Thursday, February 7
- Boisseau, Excerpts from Introduction (1-3, 7-12) [BB]
- Boisseau, “An Imperial Spy in the Congo” [BB]
- Boisseau, “A Plantation Mistress in Liberia” [BB]
**Week Six: Women and Colonial Education**

**Tuesday, February 12**
- Cock, “Domestic Service and Education for Domesticity” [BB]
- Musisi, “Colonial and Missionary Education” [BB]
- Map quiz #1

**Thursday, February 14**
- Hunt, “Colonial Fairy Tales” [BB]
- Mianda, “Colonialism, Education and Gender Relations” [WIACH]

**Week Seven: Women and Colonial Labor Systems, Part I**

**Tuesday, February 19**
- Coplan, “You Have Left Me Wandering About” [BB]
- Barnes, “Virgin Territory?” [WIACH]

**Thursday, February 21**
- Turrittin, “Colonial Midwives and Modernizing Childbirth” [BB]
- Schmidt, “Race, Sex and Domestic Labor” [BB]

**Week Eight: Women and Colonial Labor Systems, Part II [Professor gone- no class!]**

**Tuesday, February 26**
- Emecheta, *The Slave Girl*

**Thursday, February 28**
- Emecheta, *The Slave Girl*

**Week Nine: Redefining Marriage in Colonial Africa, Part I [Professor gone- no class!]**

**Tuesday, March 5**
- Nthunya, *Singing Away the Hunger*

**Thursday, March 7**
- Nthunya, *Singing Away the Hunger*

**Week Ten: Spring Break!**

**Week Eleven: Redefining Marriage in Colonial Africa, Part II**

**Tuesday, March 19**
- Carrier and Murray, “Woman-Woman Marriage in Africa” [BB]
- Njambi and O’Brien, “Revisiting ‘Woman-Woman Marriage’” [BB]
- Book review #1 due

**Thursday, March 21**
- Kendall, “When a Woman Loves a Woman” [BB]
- Gay, “Mummies and Babies” [BB]

**Week Twelve: Regulating African Women’s Sexuality**

**Tuesday, March 26**
- McCurdy, “Urban Threats” [BB]
- Jackson, “When in the White Man’s Town” [WIACH]
- Map quiz #2
Thursday, March 28
- Thomas, “Imperial Concerns and ‘Women’s Affairs”’ [BB]
- Abusharaf, “We Have Supped So Deep in Horrors” [BB]

**Week Thirteen: Women Resist Colonialism**
**Tuesday, April 2**
- Bastian, “Dancing Women and Colonial Men” [BB]
- Bastian, “Vultures of the Marketplace” [WIACH]

Thursday, April 4
- Schmidt, “Emancipate Your Husbands!” [WIACH]
- Lyons, “Guerrilla Girls” [WIACH]

**Week Fourteen: Women Resist Apartheid**
**Tuesday, April 9**
- Suttner, “Women in the ANC-led Underground” [BB]
- Romgobin, “An Indian Woman Confronts Apartheid” [BB]
- Mohamed, “Sexual Terrorism” [BB]

Thursday, April 11
- Meintjes, “Naked Women’s Protest” [BB]
- Bishop, “The Black Sash” [BB]
- Film: “To Walk Naked”

**Week Fifteen: Homophobia and Violence in Post-Colonial Africa**
**Tuesday, April 16**
- Epprecht, “Sexual Minorities” [BB]
- Map quiz #3

Thursday, April 18
- Swarr, “Paradoxes of Butchness” [BB]
- Government of Uganda, “Anti-Homosexuality Bill” [BB]

**Week Sixteen: Africa’s First Female President**
**Tuesday, April 23**
- Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*

Thursday, April 25
- Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child Will Be Great*

**Note:** Final book review is due on Monday, April 29 by 5pm in my office!