Gender and Sexuality in African History
AS 100.430, Spring 2019

Professor
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Class Meeting Time & Place
Tuesdays 4-6:50, Gilman 308

Scope and Purpose
Gender and Sexuality in African History is an upper-level undergraduate seminar that considers a broad set of historical and contemporary issues relating to issues of gender and sexuality in Africa and in African history. We will be reading and discussing half of a book each week. Most of the books are written by historians and two are by anthropologists. Topics include a general history of women in Africa, issues in reproductive health, masculinity, transactional sex and prostitution, genital cutting, infertility, miscarriage, and postcolonial debates about child support and sex work. The purpose of the seminar and its readings is to introduce students to the diversity and the complexity of issues regarding gender and sexuality in Africa and to provide them with essential introductory background for understanding some of the principle questions that scholars have been researching and writing about in recent years. The course takes an open, scholarly approach to the subject. No prior knowledge of or courses about Africa are required to be successful in this course.

Required Books (Available in hard copy or electronically)
You may purchase hard copies of the six books in the JHU bookstore or from any vendor, if you desire. MSEL also has free electronic versions of some of these, via the library catalog. Hard copies of the books are also available on print reserve in MSEL and may be checked out for short periods of time for reading or photocopying. You may also be able to borrow library hard copies via “Borrow Direct” using the library’s online catalog (order ahead to make sure the books arrive on time). Finally, you may purchase electronic copies of the books from various internet vendors, rather than using hard copies or the library’s electronic copy. A combination of the above strategies will help you to minimize book costs.


**Course Requirements**

1. Attendance and participation. I expect you to attend every class and to participate in the discussions. Any absence from class should be explained before class, not after it. I do not require a doctor’s or other practitioner’s note for absences—just responsible adult behavior by informing me before you miss a class. Participation grades assigned by the professor will be based in part on your record of attending class and on your verbal participation in it.

2. Weekly Journal Posts. Each week, students will upload short responses to the assigned reading. Short means no more than one page of text (single-spaced), generally 2-3 paragraphs. Your journal should take the following form. The first paragraph answers the question: What was the main argument of the assigned reading? The rest of the journal should address any or all of the following questions: What do you think about the argument, and why? What did you find interesting, enlightening, difficult, problematic, or surprising about the reading? How does the reading relate to other works we have read? What questions do you have for in-class discussion? Journal posts are due before the beginning of each class (you will be unable to post your comments after class has begun). You may wish to bring a hard or soft copy of your journal comments to class and use them as a basis for your verbal participation.

3. Midterm Essay. A take-home midterm examination essay covering the first three books. This will consist of one 5-page essay answer to a general question relating to the required readings and course discussions. 5 pages means at least 1,600 words.

4. Review/thought paper, 10 pages, based on your reading of two related books from the list at the end of this syllabus. You will need approval from the professor for your two books. Your review/thought paper is a thoughtful review of the two books you choose that discusses the issues in gender and sexuality in Africa raised by the two works. 10 pages means at least 3,200 words.

5. Final Essay. A take-home final examination essay covering the last three books. This will consist of one 5-page essay answer to a general question relating to the required readings and course discussions. 5 pages means at least 1,600 words.
Grading

| Attendance & participation (instructor-assigned) | 100 |
| Weekly journal posts (20 points/week)          | 250 |
| Midterm exam essay                              | 200 |
| Review/thought paper                            | 250 |
| Final exam essay                                | 200 |
| Total points                                    | 1000 |

Important Dates and Deadlines

- March 1: Midterm exam essay question available
- March 16: Midterm exam due by 11:59 pm
- April 20: Review/thought paper is due by 11:59 pm
- April 26: Final exam essay question available
- May 3: Final exam due by 11:59 pm.

Meeting Dates & Reading Schedule:

- January 29: Introduction. No class meeting.
- April 2: Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, Chapter 4 – Conclusion.
- April 30: van der Sijpt, *Wasted Wombs*, Chapter 4 – Conclusion.
List of Potential Review/Thought Books


