

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Gender and Sexualities in Sub-Saharan Africa
AFS 3332
Spring 2019

Professor: Mariama Jaitheh
Email: [Communicate via Canvas Message Only](#)
Office Hours: By Appointment

****This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your graduation requirement.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines gender and sexuality in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa, using a critique of Western conventional categories and a critical approach to the AIDS epidemic as frames for thinking about changes in African societies over the last two decades. Drawing primarily on ethnographic work and theoretical literature from the social sciences, the course examines notions of gendered and sexualized identifications in sub-Saharan Africa. Theoretically, the course asks how Sub-Saharan African contexts challenge Western or Global North conventional conceptualizations of gender and sexualities. More empirically, the course explores key aspects of personhood in Sub-Saharan African societies, including the consideration of the impact of the colonial legacy, conceptions and practices of reproductive women's rights, homosexuality and trans-sexual practices, construction of masculinities and femininities, etc.

The course assumes that enrolled students will have some background—at the introductory level—in gender and sexuality studies.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- theorize gender and sexuality in African contexts.
- critically examine and assess the applicability or lack thereof of Western conventional theoretical approaches to gender and sexuality in African societies.
- demonstrate an understanding of how Sub-Saharan African contexts challenge the ways gender, identities, personhood, "love," and intimacy are conceptualized (and sometimes universalized) in the West or Global North.
- demonstrate an expansion of their understanding of African contemporary issues.
- feel more engaged with African concerns related to gender and sexualities.

GLOBAL LEARNING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Global Awareness:

Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of how much local African gender constructs and sexualities are interrelated with global, international, and intercultural issues, movements, trends, and systems.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Global Perspective:

- Students will be able to take into consideration both African and Western feminist, queer studies, and other theoretical perspectives in their analyses of African sexualities and gender constructs as they are performed locally, and are influenced by global and international forces and laws, in ever growing intercultural contexts.

Global Engagements:

Students will be able to propose solutions to specific cases of gender intolerance and rigid heteronorm activity in given local, global and intercultural African contexts.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via messages.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- ***Blackboard Reading Response E-Posts***

During the semester students must contribute eight (8) 300 - 1 page (approximately 300-400 words) reading response e-post under the "discussion" section of the Blackboard site. E-posts are aimed at encouraging inquiry, analysis and discussion among students, on-line. **E-posts are due by the end of Each Module.** Students are encouraged, but not required, to read one another's e-posts. These responses are evaluated on the basis of the quality of students' engagement with the core themes of the readings and the coherence and clarity of the writing. As you read for the week, consider the following questions. These will also help you to write your reading response.

- 1) What is the main argument(s)? Why did the author(s) write the article or chapter?
- 2) What are the data used as evidence by the author to support the claims he/she makes in his/her argument?
- 3) What is useful about the reading(s)?
- 4) Were any of the points made questionable? If so, why?
- 5) What points, issues, or terms would you like to discuss or have clarified?
- 6) How do the various readings assigned inform each other? Contradict? Raise new questions?

- ***Exams***

There are five (5) multiple choice exams based on assigned readings and films.

- ***Film Reaction Papers***

You are expected to write (3) film reaction papers (2-3 pages, 12 pt, double-spaced) from the assigned films in the Modules. One out of these three film reaction papers will count as your GL film reaction paper. The GL film (Global Learning film) will be identified within the syllabus and Modules. You will use part 4 of your film reaction paper format to complete your GL film reaction paper. Students can choose any of the required films in the course on which to write a reaction paper, however each paper is **due the Monday after the film is**

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

assigned. The format of the film reaction papers will be posted under class resources.

Please note that your course requires the use of Turnitin to submit your assignments.

- Review the detailed [Turnitin Instructions](#) on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

Additional Items

1. A note on papers: Make sure you proofread your papers and provide appropriate citations when referencing readings from our class. Papers will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:
 - A: outstanding analysis; solid examples and reasons provided to support views; clearly written.
 - B: fulfilled the assignment adequately; few if any grammatical problems or unclear sentences.
 - C: fulfilled the assignment but either the analysis is insufficient or superficial and/or there were a number of grammatical mistakes.
 - D: the assignment was not adequately fulfilled and/or there were a substantial number of grammatical errors; awkward and confusing sentences.
 - E: the assignment was not turned in within two weeks of the due date, or was not completed according to the criteria listed above.
2. Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and page numbers.
3. You must avoid –at all costs– direct quotations in your papers. Please paraphrase and cite only from class materials. For citation style, see the AAA style guide uploaded on the course content page of this course’s website.
4. All assignments and exams are to be uploaded onto turnitin.com. NO late papers will be accepted for full credit without a medical excuse. No exceptions will be made.
5. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a ‘0’ for the assignment and you will be reported to Academic Affairs. To avoid plagiarism, all assignments will have to be uploaded onto turnitin.com.
6. In this course, we will be discussing topics some might consider sensitive, provocative, or taboo such as race and sexuality. It is imperative that you express your opinions in a respectful manner.
7. Make-up Policy: All assignments/exams should be submitted on the dates they are due. The only exceptions are dire emergency, grave illness, and religious holidays. In the case of the first, whether or not a situation qualifies as a dire emergency will be determined by me. Since I do not see most reasons for failing to turn in assignments and take exams as dire emergencies, not

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

attempting to make these excuses is your best bet. In the case of the second, I require a doctor's note.

8. Accommodations for Disabilities: Any student who, because of disability, may require accommodations in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodations for individual learning needs. FIU and I will make every attempt to accommodate all students with disabilities. For further information on resources available at FIU, contact the Disability Resource Center at WUC 131, Biscayne Park Campus (Phone: 9-5211; Email: drc@fiu.edu).

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION

Readings Response E-Posts (8 x 25)	200 pts
5 Exams (each worth 100pts)	500pts
2 Film Reaction Papers (2-3 pages) (100 POINTS EACH)	200 pts
Global Learning Assessments	
Global Learning Film or Reading Report (Global Awareness)	100 pts
TOTAL	1,000pts

1000-940	A	840 – 800	B	690 – 640	D
930-900	A-	790 – 760	C+	500 – 400	F
890 – 860	B+	740 – 700	C		

The total number of points that you can earn in this course is 1000. However, throughout the semester, you may have opportunities to earn extra credit through attending events relevant to the course and writing a reaction paper.

GROUND RULES

- 1) All assignments are to be uploaded onto turnitin.com. NO late papers will be accepted for full credit without a medical and or family related excuse. Each day late will result in the loss of 10% of the total possible points.
- 2) Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a '0' for the assignment and you will be reported to Academic Affairs. To avoid plagiarism, all assignments will have to be uploaded onto turnitin.com.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings from this course consist of journal articles and chapters from various texts. There are also several required films. All readings and films will be available on the course's Canvas website. Required readings for the course are located below in the Modules section for which they are assigned.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1

January 7 - January 27

Introduction: Reflecting Upon Understandings of, and Theorizings about Gender and Sexualities in Sub-Saharan African Contexts

Required Readings:

Arnfred, Signe

2004 "African Sexuality/Sexuality in Africa: Tales and Silence" in *Rethinking Sexualities in Africa*.

Tamale, Sylvia

2011, "Researching and Theorising Sexualities in Africa" in *African Sexualities: A Reader* edited by Sylvia Tamale.

Comaroff, John and Jean Comaroff

2001 "On Personhood: An Anthropological Perspective from Africa." *Social Identities*, 7(2): 267-83.

Oyewumi, Oyeronke

2004 "Conceptualising Gender: Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies." in *African Gender Scholarship: Concepts, Methodologies and Paradigms*.

Bakare- Yusu, D.

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*.

Film: "The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: The Hottentot Venus."

Exam #1 Covers Module 1; Thursday, 1/24/2019 at 4pm to Sunday, 1/27/2019 at 11:59pm

Module 2

January 28 – February 3

Debating the So-called "Distinct African Sexuality"

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

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* 17(3) September: 497-505.

Ahlberg, Beth

1994 "Is there a Distinct African Sexuality? A Critical Response to Caldwell et al." *Africa* 64:220-42.

Caldwell, John

1991 "The African Sexual System: Reply to Le Blanc et. al." *Population and Development Review* vol. 17(3) September: 506-515.

Heald, Suzette

1999 [1995] "The Power of Sex: Reflections on Caldwell's "African Sexuality" Thesis" in *Manhood and Morality: Sex, Violence and Ritual in Ghana Society*.

Exam #2: Covers Modules 2 on Thursday, 1/31/2019 at 4pm, 1/31/2019 to Sunday, 2/3/2019 at 11:59.

Module 3

February 4 – March 3

Further Discussing Femininity, Feminism and Women's Movements

Ahlberg, Beth Maina and Ali Kulane

2011. "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" in *African Sexualities: A Reader* edited by Sylvia Tamale.

Diallo, Assitan

2005. "Paradoxes of Female Sexuality in Mali: On the Practices of *Magnonmaka* and *Bolon*" in *Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa* edited by Signe Arnfred.

Gunkel, Henriette

2010 " 'Myself had a sweetie …': re-thinking female same-sex intimacy beyond the institution of marriage and identity politics." *Social Dynamics* 36(3): 531-546.

Kolawole, Mary

2005 "Re-Conceptualizing African Gender Theory: Feminism, Womanism and the Arere Metaphor in *Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa* edited by Signe Arnfred.

Film: "Karmen Gei"

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

The Construction of Masculinity

Ratele, Kopano

2011 “Male Sexualities and masculinities” in *African Sexualities: A Reader* edited Sylvia Tamale.

Hunter, Mark

2005 “Cultural politics and masculinities: Multiple partners in historical perspective KwaZulu Natal.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 7(4) July–August.

Ampofo, Akosua Adomako and John Boateng

2005 “Multiple meanings of manhood among boys in Ghana” in *African Sexualities: A Reader* edited by Sylvia Tamale.

Meiu, George Paul

2011., “Mombasa Morans: Embodiment, Sexual Morality and Same-Sex Men in Kenya” in *African Sexualities: A Reader* edited by Sylvia Tamale

Exam # 3: Covers Module 3 on Thursday at 4pm, 2/28/2019 to Sunday, 3/3/2019 at 11:59pm.

Module 4

March 4 – March 24

Exploring Sexual Diversity: Queer Africa

Akanji, Olajide and Mark Apprecht (2013)

“Human Rights Challenge in Africa: Sexual Minority Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

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*.

Niang, Cheikh Ibrahima, et al. 2003. “‘It’s Raining Stones’: Stigma, Violence and HIV Vulnerability among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Dakar, Senegal.” *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 5 (6): 499–512.

Rabie, Francois; Lesch, Elmién

2009 “‘I am like a woman’: constructions of sexuality among gay men in a low-income South African community.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 11(7): 717-729.

Gunkel, Henriette

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

2009 "What's Identity Got To Do With It?; Rethinking Intimacy and Homosexuality in Contemporary South Africa." *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 17(3): 206-221.

Spurlin, William and Cheryl Stobie

2011 "He uses my body': female traditional healers, male ancestors and transgender in South Africa." *African Identities* 9(2): 149-162.

O'Mara, Kathleen

2013. "LGBTI Community and Citizenship Practices in Urban Ghana" in *Sexual Diversity in Africa: Politics, Theory, Citizenship* edited by S.N. Nyeck and J. Epprecht.

Film: "[Dakan](#)"

Exam #4: Covers Module 4 on Thursday, 3/21/2019 at 4pm Sunday, 3/24/2019 at 11:59pm.

Module 5

March 25 – April 14

Changing Conceptions of African Intimacies in the Age of AIDS (1)

Bhana, Deevia; Morrell, Robert; Shefer, Tamar, and others 19

2010 "South African teachers' responses to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in schools." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 12(8): 871-883.

Fetene, Getnet Tizazu; Dimphe, G.

2010 "Globalization, public policy and 'knowledge gap': Ethiopian youth and the HIV/AIDS pandemic." *Journal of Education Policy* 25(4): 425-441.

Mindry, Deborah

2010 "Engaging care: HIV, humanitarian assistance in Africa and the reproduction of gender stereotypes." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 12(5): 555-568.

Changing Conceptions of African Intimacies in the Age of AIDS (2)

Hawkins, J.; Price, N.; Mussa, F.

2009 "Marking the cow: Young women's construction of identity and risk in age-separate transactional sexual relationships in Maputo, Mozambique." *Global Public Health* 4(2): 169-182.

Hanass-Hancock, Jill

2009 "Interweaving Conceptualizations of Gender and Disability in the Context of Vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa." *Sexuality and Disability* 27(1): 35-47.

Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Pourette, Dolores

2008 "Migratory Paths, Experiences of HIV/AIDS, and Sexuality: African Women Living with HIV/AIDS in France." *Feminist Economics* 14(4): 149-181.

Film: "Life, Above All" ([GL Film](#))

Exam #5: Covers Modules 10 on Thursday, 4/11/2019 at 4pm to Sunday, 4/14/2019 at 11:59pm.

Do not copy