

History 6_12:
Gender in Modern Africa, 1830-2013

Professor Trevor R. Getz

Contact, class and office hour details:

Synopsis

In this course, students will develop competencies around the theme of gender in the African past by working with the scholarship of leading researchers in this field. Then, through the application of these competencies to both primary and secondary sources, students will themselves undertake the act of gendering interpretations of the African past. This progression will involve three important components. First, students will explore the work of scholars who have engaged African history from a gender perspective using the theoretical framework of contemporary gender studies. African experiences with enslavement, colonialism, and modernity make this a particularly rich area and period for students to learn how to embed gender in their thinking about the human past. Second, students will employ this knowledge to (re)think from where gendered categories come, and to examine how "gender" is sustained by its own histories, connotations, and conceptual roles. The African continent, with its pluralistic and diverse societies and its modern experience of colonialism, provides a particularly useful vantage point for such exploration. Finally, students will learn and practice applying gendered perspectives and the associated methodologies and theoretical frameworks to African history. These perspectives are particularly valuable because they are broadly applicable to other fields of history and to the study of the contemporary world as well.

This course is designed to play several roles in terms of undergraduate education within the History major.

- 1. As part of the 'world' area emphasis, it will help students to complete their pathway to graduation.*
- 2. As part of the proposed 'gender' area emphasis, it will help students complete their pathway to graduation.*
- 3. African history plays a particular role in the discipline in terms of raising students' awareness of the alterity of human experiences and perspectives in the global past. This course is designed to help engender just such an awareness.*

This course is also proposed to be part of the upper-division general education pattern. By providing students with an additional upper-division GE social science course, approved for both Social Justice and Global Perspectives overlays, it will play a valuable role in our university-wide education program.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to...

- evaluate the historiography, uses, and potential of gender as a category in historical research;
- demonstrate an understanding of principle questions, theoretical frameworks, and approaches to gender research as applied to the history of sub-Saharan Africa;
- apply research and methodological tools to produce gendered analyses selected primary sources of different sorts from African history – including oral, material, and written sources;
- apply the research approaches learned in this class to propose ways of gendering classic studies of African history that are not gendered;
- Present their research in an articulate way that stimulates group discussion and peer cooperation;
- evaluate the connections between constructions of gender, ethnicity/race, and class in the context of such important historical trends as the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, the struggle for independence, and the creation of African modernities.
- apply skills learned in History 300 to research and write texts for this class.
- articulate how they might draw upon knowledge and skills acquired during this course in other settings.

Schedule

Introductions

Week 1: What is Gender? What is Africa?

Amima Mama, “Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts”,
Plenary Address, Nordic Africa Institute Conference, 2001

Week 2: Questioning our assumptions

Oyewumi, Oyeronke, *The Invention of Women*, University of Minnesota Press,
preface .

Amadiume, Ifi, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*, Palgrave MacMillan, introduction.

Week 3: A history of studying gender in Africa

Assignment 1: response to Amadiume and Oyewumi

Berger, Iris. "African Women's History: Themes and Perspectives." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4, no. 1 2003.

Stephan F. Miescher, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Catherine M. Cole, "Introduction: When was Gender?", in *Africa After Gender?*, Indiana University Press, 2007.

Africa and gender in the cosmopolitan era (c.1700-1830)

Week 4: Gender and Affect in Africa on the edge of colonialism

Kathryn M. de Luna, "Affect and Society in Precolonial Africa", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46 (2013), 123-150.

Oniawu W. Ogbomo, "Women, Power and Society in Pre-colonial Africa", *Lagos Historical Review*, 5 (2005), 4974.

Week 5: Gender and slavery in the Atlantic slave trade era

Excerpted age and gender ratios in the Atlantic slave trade from the *Atlantic Slave Trade Database*

G. Ugo Nwokeji, "African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58, 1, 2001, 47-68.

Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, "Women's Importance in African Slave Systems", in Robertson and Klein, editors, *Women and Slavery in Africa*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

James H. Sweet, "Mutual Misunderstandings: Gesture, Gender and Healing in the African Portuguese World", *Past and Present*, (2009), 128-143.

Week 6: Gendering Nongqawuse's story: The Cattle Massacre (Southern Africa)

"The Cause of the Cattle-Killing at the Nongqawuse Period", William W. Gqoba, in *Towards an African Literature: The Emergence of Literary Form in Xhosa*, Edited by A.C. Jordan, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

Excerpt from Jeff Pieres, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-1857*, (Johannesburg: Raven, 1989).

Helen Bradford, "Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zones, c.1806-1870", *Journal of African History*, 37 (1996), 351-370

Week 7: Gendering Abina Mansah's story: A slavery case (West Africa)

Trevor R. Getz, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) second edition.

Trevor R. Getz and Lindsay Ehrisman, "The Marriages of Abina Mansah – escaping the boundaries of "slavery" as a category in historical analysis", *Journal of West African History*, (1), 2015.

Assignment 2: Analysis of the gendering of Abina Mansah's story

Africa in the colonial era

Week 8: Gendering colonialism

Imperial and colonial masculinities, colonial constructions of femininity and womanhood

Meredith McKittrick, "Forsaking Their Fathers? Colonialism, Christianity and Coming of Age in Ovamboland, Northern Namibia", in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa Lindsay & Stephan Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 33-47

Allman, Jean. "Making Mothers: Missionaries, Medical Officers and Women's Work in Colonial Asante, 1924-1945." *History Workshop* no. 38 (1994): 23-47.

Lindsay Ehrisman, "'Decadent Imports', 'Vile Abominations': Transnational Discourses on Male-Male Sex and the Missionary Position in Buganda, 1875-1910"

Week 9: Colonial domesticities and the civilizing mission

Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's *Foyer Social*, 1946-1960", *Signs*, 15 (3), 1990, 447-474.

Timothy Parsons, "All *askaris* are family men: sex, domesticity and discipline in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964, in *Guardians of Empire*, edited David Killingray and David Omissi, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 157-178.

Week 10: The civilizing mission and female circumcision

Jomo Kenyatta, "Initiation of Boys and Girls," Chapter VI of *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*, (1938), 130-154

3. Lynn Thomas, "Imperial Concerns and 'Women's Affairs': State Efforts to Regulate Clitoridectomy and Eradicate Abortion in Meru, Kenya, c. 1910-1950," *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998), 121-145.

Week 11: Workshops

Gendering a primary source, preparing the research project

Documentary excerpt from *The African Times*, 1874

Oral histories from Marcia Wright, *Strategies of Slaves & Women: Life-Stories from East/Central Africa*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2009).

Oral tradition excerpt from Emily Lynn Osborn, *Our New Husbands are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011).

Assignment 3: gendering a primary source

Decolonization and Post-colonial Africa:

Week 11: Gendering African nationalist movements

Elizabeth Schmidt, "'Emancipate your Husbands!': Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58," in J. Allman et al, *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 282-298.

Pashington Obeng, "Gendered nationalism: forms of masculinity in modern Asante in Ghana", in *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, eds. Lisa Lindsay & Stephan Miescher (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), _____.

Week 12: Gendering Mau Mau: The Land and Freedom Army (East Africa)

David W. Throup, "The Origins of Mau Mau", *African Affairs*, 85 (336), 1985, 399-433.

Luise White, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 23, no.1 (1990), 1-25

Week 13: 'African sex is dangerous': Health, AIDS/HIV, and gender

Mark Hunter, "Providing Love: Sex and Exchange in Twentieth-Century South Africa," from *Love in Africa*, eds. Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 135-152

Stella Nyanzi, Justine Nassimbwa, Vincent Kayizzi, and Strivan Kabanda, "'African Sex is Dangerous!' Renegotiating 'Ritual Sex in Contemporary Masaka District'", *Africa*, 78 (4), 2008, 518-539.

Week 14: Love in post-colonial Africa

"Introduction", Jennifer Cole and Lynn M. Thomas, eds., *Love in Africa*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009).

Daniel Jordan Smith, "Romance, Parenthood, and Gender in a Modern African Society", *Ethnology* (40), 2001, 129-151.

Week 15: Modern, African, and Queer

Excerpt from Mark Epprecht, *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2004).

"Africa and African Homosexualities: An Introduction", in Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands*, (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 1-20.

Final assignment due with two parts: gendering a secondary source in African history. applying skills learned in this class to a topic outside of modern African history

Course Materials

Almost all materials for this course are available to you through our class iLearn site. There is one brief book to purchase: Trevor R. Getz, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) second edition. Total material costs for the course should be less than \$20.

Assessment

The assignments below are carefully constructed to gradually guide students along the pathway to doing their own gendered work and to meet the student learning outcomes described above. For that reason, students who miss an assignment may not be able to successfully complete the course.

Participation: 10%

Students will earn participation points through readiness, through vocal participation in classroom discussions, or alternately through individual discussions with instructor (by arrangement). Because this course is formatted to be about 40% lectures, 40% discussions of readings, and 10% workshops, all readings are mandatory and must be completed by the date of discussion. Students will lose points for failure to prepare or for excessive absences.

Assignment 1: response to Amadiume and Oyewumi, 20%

This first assignment will ask students to analyze the ways in which two major, African gender theorists frame the relationship between gender studies and Africa. Students will review the essays, discuss them in class, and then present responses to the readings. Successful essays will identify the major arguments raised by the authors and discuss their implications for the process of gendering African history. (2-3 pages)

Assignment 2: Analysis of the gendering of Abina Mansah's story, 20%

Through this assignment, students will read two analyses of the life and historical context of a nineteenth century enslaved African woman, Abina Mansah. By exploring the ways in which the authors of the second, gendered analysis are able to explore deeper issues of human experience and perspective through a gendered reading, students will be able to critically evaluate the way in which using gender as a filter and an integrated category of analysis can enrich and improve historical study. (3-4 pages)

Assignment 3: gendering a primary source, 20%

In this assignment, students will be given a range of primary sources from which to choose a text for which to design a gendered analysis. This will allow them to apply what they learned in the first two assignments and in the class up to that point. Students will be asked to identify key *questions* through which they might undertake a gendered approach, and also to propose the theoretical framings that would help them to do so. (4-5 pages)

Final assignment due with two parts: gendering a secondary source in African history, applying skills learned in this class to a topic outside of modern African history, 30%

The final assignment will have two parts. In the first part, students will be asked to select a classic (but non-gendered) article or chapter of African history. They will then write a proposal for a new study of the same episode in African history through a gendered approach. This proposal will have to include: research questions, proposed sources, methodology, historiography, and the significance of the study. The second half of the assignment will ask students to write a reflective but also critical essay on how the skills they learned in this course might or might not be useful in other fields or disciplines in which they are interested. (6-7 pages total)

Logistics and other important statements

Intellectual rights

Instructor reserves creative rights to the material in this course, other than those course readings to which copyright has already been reserved by authors and publishers. Recording of lectures is strictly not allowed without the instructor's written permission.

Attendance and late papers

Attendance is considered mandatory and absences should be discussed with instructor prior to or immediately following. Late papers may be rejected by the instructor. Absences or late papers resulting from health issues, bereavement, transportation break-down, or other major acts outside of the students' control may receive special consideration. Students are responsible for material they have missed through absence.

Disability statement

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu). (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc/facultyfaq.html#1>)

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given a "0" grade. All instances of

plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of the College, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Student disclosures of sexual violence and Title IX responsibilities

Policy on student disclosures of sexual violence: In the event that you choose to write, speak or otherwise disclose a personal experience with sexual violence, including harassment, rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, and specify that this violence occurred while you were an SF State student, federal and state laws mandate that the course instructor notify the Dean of Students, Dr. Mary Ann Begley. The Dean of Students] or designee will contact you regarding interim measures and remedies available at SF State, as well as possibilities for holding accountable the person(s) who violated your civil rights.

If you do not want the Dean of Students notified, instead of disclosing such an experience to your instructor, you can instead speak confidentially to the campus victim advocate: The SAFE Place – (415) 338-2208, safe_plc@sfsu.edu, http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/

If you want to learn more about available resources and options on your own, you can visit SF State’s Title IX website: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>