*Dr. S.M. Rodriguez – sm.rodriguez@hofstra.edu*

Understanding gender and sexuality today requires a comprehensive and engaging look into various institutions – particularly 20th and 21st century governance, kinship, media, and economics. This course will apply a sociological lens to the African continent, attempting not to understand each context of 54 countries, but to deconstruct shared processes of becoming *gendered*, *sexed or sexual* subjects. We will emphasize legal and social movements and pinpoint various impositions of Western ideology and political control, particularly during colonialism, the AIDS crisis, and early moments of transnational feminism.

This course intends to connect Africana Studies, Sociology, Women’s Studies and LGBTQ+ Studies students. While it is an introduction to this particular intersection of gender and sexuality in Africa, it assumes that enrolled students will have some background in one of these fields. As a social science course, there will be particular focus on data collection and analysis of legal texts and media portrayals, as well as contemporary social movements. Nevertheless, students will leave the course able to do the following:

1. Identify African countries on a map and understand the role of colonial imposition in creating borders
2. Identify key African criticisms, theories and histories of the concepts gender, sex and sexuality
3. Contextualize contemporary sexuality-based social movements and identities
4. Critically examine various Western interventions into sexed and sexual processes in Africa
5. Refute biased notions of African sexuality by using African academic references and perspectives

Course Agreements

By remaining in this course after receipt of this syllabus, I agree to conduct myself according to the following community standards:

* ***I enter this course with a base line of interest.*** This is not a mandatory class and, as such, the predominant reason for my attendance should be curiosity and willingness to learn. I will communicate accordingly, even if my strongest interests lie in topics that we are not currently discussing. I understand this will help my peers and our overall classroom environment.
* ***I will uphold the value of dignity for all African people and interrogate any preconceived ideas that I have, that may articulate otherwise***. I understand that no one is perfect, including myself. I try to understand how I have internalized or projected harm, and will apologize if I have said something harmful in class. I commit to battling (even my own) violent ideologies, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and transphobia.
* ***I agree to display a modicum of grace and humility, even when others don’t know something that I believe we all should know***. I will also extend kindness to myself when I do not know something, and then rigorously apply my learning skills so that I may grasp it.

**Course Assignments**

**20% Participation and Attendance**

Both attendance and participation are required in this class; they are not the same! For the attendance portion of this grade (10%), you are expected to arrive on time and give the class your full attention for the entire duration (this means, no distracting/unrelated phone or internet use, outside of emergencies). After three unexcused absences, your attendance grade will be marked down to, at maximum, half of the total possible points. Five unexcused absences will forfeit your attendance grade and will negatively affect your participation.

Your participation grade is determined by your preparation (i.e. your material digest), contribution to discussion and peer learning, and your informed responses to questions asked by Professor Rodriguez, guest lecturers and your peers.

Exceptions: If material is emotionally challenging, you can take space for a short period of rest. If our discussion includes sexual violence, there are alternative ways to “show up” that we can negotiate privately. Survivors: you are not expected to sacrifice your health for any learning material. Students with disabilities: you will never be penalized for stating your needs and co-creating the best learning environment for you (with me!). Please discuss at the start of the semester any accommodations that may help you succeed.

**25% Material Digest:**

Students will submit to the discussion board before class, once a week, the answers to the following questions:

1. What was the thesis of the text? If a film or otherwise artistic material, what was the main topic?
2. What are the data used to provide evidence for the claims?
3. What did I find most memorable?
4. What did I find most confusing or challenging?
5. How does this connect to a previous material?
6. If we have a guest speaker: Prepare a short statement about what you appreciate about their writing, activism, or art. Submit two questions ahead of time.

**5% Map Test**

You will need to successfully pass a map quiz for this class, testing your ability to recognize and place African countries on a map. There will be several designated days for you to attempt this, but you will be required to complete it and earn at least 70% by a specified deadline.

**15% Reflection Vlog, Podcast or In-Person Share**

Twice over the course of the semester will you have to present, podcast or vlog a “share” that shows how a creative work or article assigned has reflected the times. For example, you’ve seen an incident in the news or on social media that would be well explained by an article or book read in class. These should last for at least 15 minutes each and be engaging, concise and analytical.

**10% Midterm**

The midterm will consist of roughly 25 multiple choice questions, covering all of the materials from weeks 1-6.

**25% Research Paper or Final Exam**

Research Paper Option: You and up to two teammates will take a topic of interest and meet four deadlines in order to build a coherent, evidence-based exposition or argument related to sexuality, sex or gender in Africa. The first deadline will be to submit a refined thesis statement. The second, an outline which includes the type of data you will collect and your annotated bibliography, which is a document that includes brief overviews of the key sources that support your paper. On your third deadline, you will be expected to have written a draft of your paper, which will be peer reviewed before your final deadline, which is when you will turn in your final, revised, paper. For solo authors, this paper is 5-6 pages; for a team, 8-10 pages.

Test Option: As an alternative to the research paper option, you can choose to take a final, multiple choice exam. You must make this decision by the fifth week of class.

**Calendar**

Week 1 Africa is a Continent; African is an Identity

Week 2 African Feminisms

Week 3 Imagining the African Body

Week 4 Performances of Gender and Sex

Weeks 5-6 Regulating and Criminalizing Sexuality (Decision & Thesis Statement Due)

Week 7 Sex in Prisons and other Confinements (Midterm)

Weeks 8-9 Religion, Spirituality and Social Control (Annotated Bibliography Due)

Weeks 10-11 Resistance, Protest and Liberation Theology

Week 12 Nudity, Pornography and The Politics of Baring it All (Research Paper Draft Due)

Week 13 Disability, Gender and Sex (Research Paper Peer Review Due)

Week 14 Queer and Feminist Pan-Africanism and Diaspora

Finals (Revised Research Paper Due)

**Grading Chart**

A = 94+

A- = 90 - 93

B+ = 87 - 89

B = 84 - 86

B- = 80 - 83

C+ = 77 - 79

C = 74 - 76

C- = 70 - 73

D+ = 67 - 69

D = 61-66

F = <60

**Required Book Purchase**

Tamale, Sylvia. *African Sexualities: A Reader.* Pambazuka Press, 2011.

Achebe, Nwando and Robertson, Claire. Holding the World Together: African Women in Changing Perspective. University of Wisconsin Press, 2019

**Course Bibliography, by Topic**

**Ability, Disability and Gendered Embodiment**

BBC News. “I Felt Like I was Born a Problem” Kenya Recognizes Intersex Citizens

Chappell, Paul. “Queering the Social Emergence of Disabled Sexual Identities: Linking Queer Theory with Disability Studies in the South African Context.” *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 29, no. 1 (2015): 54-62.

Mohamed, Kharnita, and Tamara Shefer. “Gendering Disability and Disabling Gender: Critical Reflections on Intersections of Gender and Disability.” *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 29, no. 2 (2015): 2-13.

Swarr, A.L., Gross, S. and Theron, L., 2009. South African intersex activism: Caster Semenya's impact and import. Feminist Studies, 35(3), pp.657-662.

Walley, Christine J. “Searching for ‘Voices’: Feminism, Anthropology and the Global Debate Over Female Genital Operations.” *Cultural Anthropology* 12, no. 3 (August 1997): 405-38.

**African Feminism, Women and Feminine Power**

Abbas, Hakima, and Amina Mama. “Editorial: Feminism and Pan-Africanism.” *Feminist Africa* 19 (September 2014): 1-6.

Achebe, N. Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa. Ohio University Press. 2020

Brownhill, Leigh S., and Terisa E. Turner. “Feminism in the Mau Mau Resurgence.” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 39, no. 1-2 (2004): 95-117.

Decker, Alicia C., and Gabeba Baderoon. “African Feminisms: Cartographies for the 21st Century.” *Meridians:* *Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 17, no. 2 (2018): 219-231.

**(Post)Colonial Inventions: Gender, Sexual Communities, Illegal Beings and Doings**

Epprecht, Marc. Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS, 2008

Nyanzi, Stella. No Roses from My Mouth. Ubuntu Reading Group, 2019.

Oyewumi, Oyeronke, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Phillips, Oliver. The ‘perils’ of sex and the panics of race: the dangers of interracial sex in colonial Southern Rhodesia*. African Sexualities: A Reader.*

Rodriguez, S.M. *The Economies of Queer Inclusion: Transnational Organizing for LGBTI Rights in Uganda.* Lexington Books, 2019.

Vorholter, Julia. Homosexuality, pornography, and other ‘modern threats’ – The deployment of sexuality in recent laws and public discourses in Uganda., Critique of Anthropology 2017, 37(1)

**Men and Masculinity**

Adu-Poku, Samuel. “Envisioning (Black) Male Feminism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.” *Journal of Gender Studies* 10, no. 2 (July 2001): 157-67.

Jasor, Oceane. “Transforming African Masculinity: A Transnational Approach to Gender Justice in South Africa.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 46, no. 2 (2021): 417-441.

Kleis, Gerald W., and Salisu A. Abdullahi. “Masculine Power and Gender Ambiguity in Urban Hausa Society.” *African Urban Studies* 16 (1983): 39-53.

Lahiri, Madhumita. “Crimes and Corrections: Bride Burners, Corrective Rapists, and Other Black Misogynists.” *Feminist Africa* 15 (2011): 121-134.

Ratele, Kopano. “Male Sexualities and Masculinities.” In *African Sexualities: A Reader*, edited by Sylvia Tamale, 399-419. Dakar: Pambazuka Press, 2011.

**Nudity, Pornography and The Politics of Baring it All**

Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi. “Nudity and Morality: Legislating Women’s Bodies and Dress in Nigeria”. *East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights* 15, no. 1 (2009): 53-68.

## Matebeni, Zethu, Jabu C Pereira, and Ignacio Rivera. “Queer(ing) Porn: A Conversation.” *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 26, no. 3 (2012): 61-69.

Tamale, Sylvia. "Nudity, protest and the law in Uganda." (2017).

**Religion and Spirituality**

Gaudio, Rudolf Pell. *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Mahomed, Nadeem, and Sa’diyya Shaikh. “Islam Between Margins: Reassessing Gender and Sexuality in Islam.” *The African Journal of Gender and Religion* 24, no. 2 (December 2018): 120-138.

Marouan, Maha. *Witches, Goddesses and Angry Spirits: The Politics of Spiritual Liberation in African Diaspora Women’s Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013.

Azizaa Music Video: [Black Magic Woman](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjT6M6TsKPuAhWIuVkKHZc8CoIQwqsBMAB6BAgDEAM&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DbfeGpcmfMBA&usg=AOvVaw3hDsuWERlE0C3jLgmn1X8S)

Roger Ross Williams: God Loves Uganda (film)

**Guidelines Related to Absences for Religious Observances**

Any student who must miss class in order to observe a religious holiday retains that right in this course and University, which respect all faiths. However, all students are expected to complete all assignments and examinations.Therefore, all students must notify the professor ahead of missing class in order to ensure that we can coordinate any make up work. **Failure to notify the professor before two weeks of the event can forfeit a student’s right to make up the work.**

**Student Access Services (SAS):**

*Students who need accommodations for a disability must inform me within the first week of class, so that we can proactively address implementation.* If you believe you need accommodations for a disability, please contact for Student Access Services (SAS). In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, qualified individuals with disabilities will not be discriminated against in any programs, or services available at Hofstra University.

Individuals with disabilities are entitled to accommodations designed to facilitate full access to all programs and services. SAS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will provide students with documented disabilities accommodation letters, as appropriate.

Please note that accommodations may require early planning and are not retroactive; please contact SSD as soon as possible. *All students are responsible for providing accommodation letters to each instructor and for discussing with them the specific accommodations needed and how they can be best implemented in each course*. For more information on services provided by the university and for submission of documentation, please contact Student Access Services, 107 Student Center, 516-463-7075.

**All additional course policies can be found here. Please note that there are new and important policies relating to pregnancy, illness and classroom conduct. You are required to read this information at the beginning of the semester**: [https://www.hofstra.edu/provost/course-syllabi-information.html](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.hofstra.edu%2Fprovost%2Fcourse-syllabi-information.html&data=04%7C01%7CSM.Rodriguez%40HOFSTRA.EDU%7C4cbcff354afa4c224ac608d8bf16f72e%7Ce32fc43d7c6246d9b49fcd53ba8d9424%7C0%7C0%7C637469452701343581%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=HlD0ucnPfuezdbRh%2FZjYKQIdBq25aoLCer27jVApynI%3D&reserved=0)