

Sex, Love and Gender in Africa in the Age of AIDS

Gender Studies (GNDR) 23701

WINTER 2006

Tuesday/Thursday 12-1:20

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

This course examines gender and sexuality in contemporary Africa, using the AIDS epidemic as a frame for thinking about changes in African societies over the last two decades. Drawing primarily on theoretical and ethnographic literature from the social sciences, the course investigates notions of gendered identity in sub-Saharan Africa. Theoretically, the course asks how African contexts challenge conventional conceptualizations of gender and sex. More empirically, the course explores key aspects of personhood in African societies, including the colonial legacy, reproduction, women's rights, homosexuality and AIDS. This course assumes some background in gender and sexuality studies.

Course Goals

The goals of this course are twofold. First, you should gain an understanding of how to theorize gender and sexuality in African contexts. You should be able to critically examine the applicability of conventional theoretical approaches to gender and sexuality to African societies. How do African contexts challenge the ways we conceptualize gendered identity, personhood and intimacy? The second goal is to expose you to rich accounts of African lives, and expand your knowledge of contemporary issues on the continent. The intention is to make you more engaged with African concerns related to gender and sexuality, and to provide analytical tools appropriate to African contexts.

Requirements and Assignments

- **Attendance and Discussion:** This class is designed as a seminar, with few formal lectures, so close reading and active participation in class discussion are mandatory. The seminar format only works if you do all the reading and contribute comments, questions and criticisms during class.
- **Response Pieces:** Each week, you are required to post one response to the week's readings (via chalk). The class will be divided in half, with one half responding to the Tuesday readings and the other the Thursday readings. These are short, informal thought pieces that may include reactions to the readings, questions, or critiques. They should be no more than two paragraphs long. The posts must be submitted by midnight before class. Your responses will often be integrated into the discussion, so be prepared to expand on your comments in class.
- **Group Presentation:** Once per quarter you will be required to be part of a group reading presentation. Every Thursday, a group of students will make a presentation on the day's readings. The presentation should not be a summary of the readings, but a

discussion of key themes in the readings and questions for discussion. A template for the group presentation is included at the end of the syllabus.

- **Week 8 Group Presentation:** This week your group will work together to compare some quantitative research on sexual behavior in Chicago and Kampala, Uganda. During the Tuesday session you will use the class time to discuss the readings with your group and come up with a presentation for the Thursday session. On Thursday, all the groups will make their presentations and we will compare the findings. The presentations should compare and contrast sexual behavior in the two cities based on the statistical data. In addition, students are encouraged to critically analyze this quantitative approach to understanding sexuality.
- **Paper Assignments:** There are two short paper assignments, the first due at the beginning of week 6 and the second at the end of the quarter. Both should be 5 pages (not including references), double spaced, one inch margins.
 - Midterm paper: This paper will focus on theoretical issues raised in the class. In particular, the student should address how theoretical approaches to gender and sexuality addressed in the class are, or are not, relevant to African contexts. The student should not simply review the theoretical issues raised in the class, but make an *argument* about how best to think theoretically about gender and sexuality in Africa.
 - Final paper: This paper should delve more deeply into any of the weeks' topics. This paper should not only make an argument about how to theoretically approach a given topic, but, more importantly, grapple with the ethnographic and empirical detail raised by the readings. Additional outside reading is *not* required, but also not discouraged. The goal is for the student to gain some fluency in a substantive, real-world issue relevant to gender and sexuality in Africa, and to make an argument about how best to conceptualize an analysis of the topic.

Grading

- **Attendance and Participation:** 20% Attendance will be taken and students are expected to make at least one substantive comment per class.
- **Response Pieces:** 10% Each response is graded complete or incomplete. Students who submit 6 or more on-time responses by the end of the quarter will automatically get full credit for this assignment. Those who make fewer than 6 will not get any credit for this assignment.
- **Group Presentations:** 10% Graded complete or incomplete.
- **Mid-term:** 20% Grading guidelines for both papers are included at the end of the syllabus. What is most important is coming up with a clear, concise argument and defending it convincingly.
- **Final Paper:** 40%

Late Policy

- For papers, requests for extensions must be made 24 hours before the due date, via email. No extensions will be granted less than 24 hours before the due date. If papers are handed in late without an extension, a full letter grade will be deducted for each 24 hour period they are late.
- No late responses pieces will be accepted.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: Introduction: Gender and Sexuality in Africa

Session A: Introduction to Class

Session B: Overview of Relevant Theories of Sex and Gender

- LaFraniere, Sharon. "Forced to Marry Before Puberty, African Girls Pay Lasting Price" *New York Times*, November 27, 2005
- Mies, Maria. 1998 [1986]. Chapter 1 "What is Feminism?" in *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*.

Week 2: Contesting "Western" Conceptions of Gender and Sexuality

Session A:

- Rosaldo, Michell Zimbalist. 1974. "Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview" in *Woman Culture & Society*.
- Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko and Jane Fishburne Collier. 1987. Chapter 2 "Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship" in *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis*.

Further Reading:

- Maurer, Bill and Alejandro Lugo. 2000. Chapter 1 "The Legacy of Michelle Rosaldo: Politics and Gender in Modern Societies" in *Gender Matters : Rereading Michelle Z. Rosaldo*.

Session B:

- Comaroff, John. 1987. "Sui Genderis: Feminism, Kinship Theory, and Structural Domains" in *Gender and Kinship: Essays Toward a Unified Analysis*.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke. 2004. "Conceptualising Gender: Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies" in *African Gender Scholarship: Concepts, Methodologies and Paradigms*.

Further reading:

- diLeonardo, Micaela. 1991. Introduction "Gender, Culture and Political Economy: Feminist Anthropology in Historical Perspective" in *Gender at Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*.
- Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff. 2001. "On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa." *Social Identities*, 7(2): 267-83.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke. 1997. "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects" in *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*.
- Bakare- Yusuf, Bibi. 2004. "Yorubas Don't Do Gender: A Critical Review of Oyeronke Oyewumi's *The Invention of Women*" in *African Gender Scholarship: Concepts, Methodologies and Paradigms*.

Week 3: Debating “African” Sexuality

Session A:

- Caldwell, John. 1989. “The Social Context of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.” *Population and Development Review* 15:185-234.
- Le Blanc, Marie Nathalie et al. 1991. “The African Sexual System: Comment on Caldwell et al.” *Population and Development Review* vol. 17 no.3 September pp 497-505.
- Ahlberg, Beth. 1994. “Is there a Distinct African Sexuality? A Critical Response to Caldwell et al.” *Africa* 64:220-42.

Further reading:

- Caldwell, John. 1991. “The African Sexual System: Reply to Le Blanc et. al.” *Population and Development Review* vol. 17 no. 3 September pp 506-515.

Session B:

- Heald, Suzette. 1999 [1995]. “The Power of Sex: Reflections on Caldwell’s “African Sexuality” Thesis” in *Manhood and Morality: Sex, Violence and Ritual in Gisu Society*.
- Arnfred, Signe. 2004. “African Sexuality/Sexuality in Africa: Tales and Silences” in *Rethinking Sexualities in Africa*.

Week 4: Fertility, Sexuality and Development

Session A:

- Boserup, Ester. 1997 [1970]. “The Economics of Polygamy” in *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History & Representation*.
- Thomas, Lynn. 2003. “Postcolonial Nationalism and “Modern” Single Mothers” in *The Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction and the State in Kenya*.

Further reading:

- Ann K. Blanc and Anastasia J. Gage. 2000. Chapter 6 “Men, Polygyny, and Fertility Over the Life-Course in Sub-Saharan Africa” in *Fertility and the Male Life-Cycle in the Era of Fertility Decline*.

Session B:

- Vinh-Kim Nguyen 2005. “Uses and pleasures: sexual modernity, HIV/AIDS, and confessional technologies in a West African metropolis” in *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality, and Morality in Global Perspective*.
- Parikh, Shanti. 2005. “From auntie to diso: the bifurcation of risk and pleasure in sex education in Uganda” in *Sex in Development* (same as above).

Week 5: Feminism and Women's Movements

Session A:

- Mikell, Gwendolyn. 1997. "Introduction" in Gwendolyn Mikell ed., *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*.
- Rudo Gaidzanwa. 1992. "Bourgeois Theories of Gender and Feminism and their Shortcomings with Reference to Southern African Countries," in *Gender in Southern Africa: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues*.

Further reading:

- Mills, David and Richard Ssewakiryanga. 2002. "'That Beijing Thing': challenging transnational feminisms in Kampala." *Gender, Place and Culture*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 385–398.
- Jayawardena, Kumari. 1986. *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*. Introduction pp 1-24

Session B:

- Okurut, Mary Karooro. 2003. *The Official Wife*.
- Video: *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: the Hottentot Venus* by Zola Maseko. First Run/Icarus Films. 52 minutes, 1998.

MID-TERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7 (WEEK 6)

Week 6: Masculinity

Session A:

- Paul Dover. 2005. "Gender and Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village" in *African masculinities : men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present*.
- Mark Hunter. 2005. "Cultural politics and masculinities: Multiple partners in historical perspective in KwaZulu Natal." *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. Volume 7, Number 4 / July–August 2005.

Further reading:

- Connell, Robert. 1995. Chapter 3 "The Social Organization of Masculinity" in *Masculinities: Knowledge, Power and Social Change*.
- Kimmel, Michael. 1994. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity" in *Theorizing Masculinities*.

Session B:

- Cornwall, Andrea. 2003. "To Be a Man is More than a Day's Work: Shifting Ideals of Masculinity in Ado-Obo, Southwestern Nigeria" in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*.

- Jennifer Cole. 2005. "The Jaombilo Of Tamatave (Madagascar), 1992–2004: Reflections On Youth And Globalization" in *The Journal of Social History*. Summer 2005.

Week 7: Same-Sex Practices and Discourses on Homosexuality

Session A:

- Murray, Stephen. 2000. selections on Africa from *Homosexualities*.
- Murray, Stephen and Will Roscoe. 1998. selections from *Boy-wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities*.

Session B:

- Kendall, L. 1999. Chapter 7 "Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia" in Evelyn Blackwood and Saskia Wieringa (eds), *Female desires: same-sex relations and transgender practices across cultures*.
- *BBC Focus on Africa*. 2003. "Gay Africa: Sex and Politics." October-December 2003.
- Donham, Don, 2002. Chapter 17 "Freeing South Africa: The Modernization of Male-Male Sexuality in Soweto" in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*. edited by Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo.

Further reading:

- Tamale, Sylvia. "Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda." *Feminist Africa*, Issue 2, 2003.

Week 8: Sex in the City: What the Sexologists Say

Session A:

Break down into groups and discuss:

- **A View of the West:** Chapter 3 and Chapter 12 in Laumann, Edward. 2004. *The Sexual Organization of the City*.
- **A View of an African City:** Selections from various recent quantitative studies on sexual behavior in Kampala, Uganda

Session B:

- Group presentations comparing and contrasting data on sexual behavior in Chicago and Kampala

Week 9: AIDS in Africa

Session A:

- Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside. 2002. Chapter 5 "Why Africa?" in *AIDS in the twenty-first century: disease and globalization*.

- Ezekiel Kalipeni 2004. Part III Sections A and B in *HIV and AIDS in Africa : beyond epidemiology*.

Further Reading:

- Latest UNAIDS reports for global pandemic, sub-Saharan Africa:
<http://www.unaids.org/index.html>
- Treichler, Paula. 1999. Chapters 3 and 7 in *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic*.

Session B:

- Brad Weiss. 1996. Chapter 7 “Buying Her Grave” in *The Making and Unmaking of the Haya Lived World*.
- Epstein, Helen. 2003. “AIDS in South Africa: The Invisible Cure.” *New York Review of Books*. Volume 50, Number 12. July 17, 2003.

Further reading:

- Schoepf, Brooke. 1995. Chapter 2 “Culture, Sex Research, and AIDS Prevention in Africa,” in *Culture and Sexual Risk: Anthropological Perspectives on AIDS*.
- Human Rights Watch. 2005. “The Less They Know the Better: Abstinence-only HIV/AIDS Programs in Uganda.” <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/uganda0305>
- Epstein, Helen. 2005. “God and the Fight against AIDS” *New York Review of Books*. Volume 52, Number 7. April 28, 2005

Week 10: Changing Conceptions of African Intimacies in the Age of AIDS

Session A:

- Francis B. Nyamnjoh. 2005. “Fishing in Troubled Waters.” *Africa* 75 (3). Pp 295-324
- Epstein, Helen. 2004. “The Fidelity Fix.” *New York Times Magazine*. June 13, 2004.
- Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. 2004. Chapter 11 (afterword) “Notes on Afromodernity and the neo world order” in *Producing African Futures*.

Session B:

- Reading period, no class

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY MARCH 13 5PM
Drop Box will be placed outside office where office hours held.

Group Reading Presentation Sample Template

Note: What we are trying to avoid is the typical summary most students do when asked to make a presentation. Instead you should decide on two key themes you want to discuss. For each theme find one or two short quotes that illuminate this theme. Then come up with three questions or comments for discussion related to this theme. You do not have to address all the readings for the session. If your group finds one most interesting, you can limit yourself to that reading. Comparisons to readings and themes from other weeks are welcomed as well.

Please distribute a written copy of this presentation to the class.

THIS SHOULD BE ONE PAGE ONLY.

Theme 1: Bias in Western Theories of Sexuality

“...first quote...”

“...optional second quote...”

1. This author argues that most academics have a western bias in their theories of sexuality. What evidence does she use to support this claim?
2. question 2
3. question / comment 3

Theme 2: Male Sexual Privilege

“...first quote...”

“...optional second quote...”

1. question 1
2. question 2
3. question / comment 3