WOMEN AND POLITICS IN AFRICA

Professor: Dr. Agnes Ngoma Leslie
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AFS 4330 Section: 1F49
POS 4931, section 11DH
Class meetings:  
MAT. 0003: T-4th period (10:40-11-30)  
R 4th and 5th periods (10:40-12:35)
Semester: Fall 2013
Office: 435 Grinter Hall
Office hours: Monday 2 – 4 P.M.

Course Description

This course explores the status and role of women in African society and the state, from pre-colonial times to the present. We will explore from historical times to the present, the roles that women have played in the political sphere how they interact with political structures and how they mobilize themselves to impact the state, society, and legal systems at local, national, regional and international levels. The course will examine how the different political and social environments impact the participation of women in the political sphere. Thus, we will study African women’s participation in the political arena, their challenges and struggles for their rights and their impact on their countries’ laws and policies. We will draw on examples of individual activism and women’s movements in different African countries. We will also examine women’s participation as voters, politicians, organizers and policy makers, the challenges they face in running for political office and how they influence politics once in office. Lastly, we will analyze African women’s participation in the regional and international sphere.

Class Philosophy

This class will be taught as a colloquium. Each student will make one presentation and lead a class discussion. All students will be expected to do the readings and participate in the discussions.

Grading

Students’ grades will be based on attendance and participation in class discussions, quizzes, term paper, tests and class presentations based on the readings and videos as follows:

1) Attendance = 10 % (any absence will require a suitable explanation);
2) Participation = 10 
3) Leading one class discussion and synthesizing the readings = 20 % (4 pages, typewritten);
4) Two quizzes based on readings presentations and videos = 40 %; (20% each)
5) Term paper on one of the assigned topics = 20 

With the exception of the final paper, all writing assignments will be returned to students with comments before the final week of class. The professor reserves the right to make changes in order to meet the course objectives.

**Assigned Readings**

1. **Reading Packet** (available at Target): *Women and Politics in Africa*

**Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require classroom accommodation should first register with the Dean of Students Office who will provide them with the necessary documentation.

**Weekly Readings**

**Introduction**

Week 1 – **August 22.** Course introduction.

**Week 2 - August 27.**

1) Ifi Amadiume – *Women’s Achievements in African Political Systems: Transforming Culture for 500 Years* (Readings)
   **August 29**

**Class – reading/presentation assignments**

**WOMEN IN PRE-COLONIAL SOCIETIES**

Week 3 - **September 3**

2) Yaa Asantewa of Asante: About 1840/60-1921 (Readings)

**September 5**

1) “Swaziland - Labotsiben/Gwamile Mdluli: The Power Behind the Swazi Throne 1875-1925.” GININDZA, THOKO. (Readings)
2) Holly Hanson – *Queen Mothers and Good Government in*
Buganda: The Loss of Women’s Political Power in Nineteenth-Century East Africa. (Readings)

WOMEN IN NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES
Week 4 – September 10
  

Video – “You have Struck A Rock,” Women in the Struggle Against Apartheid.

WOMEN’S MOVEMENTS AND ACTIVISM
Week 5 – September 17
  1) Women’s Rights in Botswana – Onnalena Doo Selolwane. (Readings, p.139)


First Quiz: September 24.

WOMEN AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS
Week 6 – September 24 – First quiz

  1) Sheila Meintjes and Mary Simons - Why Electoral Systems Matter to Women. (Readings, p. 287.)


Week 7 - October 1
  1) Gisela Geisler - African women in/and Politics: Issues and Reality (Reading Packet)

October 3
  1) Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika: “Facing the Challenges of Politics”. (Readings, p. 113).

  2) Julie Ballington & Richard E. Matland - “Political Parties and Special Measures: Enhancing Women’s Participation in Electoral Processes”
WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM
Week 7 – October 8

October 10

WOMEN AS LEGISLATORS
Week 8 – October 15

October 17
1) Gender, numbers and substance: Women parliamentarians and the ‘politics of presence’ in KwaZulu-Natal - Suzanne Francis; muse.jhu.edu/journals/transformation/v070/70.francis.pdf

Week 9 – October 22
1) Into the Trenches: Women Legislators and their constituencies (Readings - packet)

October 24

Guidelines on writing term paper

Week 10 – October 29

October 31

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Second Quiz November 5
Week 11 – November 5
1) Democratizing Local Government: Problems and Opportunities in the Advancement of Gender Equality in South Africa. Likhapha Mbatha,
November 7
2) Gender Equity and Local Democracy in Contemporary Uganda: Addressing the Challenge of Women’s Political Effectiveness in Local Government
Josephine Ahikire.

WOMEN AND ISLAM
Week 12 – Nov. 12
1) Senegal – Gender Parity:

November 14
1) Senegal: Contending with Religious Constraints (Readings)
2) Changing Politics from Below? Women Parliamentarians in Morocco:
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340701398352#preview

AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE
Week 13 – Nov. 19
1) African Women and the African Union’s Protocol:
law.wlu.edu/deptimages/.../Frans%20Viljoen.pdf
1) Examples of Female African leaders: roles and impact: Class participation

Nov. 21
library presentation - research

Week 14 - November 26
November 27-30 Thanksgiving – No classes

Week 15 - December 3 – Term papers due

Term paper due: December 3

Grade Point Scale:
A = 90 or above, A- = 87-89, B+ = 84-86, B = 80-83, B- = 77-79, C+ = 74-76, C = 70-73,
C- = 67-69, D+ = 64-66, D = 60-63, D- = 57-59, E = 56 or below