



Course Outline

COURSE:	African Feminisms AFRI 4060/5060 WGST4812/5901
TERM:	Fall 2021
PRECLUSIONS:	
CLASS:	Mondays 2:35 pm - 5:25 pm
INSTRUCTOR:	Prof Shireen Hassim (she/her)
CONTACT:	Office Online for Fall 2021; by appointment Email: Shireen.Hassim@Carleton.ca

I. Course Description

This course is an advanced introduction to the ways in which feminisms emerged in Africa as a set of theoretical interventions and as political practice. It examines the ways in which gender was understood as a marker of power – status, hierarchy as well as social capability – in different parts of Africa, and the ways in which gender operated as a system of distribution of resources, responsibilities and solidarities. African theories of gender and sexuality are explored in relation to colonialism, class and race. These intersecting forms of power have resulted in differences in the forms of feminism in different parts of the continent. Although the focus will be on texts from Anglophone Africa, variations across regions will also be explored. The course is historically grounded, and takes the approach that the genealogies of ideas have explanatory capacity.

By the end of the course, students will develop an understanding of the richness and complexity of African feminisms, and will be able to place African feminisms in conversation with feminisms in other parts of the world.

Please note: We are living through strange times, requiring new modes of interaction. This course will take place online using Zoom, as an emergency measure in the context of the pandemic. My teaching mode is highly interactive and each class shapes the content of discussion, depending on their specific curiosities. I will endeavor to keep that openness to your interests as far as possible, and I hope that each of us will take responsibility for building a community that is open to learning from each other, and safe for raising what are likely to be challenging questions.

The scheduled class time will be used for synchronous learning. However, all classes will be recorded and made available to registered students. As video conversations place burdens on energy levels, we will be flexible about the length of each class; it is highly unlikely that we will all be able to concentrate and stay engaged for the full 3 hours. I will use the third hour of the allotted class time for 'office hours.' I will be online during this hour, and available to answer specific questions. Should you require private office hours outside of this time, please email me. I have a flexible schedule and we will find a time that works for both of us.

I want to really emphasize that this class works best when there is full commitment from students, including preparation for each class and willingness to risk stepping in to conversations. To underscore this, some part of your final grade is comprised of a participation assessment; please read that section carefully. Also, please do not be put off by the fact that some weeks have more readings set than others. I am sure that you will find all the texts engaging.

I am aware that many students might be accommodating a range of new commitments stemming from the pandemic. Should responsibilities of care for others, or your own illness, impact on your full participation, please speak to me as soon as possible.

II. Course Schedule

September 13: Introduction to the course

Discussion of key themes and theoretical directions

Discussion of objectives, requirements and evaluation criteria

Discussion of modes of interaction in class

September 20: Problems in the field

Azodo, Ada Uzoamaka, "Issues in African feminism: A syllabus," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol.25, No. 3/4, 1997: 201-207

Nancy Rose Hunt, "Placing African Women's History and Locating Gender," *Social History*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 359-379.

Anette Joseph-Gabriel and Mame Fatou-Niang, 2020 Transnational African Feminisms"

Available here: <https://progressive.international/wire/2020-07-28-transnational-african-feminisms/en>

Who Wrote the Gender Script? A Discussion between Yewande Omotoso and Simi Dosekun, available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arCte6Ou2Ho>

September 27: Is 'gender' African?

Oyewumi, Oyeronke. "Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist

Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies." *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African*

Women Studies. 2, no. 1, 2002. <http://www.jendajournal.com>.

OR: see Oyewumi, Oyeronke, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, chapters 1 and 2.

Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi. "[Yorubas Don't do Gender](#). A critical review of Oyeronke Oyewumi's 'The Invention of Woman: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses'." *African Identities*. 1, No.1 (2003).

Nnaemeka, Obioma "Mapping African Feminisms" in Obioma Nnaemeka (ed) 1998 *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp.31-42.

Catherine Cole, Takyiwa Manuh and Stephen Miescher, "Introduction: When Was Gender?" in *Africa After Gender?*, eds. C. Cole, T. Manuh, and S. Miescher, (2007), pp.1-14.

October 4: Colonialism as domestic intimacy

Allman, J., S. Geiger and N. Musisi, "Women in African Colonial Histories: An Introduction," in *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 1-18.

Stoler, Ann Laura. "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth Century Colonial Cultures," *American Ethnologist* 16:4 (November 1989): 634-660.

Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: Race, Sexuality and Gender in the Colonial Context* (1995): 21-40.

October 11: THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

October 13: Pumla Dineo Gqola discussion of her book *The Female Fear Factory*, details to be announced.

October 18: Is Homosexuality African?

Epprecht, Marc "Sexuality, History, Africa" *American Historical Review*, Vol 114, No. 5 (Dec-2009), pp. 1258-1272.

Tamale, Sylvia "Introduction" and "Researching and Theorising Sexualities in Africa," in *African Sexualities: A Reader* (Capetown, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 2011), pp. 1-8

Nabutanyi, Edgar Fred "(Un)Complicating Mwanga's Sexuality in Nakisanze Segawa's *The Triangle*", *GLQ* Vol. 26, Issue 3 (2020): 439-454

Steven Pierce, "'Nigeria can do without such perverts': Sexual anxiety and political crisis in postcolonial Nigeria," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (2016) 36 (1): 3-20.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201x-3482075>

BOOK REVIEW DUE!

OCTOBER 25-29: FALL UNIVERSITY BREAK

November 1: Intimate Resistances

Tamale Sylvia 2005: Eroticism, Sensuality and 'Women's Secrets' among the Baganda: A Critical Analysis, in: *Feminist Africa* 5, Cape Town, pp. 9-36.

White, Luise "Prostitution, Identity and Class Consciousness in Nairobi during World War II," *Signs*, Vol. 11, No. 2, (Winter, 1986), pp. 255-273.

Hunter, Mark "Providing Love: Sex and Exchange in Twentieth Century South Africa" in *Love in Africa*, eds. Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas (University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 135-156.

November 8: The allures and discontents of nation

Mougoue, Jacqueline-Bethel (2019) *Gender, Separatist Politics, and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon*, Introduction ("What the women of the nation are, so shall the nation be") and Chapter 2 ("Men must not die alone in the task of nation-building")

McClintock, Anne (1993) Family Feuds, Gender, Nationalism and the Family. *Feminist Review*, No 44. Summer 1993: 62-80

Yuval-Davis, Nira *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage, 1997. Chapter 1

Schmidt, Elisabeth "Emancipate Your Husbands! Women and Nationalism in Guinea, 1953-58," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 282-298.

Hassim, Shireen 2006, *Women's Organisations and Democracy in South Africa*, chapter 1, pp. 20-46

November 10: Author Mark Gevisser on his book *The Pink Line: Queer Lives on Global Frontiers* details to be announced

November 15: WORKSHOP ON WRITING

November 22: Collective action

Van Allen, Judith, "Sitting on a man: colonialism and the lost institutions of Igbo women," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol 6(2): 165-181

Tripp, Aili Mari, Isabel Casimiro, Joy Kwesiga and Alice Mungwa, *African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes*, 2011 (Introduction)

Mikell, Gwendolyn, "African feminism towards a new politics of representation," *Feminist Studies* 21(2), 1995: 405-424

Naminata Diabate. *Naked Agency: Genital Cursing and Geopolitics in Africa* (Duke, 2020): 43-62.

November 29: ESSAYS DUE!

November 30: Violence: public and private

Gqola, Pumla Dineo, *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, MF Books, (Chapter 1, 'A Recurring Nightmare' and Ch 2 'What's race got to do with rape? And Chapter 4, "The female fear factory")

Hassim, Shireen, "Violent modernity: Gender, race and bodies in contemporary South African politics" *Politikon*, Volume 41, No. 2, 2014: 1-16

Wanelisa Xaba, 'Challenging Fanon: A Black radical feminist perspective on violence and the Fees Must Fall movement' in *Agenda*, Vol 31, Issue 3-4: 96-104

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10130950.2017.1392786?src=recsys>

December 6: New Directions/ African intersectionalities

Simidele Dosekun, 2020 *Spectacular Femininity and Transnational Culture*, University of Illinois Press, chapter 1, "African women in the world of things"

Kealeboga Ramaru "Feminist Reflections on Rhodes Must Fall," in *Feminist Africa* 2019

https://feministafrica.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/fa22_standpoint_1.pdf

Sisonke Msimang, 2017, "All your faves are problematic", *Africa is a Country*, available here:

<https://africasacountry.com/2017/04/all-your-faves-are-problematic-a-brief-history-of-chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-stanning-and-the-trap-of-blackgirlmagic>

Beyonce's Black is King:

<https://www.theafricareport.com/34850/beyonces-new-film-black-is-king-is-stirring-up-controversy/?fbclid=IwAR2XAqn7FN8RoAqrYsORGKdjd-bgWkxTAHZ2wSvJz6Ln0sNNagFk09F8xQ>

<https://www.essence.com/entertainment/only-essence/beyonces-black-is-king-criticism/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/31/arts/music/beyonce-black-is-king.html>

III. Evaluation:

Seminar participation 10%

Students are expected to prepare for class. You will be assessed on your presentation as well as on your general participation in discussion throughout the course.

Seminar presentation 10%

Each student will prepare to lead one class discussion. This will include a short written intervention (2-3 pages), circulated to the class 24 hours before the presentation. You will be assessed on

- a) your ability to draw out the main themes of texts and present these coherently
- b) your ability to both lead and respond to questions from class

This exercise will prepare you for making presentations and assist you in both academic and non-academic settings

Book Review 20%

Prepare a 2-3 page critical analytical response to any book relevant to the course. Please discuss your selection with me first. Your response should address the book's core argument, supporting evidence and should provide a critical assessment of the significance and validity of the argument. Due date October 19.

Presentation of concept for essay 10%

Each student will present an idea/ concept note for an essay on October 28. This will be a two-page exposition of the core question that is being addressed and a bibliography. The concept note must be circulated to the class by noon on NOVEMBER 2.

Essay 50%

This major assignment should be a critical examination of a topic addressed in this course. The essay must demonstrate critical thinking, the ability to assess different texts in a coherent analysis, and be well written and formally referenced. The essay must be between 8-10 pages Times New Roman font size 12 double-spaced, and is due on November 30.

Course Assessment

ASSIGNMENT	WEIGHT	CONSIDERATIONS	DATE DUE
Class participation	10%	Continuous assessment based on active participation	Final grade awarded Dec 11
Seminar presentation	10%	Sign up at first class for date on which you will lead the class discussion Prepare critical response to texts for selected class and circulate 24 hours before class	Assessed at relevant class
Book Review	20%	Select book in consultation with Prof Hassim 2 page review (see details above)	October 18
Research Essay Concept Note	10%	2 pages + bibliography Details above	November 1
Research Essay	50%	Critical thinking, coherence in argument, ability to weigh different types of evidence	November 29
Total	100%		

SPECIAL INFORMATION REGARDING FALL 2021 PANDEMIC MEASURES

Carleton will continue to follow all public health guidelines as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Instructors may find it helpful to review the [guidelines for in-class teaching](#) and [labs](#). Both guideline documents are available on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) and [mandatory self-screening](#) prior to coming to campus daily.

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be taken in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

REGULATIONS

COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an important issue that must be considered within every course. The Undergraduate Course Calendar spells out several guidelines regarding student conduct.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

COURSE SHARING WEBSITES and COPYRIGHT

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

STATEMENT ON CLASS CONDUCT

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and
- preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Carleton University Equity Services states that “every member of the University community has a right to study, work and live in a safe environment free of discrimination or harassment”.

Late Assignments and Accommodations

All assignments must be submitted by 9 am on their due date electronically via Brightspace.

Late assignments will be marked down (1 point per day excluding weekends and holidays)

Assignments will automatically receive 0 if submitted more than 7 days after the due date.

If a late submission of a paper or an assignment is unavoidable (e.g., personal or medical reasons), please inform the Instructor/TA *before* the due date if possible and have written documentation available if possible.

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the [Equity Services website](#).

Religious obligation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the [Equity Services website](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

Survivors of Sexual Assault: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit [Sexual Assault Support Services](#).

Accommodations for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, access [the policy](#).

Petitions to Defer

Students unable to write a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances may apply within five working days to the Registrar's Office for permission to write a deferred examination. The request must be fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documentation. Only deferral petitions submitted to the Registrar's Office will be considered.

Grading System

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)	F = 0-49 (0) – Failure: no academic credit
A = 85-89 (11)	B - = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)	
A - = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)	
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)	

The following additional final course grades may be assigned by instructors:

DEF Official deferral of final exam (see "Petitions to Defer")

GNA Grade not available. This is used when there is an allegation of an academic offence. The notation is replaced with the appropriate grade for the course as soon as it is available.

IP In Progress – a notation (IP) assigned to a course by a faculty member when: At the undergraduate level, an undergraduate thesis or course has not been completed by the end of the period of registration.

WDN Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the

Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Withdrawal without Academic Penalty

September 30, 2021: Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall and fall/winter (full year) courses (financial withdrawal). Withdrawals after this date will create no financial change to fall term fees and will result in a permanent notation of WDN appearing on your official transcript.

December 10, 2021: Last day for academic withdrawal from fall courses.

January 31, 2022: Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter (full year) courses.

April 12, 2022: Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter term courses.

Student Resources

Institute of African Studies	(613-520-2600, ext. 2220)	439 PA
Registrar's Office	(3500)	300 Tory
Academic Advising Centre	(7850)	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre	(6608)	501 University Centre
Career Services	(6611)	401 Tory
Health and Counselling Services	(6674)	2600 CTTC

Covid-19 Student Support

- [Empower Me](#) is a free, confidential counselling service for students. This service can be accessed any time by telephone, video-counselling or e-counselling.
- [TAO Online Therapy](#) is designed to address issues related to anxiety and depression. The online modules are accessible 24/7.
- For a listing of mental health resources across Canada, please visit our [Provincial Support resources website](#).
- Additional student resources are available on [Carleton's Mental Health and Well-Being website](#).
- Information about Health and Counselling Services (HCS) will be available on the [HCS website](#).