Gender Politics in Africa

This course focuses on the ways social structures and institutions shape gender in sub-Saharan Africa, with an emphasis on the state. It begins with the highly contested conceptions of gender and feminism in Africa. Next, we turn to nationalism and gendered colonial African states. With the success of national liberation movements and the rise of African women’s movements many African countries liberalized; some became democracies. Those political transformations and the spread of a human rights culture meant women in much of Africa won a greater role in politics, the third theme of the course. Their success increased hopes among feminists that the state would attack sexism. Those hopes have yet to be fulfilled, as can be seen from an investigation of the region’s most contemporary pressing problems, from the sexual division of labor to HIV/AIDS.
Course Requirements.

- Participation, attendance and careful reading are essential.
- Grading consists of class participation and student presentations (30%), 2 analytical essays (35%), and the final research paper (35%).
- Follow the honor code. If you have a question about plagiarism, ask.
- Late papers lose 3 points each day for the first two days. Later work will only be accepted as determined by the instructor.
- See the “Assignments” file on Collab under the Syllabus tab for further details on written work and classroom policies.

Required Texts.

2. Shireen Hassim, 2006, Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority, University of Wisconsin Press.
   - NB: Buy the Bauer and Britton book at the student bookstore in paperback. Everywhere else it is available in hardback only.

*Required texts are in the UVA bookstore under PLCP and SWAG 4840.
**Recommended Background Reading.**

This course presumes students have introductory knowledge of sub-Saharan Africa, comparative politics, and gender politics. For students unfamiliar with one of these topics, the following readings are recommended:

Contemporary Africa:

Comparative Politics in Africa:

Gender Politics:

Recommended for Research Papers:

**Course Outline.**

**Class 1 (Aug. 24): Introduction**

Key terms, assignments etc.

*Recommended:*


**Part I: Debating Feminism and Gender**

**Class 2 (Aug. 26) Gender and Early African History**
Simon Hall, 1998, “A Consideration of Gender Relations in the Late Iron Age ‘Sotho’ Sequence of the Western Highveld, South Africa,” in Susan Kent ed.,


Recommended:

Class 3 (Aug. 31): Women’s Historic Power


**Recommended:**


**Class 4 (Sept. 2): CANCELLED**

**Class 5 (Sept. 7): Contesting Gender**


**Recommended:**


*Last day to drop a course is Sept. 8*

**Class 6 (Sept. 9): African Feminisms**


Recommended:


*Last day to add a course is Sept. 11*

Part II. Nations and States
Class 7 (Sept. 14): Gender and State Formation


Recommended:


Class 8 (Sept. 16): Gendered Nations


Recommended:


Class 9 (Sept. 21): Gender and Armed Struggle


Recommended:
Film: “Flame.”


**Class 10 (Sept. 23): Women in National Liberation Movements**


**Recommended:**


*FIRST ESSAY DUE Sept 27 by noon on collab*

Class 11 (Sept. 28): A History of African Women’s Movements

Recommended:


**Class 12 (Sept. 30): New Women’s Movements**

*Recommended:*


**Class 13 (Oct. 5): Autonomy and Democratization**

*Recommended:*


**Class 14 (Oct. 7): Women in Parliament** (readings will be divided up among students)


**Recommended:**


**No Class (Oct. 12): READING DAY**

**Class 15 (Oct. 14): State Feminism**


**Recommended:**


*Last day to drop a course with a “W” is October 19. *

Class 16 (Oct. 19): Gender and Political Parties

Recommended:


Class 17 (Oct. 21): Gender Policy Making


*Recommended:*


Class 18 (Oct. 26): Women Sidelined In Politics


*Recommended:*
Denise Walsh, 2011, *Women’s Rights in Democratizing States: Just Debate and Gender Justice in the Public Sphere*, Ch. 6 and 7.

Class 19 (Oct. 28): Gender and Tradition


Recommended:


*SECOND ESSAY DUE Nov. 1 by noon on collab*

**Class 20 (Nov. 2): Gender and Peacemaking**  


Recommended:
Film: “Forgiveness”


Part III. The Sexual Division of Labor
Class 21 (Nov. 4): Gender and Work
Frederick Cooper, “Industrial Man Goes to Africa,” in Lisa Lindsay and Stephan Miescher, eds., 2003, Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa Portsmouth: Heinemann, pp. 128-137 (collab).


**Recommended:**


**Class 22 (Nov. 9): Gender and Development**

Dzodzi Tsikata, 2009, “Informalization, the Informal Economy and Urban Women’s Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa since the 1990s,” in Razavi, pp. 131-162 (collab).

**Recommended:**


**Part IV. Bodies, Morality and Sex**

**Class 23 (Nov. 11): Colonial (Mis)Perceptions of African Bodies**


**Recommended:**

Film: “District 9”


Anne McClintock, 1995, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest, New York: Routledge, Ch. 5.


Class 24 (Nov. 16): Sexuality


Recommended:


Amanda Locke Swarr, “Transition Matters: Transsexual Ruptures to the Congruence of Sex, Gender, and Race in South Africa,” unpublished manuscript, see the instructor for a copy.


**Class 25 (Nov. 18): Homophobia**


**Recommended:**


*Thanksgiving Recess: November 25-29*

**Class 26 (Nov. 23): Research Paper Proposal Due on Collab by 12 midnight**

**Class 27 (Nov. 30): Gender and HIV/AIDS**


**Recommended:**


**Class 28 (Dec. 2): Gender Based Violence**


**Recommended:**


Anything by Rachel Jewkes and her colleagues. Find her under “google scholar.” She puts out one or two articles a year, based on extensive empirical data, almost all of it from South Africa.


Class 29 (Dec. 7): Gender Identity in Crisis


**Recommended:**


*RESEARCH PAPERS DUE *
Dec 16, 12 noon, as an attached file on collab