

ST LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY KENYA SEMESTER PROGRAM

AFS/ANTH/GNDR: 247

GENDER ISSUES IN MORDERN AND TRADITIONAL KENYA

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People go to Africa and confirm that they already have in their heads and so they fail to see what is there in front of them.

Chinua Achebe, Nigerian author

Introduction:

Africa... Kenya cannot be fully appreciated without a conscious effort to cultivate a deep understanding of the complex and interrelated issues that have influenced and continue to influence her. Kenya does not exist in a vacuum and therefore there are both internal (Kenyan) and external (regional and international) forces that impact social, environmental, political, economic, and historical issues. A scholar of Africa must therefore seek extensive knowledge of Africa, observe keenly current affairs, and reflect on how his/her own perspective impacts their understanding of Kenya (Africa in general).

Gender issues in Kenya are complex and no one course can claim to give students a complete understanding of the factors that influence gender issues not the impact of traditional and modern forces on gender issues in Kenya. However, this course will provide you with some basic knowledge about salient issues in gender in Kenya. The course will demand that you use and further develop critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities, reflective practice and keen observation. If you engage consciously with the course material and learning goals you will develop a framework for analysis of gender issues that will be transferable into other personal and professional settings.

In this course we will use the basic definition of "Gender [as] a socially constructed term depicting the system of relations between women and Men. It designates the behaviors, attitudes, roles, status and other processes that govern relationships among the sexes in a given socio-cultural, socio-economic and /or socio-political context. This means, that gender relations vary not only from one community to another, but also according to different social classes in a given society" (Annan-Yao, 2004 p. 1). Gender relations and roles also change and experience push and pull from traditional and modern forces. This course will guide you as you explore how gender issues

in modern and traditional Kenya impact and are impacted by social, economic, environmental and political experiences.

Course Description

This course examines how sex and gender manifest themselves in the social, cultural, and political contexts in both rural and urban as well as traditional versus modern Kenya. It explores various aspects of women's experiences both within the public institutions and with personal relationships, analyzes cultural representations of women, and examines how women's and men's lives are shaped by structures of gender inequality. It also focuses on Women as a force in social change and identifies significant gender issues in relation to development and in reference to particular sectors.

Purpose of this course

This course is designed to give learners an overview of gender issues in Kenya related to both traditional and modern structure that influence the roles, access and engagement in public institutions, participation in development of both men and women in Kenya. It explores the historical impact of colonialism and globalization on concepts and representations of gender roles and responsibilities, and the development of women's movements and advocacy agencies on the changes in gender issues. It will also explore the role of religion and concepts of wealth (property) in relation to equity in participation (or constraints) of women in rural and urban settings in Kenya.

This course encourages students to examine gender issues in Kenya through various social, cultural, economic, and political lenses especially in how these lenses impact policy and development from both grass-roots levels and national levels. Students will be able to apply either a feminist or critical analysis framework to gain insight into their experiences throughout the semester. For example, a student may examine the role of religion (Islam) in either encouraging or inhibiting women's engagement in civic leadership in Mombasa (coastal regions), or the extent to which women benefit from tourism in either the Masai or Hadza communities.

Learning Objectives

This course will expose the learners to salient gender issues in Kenya. There will be numerous opportunities for the learners to examine the development of their own understanding of and orientation to gender issues; explore the issues of identity, independence, and religion; and practice critical thinking, problem solving, and reflective practice skills.

At the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Understand both critical and feminist analysis framework
2. Describe traditional hunter gathering and pastoral roles of both men and women in the Masai and Hadza communities
3. Explain the influence of rural and urban lifestyles on gender roles and identities

4. Explain the major influences of religion (Islam, Christianity, & Traditional African Religion) on gender roles and identities (of a select group/ tribe in Kenya through reflection of either the rural or urban experience)
5. Articulate the role of advocacy agencies on gender issues in Kenya, including a historical overview of the Women's movement in Kenya and its role in addressing gender inequity in Kenya
6. Understand the role of women in both community based and national development in Kenya.
7. Student will develop their observation, listening, and interviewing skills as a part of research/ data gathering techniques for social/anthropological inquiry

Course Content

1. Introduction to Gender Studies
2. Introduction to basic feminist and critical analysis frameworks
3. Overview of the history and development of the Women's Movement in Kenya
4. Role of Women in Development
5. Influences of Religion on Gender issues (access to education, health, property, capital, and civic participation)
6. Effects of globalization on traditional concepts of gender
7. Impact of rural-urban migration on gender roles and identities
8. Differences between Kenyan rural and urban concepts of gender
9. Impact of community based organizations (Chamas) on gender issues

Course Assessment

Each student will create a course portfolio on Gender Issues in Kenya. The portfolio will be the basis of the assessment for this course. The portfolio will comprise of the following:

• Three short reflective essays	30%
• One exploratory "Hot Spot" Paper or creative collage	20%
• An Analytical Essay/ research position paper on a contemporary gender issues	40%
• <u>QUIZ & participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

All your essays for this course should follow the APA format for writing, attribution, citation and referencing; should be double spaced, in font size 12 and use either Arial or Verdana fonts. Refer to the St Lawrence University web site for guideline on APA

(www.stlawu.edu/writing/apastyle.doc) and send your papers electronically after checking for plagiarism. All papers should be free from academic dishonesty – falsification of information, plagiarism, and collusion (refer to the Academic Honesty Policy in the *St. Lawrence University Kenya Semester Program Student Handbook*). For help with your writing, please refer to the St Lawrence Writing Center web site <http://www.stlawu.edu/writing/handouts.html> or the university of Purdue Online Writing Lab <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

Reflective Essays:**30%**

Meta-cognition and an ability or awareness of one's own learning process is the basis for lifelong and deep learning. Using an understanding of cognitive development and reflective writing (see handout on Reflective Writing), these 3 short essays (worth 10% each) are a way for you to track your development understanding/ thinking about gender issues.

1. Reflective Essay 1 – draft a 2-3 page essay on what you think Kenya's salient gender issues are. The purpose of this essay is to provide you with the space to explore what you think about gender issues in Kenya, why you think so, and what you identify as areas for a need for more information and an expanded understanding.

Articulate what you think about women in Kenya. From what you know, what do you think life is like for an average Kenyan woman (traditional and modern/ rural and urban)? What do you base your description on? What do you think you need to know to understand gender issues in Kenya?

2. Reflective Essay 2 – draft a 3-4 page essay on a particular topic that is troubling you. The purpose of this essay is to give you an opportunity to challenge your thinking on a gender related issue. Pick a topic you are finding challenging to understand or one you are wondering about (like a Hot spot) and use the Reflective writing tool to analyze your thinking/ perspective about the gender issue

Use the “I thought.... I Wonder.... I Believe.... I know.... “Prompts to help you get started

3. Reflective Essay 3 – draft a 3-5 page essay discussing your biggest “ah-ha” Learning moment about a gender issue in Kenya. Trace your thinking and articulate what you have learned about the issue and about your own learning process.

What was the issue? What did you think at first? What happened to challenge your thinking? How did you gather additional data to help you make sense of the “learning moment”? Were you satisfied with your data? Why or why not? What do you think now? Are you surprised by the change in your thinking? Have you completely resolved your understanding of the issue?

Exploratory Essay or Collage**20%**

Choose a question, problem or issue that genuinely perplexes you about gender issues in Kenya (or Tanzania). At the beginning of your exploratory essay explain why you are interested in the topic and why you are unsatisfied with your current position on the issue. Write a narrative account of your thinking process as you navigate your topic through research, talking to other, observation, and your own reflective thinking. Your research should involve reading scholarly and newspaper/ magazine articles, assigned sources, and field research (observation and talking to others). Your goal is to examine your topic from a variety of perspectives while assessing the

strength and weakness of the different positions or points of view. By the end of the essay you may or may not have reached a satisfactory solution/ conclusion. You will be rewarded on the quality of your exploration and thinking processes. Your goal is not necessarily to answer the question, but rather to wrestle with it. Use the universal standards to Intellectualism (Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, page 10-12) to help you develop your exploratory thinking skills.

Your essay should be 3-5 pages long written in APA format.

Analysis Paper/ Research Position Paper

40%

Based on either the movie “The White Masaai” and your Masaai experience OR the movie “The Bushmen of the Kalahari/ The God’s Must be Crazy” and your Hadza experience, write an essay analyzing the portrayal of traditional living and gender roles of women and men and your own experience. This essay should include a short review of the movie (summary and most important point that were controversial).

Analyze the movie(s): What values or beliefs did the movie perpetuate about gender roles? What cultural image is conveyed? Based on your experience, is that image accurate? Comment on the impact of globalization on the culture and gender roles.

OR

Write a position paper on a controversial gender issue and take a stand on the issue. Your introduction should present your issue, provide background information and state your claim/ position. The body of your essay should support your claim, summarize and respond to opposing arguments and use reasons and evidence to support your claim.

Required Reading and Additional Resources:

Your required reading is compiled in the Gender Issues In Modern and Traditional Kenya Course packet. In addition to the course packet you are required to read the daily newspapers and conduct your own research on the topic of your choice using the St Lawrence online Library service

(<http://encore.stlawu.edu/iii/encore/search?target=online+journals&formids=target&lang=eng&suite=def&reservedids=lang%2Csuite&submitmode=&submitname=>)

Reading List

<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/36/index-be.html>

<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/36/index-beaa.html>

<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/36/index-beda.html>

<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/45053>

http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/a/intl_timeline_2.htm Timeline of Women’s Suffrage Movement

<http://www.africanmarket.com/front/product.asp?product=3900> Talking Gender: Conversations with Kenyan Women Writers

<http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/05/25/afraf.adr038.full>

Safe World for Women <http://www.asafeworldforwomen.org/home/about-2011-campaign/118-the2011campaign.html>

Gender Index Kenya <http://genderindex.org/country/kenya>

Course Calendar

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Assignments/ Notes
1: Aug 29- Sept 2	Intro to Course: *Gender construction *History of women's Movement in Kenya * Theories of analysis	*Review of Critical Thinking & Reflective practice * introduction to Action Learning Sets	*	
2: Sept 5-9				
3: Sept 19 – 23				
4: Sept 26- 30				
5: Oct 3 – 7				

6: Oct 24 – 28				
7: Oct 31 – Nov 4				