

WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES 311
TRANSNATIONAL APPLICATIONS: WOMEN & FEMINISM IN AFRICA
T/Th 6:30-8:00 pm, ETN 311
Spring 2012

Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:30am & by email appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will use transnational feminist theoretical positions to study how feminism and women's movements are constructed and enacted on the continent of Africa. It has been argued that Africanist perspectives and feminist perspectives are mutually incompatible – however, women have wielded agency and influence and affected ideological debates in Africa from the pre-colonial period to the present. Through this course, students will be challenged to develop their own opinions on the debate through the investigation of historical contexts, contemporary political situations, and case studies. The primary theoretical frameworks we will work from in order to situate our debates will be transnational, global, and socialist feminisms. Readings, discussions, and lectures will be used to form our understandings and opinions of the contemporary realities of African women in both local and global contexts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will demonstrate through class discussions and paper writing the ability to transnational contextualize feminism and activism from different historical and theoretical vantage points.
2. Students will demonstrate through discussion and paper writing the ability to challenge Western perceptions of feminism, theory, and practice.
3. Students will demonstrate through the mid-term presentation, activity attendance, and news analysis the importance of region to African feminism.
4. Students will demonstrate through news analyses, discussions, and paper writing an understanding of historical contexts as well as contemporary situations of African women's activism.
5. Students will demonstrate through paper writing the ability to conduct research, form a thesis, and coherently organize evidence and arguments.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Aili Mari Tripp, *African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes* (2009)

All readings that are not located in our text will be available on the university's on-line instructional system, WISE. Please print out these readings and bring them to class on the assigned date. Since a majority of our readings will be print outs from WISE it is recommended to purchase a binder for organizational purposes.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of the courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may, therefore, be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.

Attendance & Lateness

Please be courteous and work to avoid lateness. Because this course relies heavily on class discussion, your attendance is crucial. If you must miss class, please inform me the class session prior or by email. You may miss (roughly) 3 class periods before your grade in the class is affected. I reserve the right to mark excessive lateness as absence.

Availability

If you have any concerns, questions, or issues, please do not hesitate to contact me at my provided email. I will work to get back to you as soon as possible. In return, I ask that students also be available by email and work to maintain prompt and professional communication.

Disability Statement

Willamette University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Services Office strives to facilitate reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office directly at 503-370-6471.

Etiquette

Cell phones, laptops, and all other electronic devices should not be used or heard from during the class. Of course, respect for myself and your fellow classmates is always required.

Preparedness

Always come to class with the readings thoroughly completed and in hand. A substantial portion of your grade will be determined by your level of engagement with the class discussions (see “active participation”). Additionally, I will begin many class sessions with quick writing assignments intended to ensure your continued dedication to the readings. These in-class writing exercises may not be made up.

Written Assignments

All assignments should be 12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced, 1-inch margins. Use MLA format for in-text citations. I do not accept late papers unless prior arrangements have been made. I will not be available to answer major questions regarding papers 24 hours before the due date. Please wait 24 hours after receiving a paper back before contacting me regarding the grade. Lastly, use the Writing Center – it is an awesome resource that can help you at any stage of the writing process. Please remember to make appointments in advance as the Writing Center is often very busy. Appointments can be made at 503-370-6959.

COURSE EVALUATION

Active Participation: 20%

Includes: attendance, in-class writing assignments, group activities, and class discussion

Events Attendance: 5%

News Reports: 10%

Papers One & Two: 30 % (2 @ 15% each)

Midterm Presentation: 15%

Final Research Paper: 20%

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Attendance of a Women's & Gender Studies AND an African Studies Event

Students are required to attend two related events during the semester – these events may be on or off campus. One of the events must be related to Women's and Gender Studies, the other to African Studies. Possible option: attending any of the many offered lectures, Willamette's Feminist Film Series, the African Film Festival in Portland (Feb 4 – Mar 5), or an Africa Week event, hosted by Willamette's Africa Club (Feb 14-18). Due (at most) two weeks after the event is a 500 word write up about the event, your feelings about its content, and its relation to this class. Please attach a flyer or ticket stub to these write ups.

2 Analytical Papers (3-4 pages each)

Prompts to be assigned on Feb 10 and April 5.

News Reports

Throughout the semester, you are required to write at least six 200 word summaries of news articles that pertain to the themes and discussions in the class. Additional news write-ups are encouraged and certainly will not negatively affect your grade. Please post your news write-ups to WISE by 5 pm before class. You will be called upon to share your news reports with the class.

Midterm Presentation

Each group of 3 will be assigned a region of Africa: North, East, West, South, and Central. The presentations will be 45 minutes, with each presenter focusing on one issue or topic pertinent to the region (for example, the group assigned to cover West Africa might want to have one presenter focusing on Akan systems of matrilineal heritage while the Central Africa might wish to have one presenter focus on rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo). Please submit your group topics to me for approval by March 1. Along with the presentations, each student must turn in a 3 page write up and analysis of their research.

Final Research Paper (8-10 pages)

Your final paper will be a research based paper on a topic of your choice. During the allotted time for our class final, students will be present for 10-15 minutes on their paper. Please come and talk to me before April 20 about your topic, outline, and research methods.

Use of the Writing Center is highly encouraged for papers one and two and is required for your final paper. Please remember to make your appointments in advance.

PAPER GRADING CRITERIA

An "A" paper offers a persuasive, eloquent, stylistically sophisticated argument. It presents a compelling thesis, which is then developed into a well-structured, coherent essay. An "A" paper uses evidence effectively. Such a paper thoughtfully considers and analyzes other viewpoints, including the views of the paper's intended audience. An "A" paper's style is distinctive, and this style helps further the writer's argument.

A "B" paper also offers a convincing argument. It has an interesting thesis and is, on the whole, well-structured. Like an A paper, it too considers alternative positions and does so in a thoughtful manner. A "B" paper's style is clear and relatively free of errors that could hinder its readability and/or persuasiveness. A "B" paper grasps the significance of style in making an effective argument.

A "C" paper makes an argument but does not do so effectively. It may fail to present evidence in support of its thesis or it may present evidence in a haphazard and hence unconvincing manner. In addition, a paper will receive a "C" if it is stylistically unsophisticated, replete with digressions, lacks a sense of audience, or ignores opposing opinions.

A “**D**” paper fails to present an argument. The paper lacks a thesis and is merely a string of ideas, some of which may be very interesting but none of which are developed into a clear, rational, coherent essay. Additionally, a plethora of typos, stylistic problems, or grammatical flaws may turn any paper into a “D” paper if such lapses significantly affect the essay’s readability.

An “**F**” paper results when the writer neglects to hand in the assignment; refuses to address the paper topic; or violates common standards of decency. Additionally, plagiarism also will result in a paper grade of “F.”

GRADING SCALE

A	93-100%	Performance at this level is exceptional. The student is in excellent command over content and methods of the course as well as originality and depth of insights.
A-	90-92%	
B+	87-89%	
B	83-86%	Performance at this level is good. The student shows acceptable command over content and methods and achieves the stated course objectives.
B-	80-82%	
C+	77-79%	
C	73-76%	Performance at this level is acceptable. The student shows fair command over content and methods and achieves most of the stated course objectives.
C-	70-72%	
D+	67-69%	
D	63-66%	Performance at this level is poor. The student demonstrates lower than average command over content and methods and does not achieve the stated course objectives.
D-	60-62%	
F	0-60%	

COURSE SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

Tu Jan 18 Welcome to WGS 311!

- Introductions & Syllabus
- Clip: Nigerian Novelist Chimamanda Adichie's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story"
- Discussion: What is feminism? How does feminism look different from certain vantage points? Can feminism be considered a global concept?

Th Jan 20 Transnational/Third-World/Global Feminism

- Manisha Desai, "The Perils and Possibilities of Transnational Feminism"
- Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality"
- Uma Narayan, "Contesting Cultures: 'Westernization,' Respect for cultures, and Third-World Feminists"

Tu Jan 25 Theorizing An African Feminism

- Pepe Roberts, "Debate: Feminism in Africa"
- P. Mekiwe, "Post Africa(n) feminism?"
- Allison Drew, "Female Consciousness and Feminism in Africa"
- Elaine Salo and Amina Mama, "Talking about Feminism in Africa"

Th Jan 27 Women in Africa During the Pre-colonial Period

- Tripp, chapter 2 (pages 25-61)
- Nkiru Nzegwu, "Recovering Igbo Traditions: A Case for Indigenous Women's Organizations in Development"

Tu Feb 1 Women in Africa During the Colonial Period

- Cheryl Johnson, "Class and gender: a consideration of Yoruba women during the colonial period"
- Joyce Chadya, "Mother Politics: Anti-colonial Nationalism and the Woman Question in Africa"
- Barbara Yates, "Colonialism, Education, and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaire"

Th Feb 3 Postcolonial African Women & Feminism: Case Studies

- Amanda Kemp, et. al, "The Dawn of the New Day: Redefining South African Feminism"
- Diane Hubbard and Colette Solomon, "The Many Faces of Feminism in Namibia"

Tu Feb 8

- Wilhemina Oduol and Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira "The Mother of Warriors and Her Daughters: The Women's Movement in Kenya"
- Hussaina Abdullah, "Wifeism and Activism: The Nigerian Women's Movement"

Th Feb 10 African Socialist Feminism

- Claire Robertson and Iris Berger "Analyzing class and gender: African perspectives"
- Iris Berger, "Sources of class consciousness: South African women in recent labor struggles"

Tu Feb 15

- Manisha Desai, "The Messy Relationship Between Feminisms and Globalizations"
- Vandana Shiva, "Development, Ecology, and Women"

Th Feb 17

- Janet M. Bujra, “‘Urging women to redouble their efforts’: class, gender, and capitalist transformation in Africa”
- Winifred Poster and Zakia Salime, “Limits of microcredit: transnational feminism and USAID activities in the United States and Morocco”

Tu Feb 22 Paper one due in class

- In Class Film: *Arugba* (2008), Nigeria

Th Feb 24 African Women’s Political Involvement & Movements

- Tripp Ch. 3 & 4 “The Rise of New Women’s Movements” & “The Challenge of Women’s Movements” (pgs 62-107)

Tu Mar 1

- Tripp Ch. 5 “Women’s Movements and Constitutional and Legislative Challenges” (pgs 108-139)

Th Mar 3

- Tripp Ch. 6 “In Pursuit of Equal Political Representation”
- Tripp Ch. 7 “Engendering the State Bureaucracy” (pgs 140-194)

Tu Mar 8 Islam & Women in Africa

- Sondra Hale, “Gender, Religious Identity, and Political Mobilization in Sudan”
- Alya Baffoun, “Feminism and Muslim Fundamentalism: the Tunisian and Algerian cases”

Th Mar 10

- Cherifa Bouatta and Doria Cherifati-Merabtine “The Social Representation of Women in Algeria's Islamist Movement”
- Margot Badran “Gender Activism: Feminists and Islamists in Egypt”

Tu Mar 15 Midterm Presentations – Groups North and East

Th Mar 17 Midterm Presentations – Groups South and West

Tu Mar 22 & Th Mar 24 Enjoy your Spring Break!

Tu Mar 29 African Women & Sexual Agency, Health and Rights

- Sylvia Tamale, “The right to culture and the culture of rights: a critical perspective on women's sexual rights in Africa”
- T Braam; L Hessini, “The power dynamics perpetuating unsafe abortion in Africa: a feminist perspective”
- Tola Olu Pearce, “Women, The State and Reproductive Health Issues in Nigeria”

Th Mar 31

- Gwen N. Lesetedi, “HIV/AIDS and the status of women”
- Susser and Stein, “Culture, Sexuality, and Women's Agency in the Prevention of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa”

Tu Apr 5 Sexual Agency, Health, and Right's con't: Female Genital Cutting

- Elizabeth Boyle, et al, "Local Conformity to International Norms: The Case of Female Genital Cutting"
- Bettina Shell-Duncan and Ylva Hernlund, "Female "circumcision" in Africa: dimensions of the practice and debates"
- Audrey Macklin, "The double-edged sword: using the criminal law against female genital mutilation"

Th Apr 7

- Lynn Thomas, "Ngaitana (I will circumcise myself)": the gender and generational politics of the 1956 ban on clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya.
- Mwenda Ntarangwi, "'I have changed my mind now': U.S. Students' Responses to Female Genital Cutting in Africa"
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Tu Apr 12 Genocide & Rape

- Lisa Sharlach, "Gender and genocide in Rwanda: Women as agents and objects of Genocide"
- Kimberley A Ducey, "Dilemmas of Teaching the "Greatest Silence": Rape-as-Genocide in Rwanda, Darfur, and Congo"
- In Class Clip: "Intended Consequences"

Th Apr 14 Paper two due in class

- In Class Film: *Les Saignantes* (The Bloodettes) (2010), Cameroon

Tu Apr 19 African Women's Activism

- Tripp Ch. 8 (pgs 195-216)
- Nancy A. Naples, "Challenges and Possibilities of Transnational Feminist Praxis"
- Melinda Adams, "Regional Women's Activism: African Women's Networks and the African Union"

Th Apr 21

- Laura Chakravarty Box "Outrageous Behavior: Women's Public Performance in North Africa"
- Susanna D. Wing "Women Activists in Mali: The Global Discourse on Human Rights"

Tu Apr 26 Academic Feminism in Contemporary Africa

- Akosua Ampofo, et. al. "Women's and Gender Studies in English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa"
- Ebrima Sall, "Women in academia: gender and academic freedom in Africa"

Th Apr 28 Transnational/Global/Third World Feminism Revisited

- Mari Tripp, "The Evolution of Transnational Feminisms: Consensus, Conflict, and New Dynamics"
- Sherna Gluck "Whose Feminism, Whose History"

Tu May 3

- Diane Margolis, "Women's Movement's Around the Word: Cross-Cultural Comparisons"
- Myra Feree and Carol Meuller, "Feminism and the Women's Movement: A Global Perspective"

May 8 2-5 pm Final Paper Presentations

Final papers are due to my office and on WISE on May 10th by 5pm.

Work to familiarize yourself with the names and locations of the countries in Africa. Don't be shy to ask for help with pronunciation! As much as possible, please be country/region specific (for example: say "Malian musicians Amadou et Mariam" and "East African dance" as opposed to "African musicians" and "African dance").

AFRICA

