African Women’s History  
T/F 1:30-2:45, Denny 204  

Instructor  Office  Email  Office Hours  
Jeremy Ball, Ph.D.  Denny 019  ballj@ dickinson.edu  Thursday 9-11am

This course examines the role of women in African societies since the nineteenth century. Lectures and readings will be arranged thematically. Themes include sexuality and reproduction, the household, women’s economic activity, political power, religion, colonialism, nationalism, democracy, and AIDS. After a discussion of gender, we will analyze pre-colonial production and reproduction, family life and religion in the twentieth century, women’s roles in nationalist politics, the politics of female genital mutilation, and the life of a contemporary African woman leader. Readings, including historical studies and novels, songs, and art, will be drawn from across the cultures and languages of Africa.

Course Readings  

Required  

In addition to required books, you will be required to print weekly readings on blackboard.

Reserve  

Film and multimedia  
Blooms of Banjeli  
Flame  
Warrior Marks  
Trokosi: Wife of the Gods  
You Have Struck a Rock  
Yesterday

A couple of the best websites about Africa include:  
•The Stanford University African Studies Center: www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html  
•The African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania: www.africa.upenn.edu/
Course Requirements:
This course will be run as a seminar, therefore your participation in discussion is vital.

Writing Assignments:
Essay #1 (Due Friday March 9), 20% of course grade, 8-10 pages. Choose one:
   a. Did patriarchy subordinate women in pre-colonial African society? Choose an African society and one or two issues to illustrate your argument.
   b. What is lobolo? Explain how lobolo has worked in one African society (Zulu, Tswana, etc.). Has lobolo changed over the past century?

Essay #2 (Due Tuesday May 1), 30% of course grade, 10-12 pages. You will present your research to your colleagues in a class presentation. Choose one:
   a. Write a biography of an African woman leader (historical or contemporary).
   b. Propose an essay topic. Topics must be approved no later than Tuesday 3 April.

Weekly Questions, Map Quiz, & Debate, 20% of course grade. Discussion questions will be collected in class every Friday. Questions will be emailed to students a week in advance.

Book Review & Presentation, 20% of course grade. Each student will help to lead discussion on one of the assigned books. You will be expected to ask questions about arguments and details in the reading. The point of these questions is to stimulate thinking and discussion. In addition to your presentation, you will submit a 3-4 page book review. [Guidelines will be distributed.]

Group Project (Due Friday April 20), 10% of course grade. In groups you will research and present how AIDS affects women in an African society.

Accommodations for Disabilities
In compliance with the Dickinson College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be recommended for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first few weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
   Students are required to register with Academic Resource Services in the Advising Office (first floor of Biddle House) to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Plagiarism
For clarification and details of the official College statement on plagiarism, please see the Dickinson Writing Program’s website:
www.dickinson.edu/departments/writing/plagiarism.html
Course Schedule

WEEK 1: Why Women?
Jan. 23: Africa Introduced

Jan. 26
Electronic Reserve: [Print and bring to class]

WEEK 2: Gender and Power
Jan. 30
Electronic Reserve:
• Eugenia Herbert, Iron, Gender and Power, pp. 115-127.
• Film: Blooms of Banjeli

Feb. 2
Electronic Reserve:
• Film: Trokosi: Wife of the Gods
• Map Quiz

WEEK 3: Gender and Sexuality
Feb. 6
Electronic Reserve:

Feb. 9
Electronic Reserve:
• Map Quiz (make-up)
WEEK 4: Women, Slavery, and Trade
Feb. 13
*Electronic Reserve:*

Feb. 16
Buchi Emecheta, *The Slave Girl*, pp. 73-End.
• Map Quiz (Final)

WEEK 5: Female Power and Authority
Feb. 20

Feb. 23
• Achebe Book Review due in class.

WEEK 6: Women, War, and Nationalism
Feb. 27
*Electronic Reserve:*

March 2

WEEK 7:
March 6
*Field trip*: Osubi Craig, “African Musical Diasporas,” Weiss Rm. 235, 1:30pm.

March 9
• Film: *Flame*
*Essay #1 Due in class.*

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK
NO CLASS.
WEEK 9: Women’s Leadership & Resistance to Apartheid
March 20
Electronic Reserve:
• Films: You Have Struck a Rock & Amandla!
• Pfalum Lecture, Stern Center, Great Room, 7pm. Dr. Lamin Sanneh. (Extra Credit)

March 23
• Ramphele Book Review due in class.

WEEK 10: Female Circumcision/Genital Mutilation
March 27
Electronic Reserve:

March 30
• Film: Warrior Marks.

WEEK 11:
April 3
Electronic Reserve:

April 6 Debate
Resolved: Female Genital Circumcision ought to be declared a crime against humanity by the United Nations

WEEK 12: Women and the AIDS Epidemic
April 10
Electronic Reserve:
• Noerine Kaleeba, We Miss You All.
April 13
Electronic Reserve:
• Film: *Yesterday*

WEEK 13:
April 17
• Film: *Yesterday*

April 20
Group Project Presentations

WEEK 14: Women, Leadership, and the Environment
April 24

April 27
• Maathai Book Review due in class.

WEEK 15: Conclusions
May 1 Essay Presentations
Essay #2 Due in class.

May 4 Essay Presentations & Conclusions