

## HIS 364G/AFR 372G/WGS 340-32• AFRICAN WOMEN'S HISTORY

Fall 2013 • Meets: W 4:00-7:00 PM, WEL 3.260

Office Hours: TTH 3:30-4:30pm

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

*Samukele, Mauya, Karibu, Welcome!* to African Women's History. This course is designed to introduce and expose students to African history *through women's eyes*, beyond media stereotypes. However, given the geographic vastness of the African continent, its deep rich history and cultural diversity, it means we will not be able to cover everything in the course of one semester – even a lifetime. Instead, we shall take a chronological approach, studying key themes in African History from all four regions of the continent, thereby allowing students an in-depth understanding of the continent from the earliest times to the present. The course will focus on the major historical categories of: society, culture, politics, economics, and the environment – and within those, particular themes like *self-determination, migration, ethnicity, religion, education, motherhood*. We will study these (and other) themes using the historiography as well as memoirs and novels written by African women to illuminate the large and small arcs of **change over time** in women's lives and gender dynamics in African History. Because we can only read so many books and articles during the semester, required course material also includes documentary and feature films, and you may have to watch some out of class time.

The **course's major objectives** are that at the end of the semester you, the student, shall: a) have a good grasp of basic African History, and the lives of women therein; b) have acquired and/or sharpened your critical thinking and analytical skills; and c) be able to skillfully synthesize and write a first rate paper on African women on a theme of your choice from those taught during the semester. The course is designed to be rigorous and challenging, but plenty fun!

### COURSE POLICIES

Academic integrity *is taken very seriously* in this course. Students who violate University rules on scholastic honesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of dismissal from the University. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the policies of the [College of Liberal Arts \(COLA\)](#) and the [general University policy](#) on these matters.

**Religious Holy Day Policy:** We follow the [UT Policy for observance of any religious holiday](#). However, the student should inform the Professor as far in advance as possible.

**Disability Statement:** Accommodations and adjustments for disabilities are an integral part of the course [within the boundaries of University policy](#). Students who need an accommodation should contact me as soon as possible to discuss their specific needs, and documentation thereof. Please act early as retroactive accommodations are not an option – save in the case of an unfortunate/unforeseen turn during the semester.

**Respect** is important both in and outside the classroom. In the classroom, it means raising your hand, waiting your turn, and being respectful to different points of view. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the computer – in its multiple variations and platforms – is a way of life. However, like any technology in the past – the knife, fire, etc. – the computer can also be a source of distraction. So to make our learning most productive, we will have scheduled times to use our computers, so please do silence and store away your gizmos during class as we engage the texts, and we'll pull them out as needed for class discussion. It is only respectful.

**Update communication** will be mainly through [Canvas](#). Canvas will be our parallel platform of engagement, the primary being class face time and office hours. Ignorance of important information is not an option as the university does have computers that students can access with their UTEID at no extra charge.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT *NB: Late Assignments Not Accepted.***

Since this course is not designed as a MOOC or distance education course, it is in your best interest to not only be physically present, but actively engaged in all class activities.

- **20% Class Participation & Attendance. NB: Cognizant of the fact that life happens, and you may miss only two classes without penalty** (including for certified medical/other reasons).
- **40% Four Analytical Essays @ 10% each**
- **20% Map Quizzes, 2 @ 10% each**
- **20% Final Reflection Essay 10-page paper. *Late papers will not be accepted.***
  - ***NB: Assignments are due in class on Wednesdays at 4pm, unless stated otherwise.***

**COURSE GRADING POLICY** is on a +/- scale with an **A** signifying “exceptional work; a **B** “superior achievement”; a **C** “satisfactory”; a **D** is “passing, but unsatisfactory”; and an **F**.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS (Books available at the Coop Bookstore & PCL Reserve).**

**Because this is a Women’s History Course, both Collaborative and Individual Effort are Valued. To that end, some readings are assigned in Teams – especially those texts that are long and/or particularly challenging.**

- ✓ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh*
- ✓ John Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony*
- ✓ Trevor R. Getz, L. Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*
- ✓ Yvonne Vera, *Butterfly Burning*
- ✓ Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
- ✓ Laurreta Ngcobo, *And They Didn’t Die*
- ✓ Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, *491 Days*
- ✓ Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*

## **CLASS SCHEDULE – August 26-December 4, 2015 – CLASS MEETS WEDNESDAYS.**

### **PART I –: CONCEPTS AND CONTEXTS**

#### **Week 01 –: Defining Terms and Contexts – Introductions.**

Ehret, “Introduction,” *The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800*; Iris Berger, “African Women’s History: Themes and Perspectives” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 4, 1 (Spring 2003).

#### **Week 02 –: Defining Terms: Her Story/His Story or History?**

Readings from *African Gender Studies*; Chapter 11, Ziyambe, “Gender Biases in African Historiography;” Chapter 1 – Oyewumi, “Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects;” Chapter 4, Lazreg, “Decolonizing Feminism.”

#### **Week 03 –: Grounding Epistemologies**

Reading from *African Gender Studies*, Chapter 4, Lazreg, “Decolonizing Feminism.”  
Desiree Lewis, Discursive Challenges for African Feminisms, chapter 8 of [\*African Feminist Politics of Knowledge\*](#)

### **PART II –: SELF DETERMINATION, RELIGION, POLITICS (Essay for Part I Due)**

- ✓ Joyce A. Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh*
- ✓ John Thornton, *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony*
- ✓ Trevor R. Getz, L. Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History*

**Week 04** —: Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh*

**Week 05** —: Tyldesley, *Hatchepsut: The Female Pharaoh*

**Week 06** —: Thornton, *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony*

**Week 07** —: Thornton, *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony*

**Week 08** —: Getz & Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men*

**PART III** —: **COLONIALISM, EDUCATION, MOTHERHOOD (Essay for Part II Due)**

- ✓ Yvonne Vera, *Butterfly Burning*
- ✓ Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
- ✓ Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, *491 Days*

**WEEK 09** —: Vera, *Butterfly Burning*

**Week 10** —: Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

**Week 11**—: Madikizela-Mandela, *491 Days*

**PART IV** —: **ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH (Essay for Part III Due)**

- ✓ Laretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*
- ✓ Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*

**Week 12** —: Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*

**Week 13** —: Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*

**Week 14** —: **(Essay for Part IV Due) + THANKSGIVING**

**Week 15** —: **Final Reflection Essay + Map Quizzes 1 & 2** In class at 4:00pm.