**Gender & Power in Africa 070:379 (Fall 2017)**

Prereqs: 101 (Intro to Cultural Anthropology) or Permission of Instructor

Professor Cathryn Townsend,  Room 309 Biological Sciences Building, Douglass

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30am-12:30pm

Classroom Hours: Tuesdays 2:50pm -5:50pm

HH-A5 (Hardenbergh Hall), College Ave. Campus - link to map:  
<http://rumaps.rutgers.edu/location/hardenbergh-hall>

This course explores gender relations in Africa in the past and present. Using theoretical reviews, ethnographic case studies, life-histories, archaeological data and forms of cultural production such as fiction and film, we will analyze the diversity and commonality of gendered ideas and practices across the continent; explore how gender articulates with ethnicity, ecology, economics, and other forms of difference; examine alternative theoretical perspectives in how gender is produced, reproduced and transformed; identify which gender-related issues are of most concern to African women and men; and examine gendered experiences of parenthood. Throughout the course we will be concerned with the disjunctures between the representations and realities of the lives of African men and women.

The course will be taught as a lecture/discussion, with considerable attention devoted to the discussion portion. The reading load is demanding and difficult at times, but students will be expected to keep up with the readings and to be prepared to participate in discussions. Whatever our differing knowledge and experiences of gender, Africa and anthropology, we all have something to contribute to discussion.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES -** After taking this course, students will be able to:

* Understand patterns of diversity and similarity in gender ideas and relations in sub-Saharan Africa [CITE 1]
* Grasp the role of culture, power and history in shaping the lives and relationships of men and women [CITE 1]
* Understand how ethnographic data informs, shapes and challenges theoretical debates about gender [CITE 1]
* Identify, explain and historically contextualize the fundamental concepts, modes of analysis, and central questions of  feminist anthropology [CITE 2, 4]
* Use anthropological concepts and examples to reframe contemporary gender debates and issues [CITE 2, 4]  CITE 1, CITE 2, and CITE 4 refer to the Learning Goals for the Department of Anthropology: http://anthro.rutgers.edu/undergrad-program/department-learning-goals

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS (based on a 100 point scale)**

**1) Attendance, reading and discussion: 20 points**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to have read the assigned material for each class meeting and to actively contribute to discussion of the issues. More than one unexcused absence and/or late arrival (defined as more than 15 minutes after class has started) from class will lower your final grade by 10 points. Each additional unexcused absence or late arrival will lower your final grade by an additional 10 points. Documentation of an excused absence must be submitted to me within 2 weeks of missing class or the absence will be considered unexcused.

**2) Reading Comprehension Quizzes 10 points**

Three reading comprehension quizzes will be given during the course to ensure that everyone is keeping up with the reading. Only the best 2 out of 3 scores will count towards this grade (each will count for 5 points). If you are late to class and arrive after the quiz has started, or if you are absent from class on the day a quiz is given, whatever your excuse, you will not be able to take a make-up.

**3) Weekly Commentaries: 30 points**

To facilitate discussion, each week students will submit a brief (one to two page) response to the week's readings **by Monday morning (10am at the latest)** to the “Forums” section of the course Sakai site, under the relevant topic. The commentary should: 1) briefly summarize the main arguments of the reading(s); 2) analyze the contribution of the reading(s) to the week’s theme; 3) pose three questions about the reading(s). ***You must post a minimum of 10 commentaries over the course of the semester. Each commentary is worth a total of 3 points.***

**4) Midterm Exam: 20 points**

There will be one midterm exam comprised of short answer and short essay questions. The exam will take place on **October 24th** in class.

**5) Final Essay: 20 points**

The final essay will gauge your knowledge of fundamental concepts and assess your ability to integrate, synthesize and understand the significance of the information discussed in class and presented in the readings. You will have a choice of topics, which will be distributed well in advance of the due date. The essay should be 4 to 5 pages double-spaced and is due no later than **10am on Tuesday, December 19th**. It should be posted (as a word attachment) on the “Assignments” tab on Sakai.

FINAL GRADE: Will be calculated as follows: Attendance, reading & discussion (20 points), Weekly Commentaries (30 points), Class Presentations (10 points), Essays (30 points), with a possible 10 additional points of extra credit available on the final numeric grade. The Grading Scale is: A = 90 and above; B+ = 88-89; B = 80-87; C+ = 78-79; C = 70-77; D = 60-69; F = 59 and below

**FILMS**

If you miss a class where a film is shown, the films are available at the Media Center in the Douglass Library. The title and call number of each video are listed on the syllabus.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

All students must strictly adhere to the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy, which identifies and defines violations of cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and denying others access to information or material. Full definitions of each of these violations, as well as the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy, are available online at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu. I encourage you to study this website carefully for information about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly acknowledge the ideas and words of other. The complete Policy can be viewed at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy

**LAPTOPS, CELLPHONES AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

We are all responsible for creating and maintaining a culture of respect, active listening and participation in the classroom. To that end, the following policies apply: students may use **laptops** to take notes in class or to refer to e-versions of the readings. But if I see that a laptop is being used for email, Facebook, or anything other than taking notes or reading course materials, then you will no longer be allowed to use your laptop in class for the rest of the semester. **Cellphones** must be turned off. If your cellphone rings during class or I see that you are texting or looking at it, I will take it away for the rest of the class period.

**WRITING SKILLS**

As this is an advanced undergraduate course, you are expected to demonstrate competent writing skills in all of the course work that you submit. Writing effectively is one of the most important skills that you should be developing during your university studies. If you find that you are struggling with acquiring writing skills, please make the time to visit the Rutgers Writing Centre to find out about the many resources it offers to students.

Always include an introduction, body, conclusion and list of references (bibliography) in assignments and exam questions that take the form of an essay. Please use concise paragraphing, with one clearly identifiable central topic per paragraph. The ideal paragraph is 100-250 words. Your writing should be grammatically correct and contain no spelling or punctuation errors. Do not use words out of context. If you are not 100% sure of the precise meaning of a word, please consult a dictionary before using it. You will be penalized for errors. Please proof read your work carefully.

**ABSENCE REPORTING**

If you will be absent, please email me and report your absence through the online absence reporting system: https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/

**REQUIRED TEXTS (Available from Barnes & Noble and on reserve in Douglass Library or electronic copy through Rutgers Libraries catalogue)**

Virginia Lee Barnes and Janice Boddy. 1994. *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl*. New York: Vintage Books

Tsitsi Dangerembga. 1988. *Nervous Conditions*. Seattle: Seal Press (newer editions are fine).

Marjorie Shostak. 1981. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman,* (newer editions are fine), electronic copy available through Rutgers Libraries catalogue.

**Additional readings listed below are available through the course SAKAI site (sakai.rutgers.edu) in the “Resources” section by author’s last name (in alphabetical order).**

**COURSE OUTLINE: GENDER & POWER IN AFRICA**

**Week 1 (5 Sept)**

**Introduction: Setting the Terms of Debate**

FILM:

*N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman* (60 mins, Media 10-3623)

**Week 2 (12 Sept)**

**Gender Equality in Immediate-Return Hunter-Gatherer Societies**

* James Woodburn. 2005. ‘Egalitarian Societies Revisited’. In T. Widlok & W. G. Tadesse  Property and Equality Vol 1:Ritualisation, Sharing, Egalitarianism, New York: Berghahn Books.
* Jerome Lewis. 2008. ‘Ekila, Blood, Bodies & Egalitarian Societies.’ *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14(2).
* Cathryn Townsend. In Press for 2018. ‘Egalitarianism, Evolution of’. In H. Callan, *The International Encyclopaedia of Anthropology,* Wiley-Blackwell.
* Optional: Alan Barnard. 1980. Sex Roles among the Nharo Bushmen of Botswana’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute,* 50 (2): 115-124.
* Optional: M. Dyble et al. 2015. ‘Sex Equality Can Explain the Unique Social Structure of Hunter-Gatherer Bands’. *Science* 348(6236): 796-798.

FILM: *A Caterpillar Moon* (Media: Electronic Resource)

**Week 3 (19 Sept)**

**Gender Relations in Delayed-Return Hunter-Gatherer Societies**

* Patricia Draper. 1975. ‘!Kung Women: Contrasts in Sexual Egalitarianism in Foraging & Sedentary Contexts’. In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. Edited by R. R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 77-109.
* Corinne Kratz. 2000. ‘Forging Unions and Negotiating Ambivalence: Personhood and Complex Agency in Okiek Marriage Arrangement’ in I. Karp and D. A. Masolo (eds.), African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press.
* Lee Cronk. 1989. ‘From Hunters to Herders: Subsistence Change as a Reproductive Strategy among the Mukogodo’. *Current Anthropology* 30(2): 224-234.

FILM (extracts): *Mad Max Fury Road,* (Media 10-6024)

**Week 4 (26 Sept)**

**Agency and Structure: A Life History**

* Marjorie Shostak. 1981. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman,* (newer editions are fine), electronic copy available through Rutgers Libraries catalogue.

**Week 5 (3 Oct)**

**Gender, Ritual & Religion**

* Cathryn Townsend. 2015. ‘Baka Ritual Flow Diverted’ *Hunter Gatherer Research* 1(2): 197-224.
* Camilla Power and Ian Watts. 1997. ‘The Woman with the Zebra’s Penis: Gender, Mutability & Performance’. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 3(3): 537-560.
* Victor Turner. 1969. ‘Paradoxes of Twinship in Ndembu Ritual’. In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

FILM: *Forest of the Dancing Spirits,* not available in library.

**Week 6 (10 Oct)**

**Property, Lineages and Marriage in Traditional Economies**

# Ashley E. Frost, & Francis Nii-Amoo Dodoo. 2010. ‘“The Man Comes to Marry the Woman”: Exploring Adolescent Boys' Gendered Expectations for Bridewealth and Marriage Among the Akwapim of Southern Ghana’, Marriage and Family Review 46 (1-2).

* Ester Boserup. 1970. ‘The Economics of Polygamy’. In *Women’s Role in Economic Development,* Allen and Unwin.
* Jean Lydall. 2005. ‘The Power of Women in An Ostensibly Male-Dominated Agro-Pastoral Society’. In T. Widlok and W. G. Tadesse, *Property and Equality: Ritualisation, Sharing, Egalitarianism,* New York: Berghahn Books.

**Week 7 (17 Oct)**

**Agency and Structure: A Life History**

* Virginia Lee Barnes and Janice Boddy, 1994. *Aman the Story of a Somali Girl* (RT)

**Week 8 (24 Oct)**

**Mid-Term Exam to be taken in class**

FILM: *Asante Market Women* (52 mins, Media 2-7524)

**Week 9 (31 Oct)**

**Archaeological Perspectives: Gender in African Prehistory**

* Susan Kent. 1998. ‘Invisible Gender – Invisible Foragers: Southern African Hunter-Gatherer Spacial Patterning and the Archaeological Record’. In S. Kent (ed.) *Gender in African Pre-History.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMiraPress, pp. 39-53
* Diane Gifford-Gonzalez. 1998. ‘Gender and Early Pastoralists in East Africa’. In S. Kent (ed.) *Gender in African Pre-History.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMiraPress, pp. 115-137
* Peter Schmidt. 1998. ‘Reading Gender in the Ancient Iron Technology of Africa’. In S. Kent (ed.) *Gender in African Pre-History.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMiraPress, pp. 139-162.

**Week 10 (7 Nov)**

**Historical Perspectives: Precolonial Africa**

* John Iliffe. 2004. ‘Honour, Rank and Warfare Among the Yoruba”. In John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge University Press).
* Edna G. Bay. 1995. ‘Belief, Legitimacy and the Kpojito: An Institutional History of the Queen Mother in Precolonial Dahomey. *The Journal of African History* 36(1): 1-27.
* Barbara Cooper. 2005. ‘Reflections on Slavery, Seclusion and Female Labor in the Maradi Region of Niger in the 19th and 20th Centuries. In A. Cornwell, *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Indiana University Press.
* Optional: George E. Brooks, Jr. 1976. ‘The *Signares* of Saint-Louis and Goree: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Senegal. In N. J. Hafkin & E. G. Bay (eds.), *Women in Africa,* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

**Week 11 (14 Nov)**

**Historical Perspectives: Colonial Africa**

* Dorothy L. Hodgson. 1999. ‘Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History: Changing Gender Relations among Maasai in Tanganyika, 1850-1930.’ *Journal of African History* 40(1): 41-65.
* Judith Van Allen. 1972. ‘Sitting on a Man’: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6(2): 165-181
* Poppy Fry. 2015. ‘Re-reading the 1835 “Fingo Emancipation”: Women and Ethnicity in the Colonial Archive’. In J. B Shetler (ed.) *Gendering Ethnicity in African Women’s Lives.* Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 87-99.

**Week 12 (21 Nov)**

**Historical Perspectives: Postcolonial Africa**

* Tsitsi Dangerembga, *Nervous Conditions* (RT)

FILM: *In Their Own Words: African Women Speak -- Tsitsi Dangerembga* (60 mins)

**Week 13 (28 Nov)**

**Feminine Gender Roles**

* Filomena Steady. 1987. “African Feminism: A Worldwide Perspective.” In Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Sharon Harley and Andrea Benton Rushing, eds. *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, pps. 3- 24.
* Olabisi Aina. 1998 . “African Women at the Grassroots: The Silent Partners of the Women’s Movement.” In Obioma Nnaemeka, ed. *Sisterhood: Feminisms & Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*. Trenton: Africa World Press, pps. 65- 88.
* Nwando Achebe and Bridget Teboh. 2007. “Dialoguing Women.” In Catherine M. Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan F. Miescher, eds. *Africa After Gender?* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pps. 63-81.

FILM: *In Their Own Words: African Women Speak -- Fatou Sow* (60 mins)

**Week 14 (5 Dec)**

**Masculine Gender Roles**

* Chenjerai Shire.1994. “Men Don’t Go to the Moon: Language, Space and Masculinities in Zimbabwe.” In Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, eds. *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. New York and London: Routledge, pps. 147-158.
* Andrea A. Cornwall. 2003. “To be a Man is More than a Day’s Work: Shifting Ideals of Masculinity in Ado-Odo, Southwestern Nigeria. In Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephen Miescher, eds. *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, pps. 230-248.
* Dorothy L. Hodgson. 1999. ‘Once Intrepid Warriors’: Modernity and the Production of Maasai Masculinities.” *Ethnology* 38(2): 121-150.

FILM: *Maasai Manhood* (53 mins, Media 2-3892)

**Week 15 (12 Dec)**

**Motherhood and Fatherhood**

* Susan Rasmussen. 2000. ‘Exalted Mothers: Gender, Aging & Post-childbearing Experience in a Tuareg Community’. In Dorothy L. Hodgson, ed. *Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa*. Oxford: James Surrey, pps. 186-205.
* Barry Hewlett. 1997. ‘The Cultural Nexus of Aka Father-Infant Bonding’. InC.B. Brettel and C. Sargent (eds.) *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective.* Prentice Hall Humanities, pps. 45-56.

**FINAL ESSAY DUE ON 19th DECEMBER**