

The MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women provided funding for the development of this syllabus. The syllabus may not be reproduced or distributed without permission from Dr. Jeremy Rich, Department of History, MTSU.

## HIS 3070 Topics in World History: Women in Modern Africa

Fall 2007

Dr. Rich

[jrich@mtsu.edu](mailto:jrich@mtsu.edu)

Office: Peck Hall 2

Office phone: 898-2574

Office hours: T 2-4, Th 1-3; by appointment

Required Readings: Susan Geiger et al., *Women in African Colonial Histories*; Marie Beatrice Umutési, *Surviving the Slaughter*; Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, *Uncertain Honor*; Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*

### **Overview:**

It is very common for Americans to view African women as poor, passive victims. While there is no doubt that African women have faced a great set of challenges from the onset of colonial expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, it would be a serious mistake to lump female experiences together. This course will explore the diversity of challenges and achievements by African women in different parts of the continent. We will consider the varied impact of colonialism on family life and understandings of gender, the ways women have negotiated with difficult economic situations and civil wars, different disciplinary approaches to how scholars have tried to understand and interpret the actions and beliefs of African women, and the political roles of women in the colonial and post-colonial period. This course does not require a strong background in African issues.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will become familiar with the strengths and drawbacks to different disciplinary approaches to African women's issues
- Students will recognize the varied religious, cultural, and political environments of African women
- Students will be able to delineate strategies and methods African women have used to protect their autonomy
- Students will be capable of discussing the impact colonial rule had on gender roles and African women's lives
- Students will develop an awareness of the challenges scholars face examining written sources and interviews as evidence in African history

**Exams:** Students will take four essay examinations in the course of the semester. There is an examination for each of the four assigned readings. Each test will consist of two questions. The tests will concentrate on the assigned readings. A student in this class should expect that one of the questions will focus specifically on the reading due on the day of the exam. There will be no cumulative final examination.

The MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women provided funding for the development of this syllabus. The syllabus may not be reproduced or distributed without permission from Dr. Jeremy Rich, Department of History, MTSU.

**Final Paper:** Each student will write a final research paper based on primary and secondary sources on challenges women have faced in modern Africa (1850-present) and ways that women sought to resolve or negotiate with this challenge. This assignment will be due on December 6<sup>th</sup> in my office. No late final papers will be accepted for any reason, and any paper less than 15 pages long will not receive a passing grade. The assignment must be at least 15 pages long (excluding endnotes, bibliography, and cover page), double spaced, and written in Times New Roman font. The format should follow the Chicago Manual of Style.

**Final Paper Proposal and Update:** On October 1<sup>st</sup>, students will have to submit a final paper proposal of at least three pages. This proposal will consist of a thesis statement and a list of at least five sources (must be print sources or academic articles). If this is not handed in on time, two grades will be deducted from the final paper grade. Students also will have to provide to the instructor an update on their progress on the final paper by November 5<sup>th</sup> on the paper (at least 3 pages). If a student cannot show any progress by this date or if the update is not turned in, two grades will be deducted from the final paper grade.

**Late assignments:** Unless a major medical or personal issue arises that can be documented, papers should be handed in on time. I will drop a grade if the paper is not turned in as a hard copy (no disks, flash drives, etc.) by the end of class time. After this 24 hour period, I will fail the assignment. If a problem arises, please let me know before class. **Computer and printer problems will not be considered valid reasons for turning in paper late.**

**Classroom participation:** You will be expected to participate and demonstrate your knowledge of the readings. During this course, we will have group work and several debates in class. **Do not be afraid to express yourself even if you are not sure you have the "right" answer! After all, it is your class.** If you are willing to take risks and ask questions, the more you will learn. This category is notoriously vague and difficult to assess so here is a rough outline of how your participation will be evaluated:

A: Contributes several meaningful points (more than one) that demonstrate knowledge and analysis of the readings in each class. In articulating your viewpoint, you do not have to have fully understood the material but rather show you have read and evaluated it thoughtfully. Does not miss a class except in exceptional circumstances to be discussed with me preferably before the absence.

B: Contributes one meaningful point in each class and generally but not always familiar with the week's readings. Sometimes active in discussion but not in every class. If you skip one class without a reasonable explanation, then this is the highest grade you can have for discussion.

C: This is a catch-all area I hope you all avoid. It consists of several types: 1) a student who shows to every class but rarely speaks, 2) A student who skips class several times without explanation, and 3) someone who consistently demonstrates their lack of reading

The MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women provided funding for the development of this syllabus. The syllabus may not be reproduced or distributed without permission from Dr. Jeremy Rich, Department of History, MTSU.

with superficial comments. If you show up for every class but never say a word, then this is the lowest participation grade you can receive. Please do not do this; your opinion is important and you would be robbing us as a class of your valuable perspective.

D and F: Rarely comes to class and reveals little knowledge of assignments.

## **DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation with any aspect of this course, or have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with Dr. Rich as soon as possible or contact the Office of Disabled Students Services (898-2783).

## **OTHER CLASS POLICIES**

Everyone will abide by the MTSU Statement of Community Standards of Civil Behavior. Students are allowed only **two** unexcused absences. Excuses must involve documentation from a medical professional or the student's advisor. This may seem unreasonable, but keep in mind we only meet 13 times for the entire semester. If you tend to skip classes, please consider taking another course.

All cell phones, pagers, etc. must be turned off and put away during class.

No tobacco products may be used during class. Save the pipes, the Skoal, and the Benson and Hedges Ultra Light Menthol 100s for your free time.

The grade scale is A 90-100; B+ 89-88; B 83-87; B- 80-82; C+ 78-79; C 73-77; C- 70-72; D+ 68-69; D 63-67; D- 60-62; F 0-59.

The principal objective of the Middle Tennessee State University honesty policy is to encourage a dynamic, open and honest intellectual climate based on the personal and academic integrity of all members. It is the responsibility of students to help maintain the community of academic integrity. Students shall not receive credit for work that is not a product of their own efforts. For a full description of the policy, please see your catalog. **Any act of plagiarism, cheating, or deliberate attempts to deceive the instructor will result, if proven, with a F grade for the semester.**

## **LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C,D,F or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may use eligibility for your lottery scholarship.

## **Readings**

August 27 Introduction

September 10

The MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women provided funding for the development of this syllabus. The syllabus may not be reproduced or distributed without permission from Dr. Jeremy Rich, Department of History, MTSU.

Readings covered in this class: *Women in African Colonial Histories*, ch. 1-3

September 17

Readings covered in this class: *Women in African Colonial Histories*, ch 4-5, 8

September 24

Readings covered in this class: *Women in African Colonial Histories*, ch 9-11

**Exam 1**

October 1

Readings covered in this class: *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, Introduction and ch 1-2

**Proposal due**

October 8

Readings covered in this class: *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, ch 3-4

October 22

Readings covered in this class: *Women in African Colonial Histories*, ch 12-13; *Farmers, Traders, Warriors, and Kings*, ch 5

**Exam 2**

October 29

Readings covered in this class: *Surviving the Slaughter*, ch 1-4

November 5

Readings covered in this class: *Surviving the Slaughter*, ch 5-8

**Progress Report due**

November 12

Readings covered in this class: *Surviving the Slaughter*, ch 9-11

**Exam 3**

November 19

Readings covered in this class: *Uncertain Honor*, ch 1-3

November 26

Readings covered in this class: *Uncertain Honor*, ch 4-6

December 3

Readings covered in this class: *Uncertain Honor*, ch 7-8

**Exam 4**

**December 6**

**Final Paper due by 5 PM in Peck Hall 274**