Course Description HI588/AA588 examines the changing status of women in Africa from the pre-colonial period to today. Students read articles, monographs, and autobiographies that examine strategies women used to obtain and exercise power. The readings also explore women’s place as economic actors, as well as their spiritual and ritualistic roles in the various societies. All the readings interrogate how African women contested gender categories that privileged males.

Some of the questions and issues that the readings address are:

1. In what ways have western and African feminist scholarship helped to advance the study of the history of women in Africa?
2. Is gender as a category of analysis essential in the study of the history of women in Africa?
3. Can the study of how African women exercised political power in the past provide an analytical framework for assessing women’s changing political status?
4. How has culture informed the ways in which women exercised power in the past, and how has women’s access to power and leadership changed over time?
5. To what extent have European conquest, colonial control, independent movements, civil wars, and international developments during the various historical periods shaped African women’s access to power and notions of gender?

Prerequisites: Sophomore status or higher

Readings

The required books are available for purchase at Barnes & Noble at Boston University. One copy of each required book is also available on two-hour reserve at Mugar Library. To obtain a list of the materials on reserve, go to [http://library.bu.edu](http://library.bu.edu) and click on
Reserve Services, selecting either my name or the course number. Additional required readings from books and journals are available at Blackboard Learn. (BL)

Library Assistance: The African Studies Library is located on the 6th floor of Mugar Memorial Library. Hours are 9:00 am-5:00 pm. Library staff can be reached by email at asl@bu.edu or by phone at 617-353-3726.

Academic Integrity Policy: Each student is expected to author his/her own work. Students should familiarize themselves with the CAS Conduct Code. Students who submit plagiarized papers or other assignments that they have not authored will be subject to the penalties imposed by Boston University Academic Conduct Code.

Required Books (Available on Reserve at Mugar Library and Bookstore)


Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Description of Assignments and Dates Due

Critical Papers: Each student must write 3 critical papers of 5 pages each. **One of the critical papers should be based on the readings from Week II or Week III, the second paper should be based on one week’s readings from Weeks IV-VIII, and the last paper should be based on one week’s reading from Weeks IX-XIII.** Papers should be submitted at the end of the class for the week selected. The papers will be graded according to the following criteria: critical analysis of the main themes in the readings; connections made between themes in the readings and the conceptual issues raised in the readings and discussions for Week I; evidence of outside readings consulted, particularly research on Google Scholar and other scholarly electronic sites. Students will select the weeks for their essays during the first class session. **Students writing critical papers will take the lead in the discussion for the week selected. 30% of final grade.**

Presentations, Class Participation, Attendance: All students are expected to attend each class session. Each student will also make an oral presentation on one week’s reading. The week selected should not be one of the weeks that you have selected for the
critical essays. Students who are not making a presentation should be prepared to participate in class discussions. **20% of final grade.**

**Research Paper:** Each student will be required to write a research paper on one of the themes arising from the weekly readings and discussions. Students must consult with me before selecting a topic and undertaking research (During Week 7 or before). Each student will make a formal oral presentation of his/her research paper during weeks 13 and 14. Completed research papers are due no later than 5:00 pm Monday December 18. The research paper should be no less than 5,000 words (undergraduates), and 8,000-9,000 words (graduate students). **50% of final grade.**

**Weekly Readings**

**Part One: Introduction**

**Week I (9/4): Women in Africa: Theories, Methods and Historiography**

**Readings:**
- Iris Berger, “African Women’s History: Themes and Perspectives.” **BL**
  - *Feminist Studies* (1986) **BL**
- Boyston, “Gender as a Category of Historical Analysis.” **BL Rec.**
  - *Introduction, Lecture, Discussion of Readings*

**Part II The Foundations: Pharaonic Egypt, Kush/Nubia**

**Week 2 (9/11) Women Ruler of Ancient Egypt: Hatshepsut**

**Readings**
- Kara Cooney, *The Woman Who Would Be King*
- Lesko, “Women’s Monumental Mark on Ancient Egypt” **BL**
  - *Behind the Roddick Gates*, Ripley, “Hatshepsut, Identity, Ideology…” **BL Rec**
  - *Continuation of Discussion of Week 1 Readings; Presentation; Lecture, Discussion of Readings, Week 2.*

**Week 3 (9/18) Culture, Power and Gender in Kush, Nubia and Egypt**

**Readings:**
- Lohwasser, “Queenship in Kush” **(BL)**
- Carney, “Women and Military Leadership…Egypt.” **BL**
- Cooney, “Cleopatra” in Cooney, *When Women Ruled the World*
  - **BL**
  - *Presentation, Lecture, Discussion*

**Part III Asserting Power in the Period of the Slave Trade**
Week 4 (9/25) Women and Leadership: Visionaries and Politicians

Readings:
Heywood, *Njinga of Angola: Africa’s Warrior Queen*
Thornton, “Elite Women in the Kingdom of Kongo” **BL**

Student Presentation, Lecture, Discussion

Week 5 (10/2) Women: Trans-Cultural Relations and New Bases of Power

Belcher, “Sisters Debating the Jesuits,” **BL**

Hilary Jones, “From Marriage a la Mode…” **BL**

E. Francis White, “Creole Women Traders in the Nineteenth Century,” **BL** (Rec.)

Wheeler, “Joaquina da Sliva…” **BL**

Student Presentations, Lecture, Discussion

Week 6 (10/9) Gendered Lives, Leadership and Power: Queen Mothers, Warriors, and Concubines, Traders

Readings
Oyéwùmì, *The Invention of Women*, pp. 80-120.
Aidoo, “Asante Queen Mothers in Government and Politics.” **BL**

Boyd and Last, “The Role of Women…Sokoto,” **BL** or

Larsen, “City of Women” **BL**

Student Presentations, Lecture, Discussion

Part IV African Women and the Colonial Regimes to Independence

Week 7 (10/16) Changing Notions of Status, Gender and Power

Readings:

Adirento, “Gender, Race Class, Prostitution…Lagos.” **BL**

Van Allen, “‘Sitting on a Man’ Colonialism…Igbo Women,” **BL**

Thomas, “Imperial Concerns and ‘Women’s Affairs…” **BL**

Student Presentations, Lecture, Discussion

Week 8 (10/23) Women, Gender and Leadership in Late Colonial Africa

Readings:

Johnson Odim, “For Four Freedoms” (**BL**)

Rachael Jean-Baptiste “Miss Euro-Africa Men Women…Metis Senegal,” **BL**


Student Presentations, Lecture, Discussion

Part V African Women: Decolonization and the Post-Colonial State


Readings and Videos:
Rec. Video, Flame (1996), Begin
Student Presentations, Lecture, Discussion

Week 10 (11/6) African Women: Gender and Power since the 1980s: Part One
Readings and Videos:
Preez Bezdrob, Winnie Mandela: A Life (136 to end)
Ranchod Nilsson, “Gender Politics, Gender Backlash…Zimbabwe.” BL
Parpart, “Militarized Masculinities: Heroes and Gender Inequality…Zimbabwe.” BL
Selection of Television Interviews with Winnie Mandela
Student Presentation, Lecture, Discussion

Readings: Tripp, Women and Power in Post Conflict Africa (3-33 and 49-77)
Decker, “Of Miniskirts and Morality” in In Idi Amin’s Shadow BL
Presentation, Discussion

Readings, Tripp, Women and Power in Post Conflict Africa (p.78-141)
Heywood, “Angola and the Violent Years” BL or Moran, “Our Mothers Have Spoken.” BL
Presentation, Discussion, Final Paper Presentations (Begin)

Readings: Tripp, Women and Power in Post Conflict Africa pp. 142-258
Mouzinho and Cutaia, “Reflections on Feminist Organizing in Angola,” BL or Morrell et. al., “Hegemonic Masculinities…South Africa: Culture, Power and Gender Politics,” BL
Presentation of readings; Final Paper Presentations (Begin)

Week 14 (12/11) Final Paper Presentations

Final Papers Due Monday 16 December 12:00 noon