

**Department of Social and International Studies**  
**Southern Polytechnic State University**  
**Fall 2009 Semester: Aug. 24, 2009–Dec. 10, 2009**  
**Class Meetings: Mon & Wed., Room J-156**  
**Class Hrs: 4.30-5.45 pm**

**Instructor:** Robert Y. Owusu, Ph.D.

Office Hrs: MW: 3.45–4.25pm & mostly by appointment

**Course Name & Number**

**CRN: 8309**

*ES 1100 Women in Africa*

**Description**

This course deals with African woman's personhood and identity and her role in the development of the society and nation. Areas of the woman's life to be discussed include the place and plight of the African women in religion, politics, and society. Critical issues like violence against women, child-bearing, infertility, singleness, motherhood, female circumcision, discrimination, and other gender issues will be given adequate consideration. Women organizations founded by women to empower women as well as the quest for African women's rights will also be discussed. In some cases, attention will be given to the study of the lives of selected women in Africa or of African descent—past and present.

**Class Format**

This is both a lecture and discussion class.

**Objectives**

The course is to enable students to

- Understand the personhood of the female gender
- Identify the oppressive and discriminately elements against the African woman in religion, culture, politics and economics.
- Outline specific contributions of African women to the development of the African church and society
- Appreciates the significant contributions of feminist/womanist movement to theological development in Africa and towards the full liberation of humanity

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the historical, cultural, political, social, and economic issues that have shaped societies and the evolving roles of the individual in society.
2. Relate current events to topics, themes, and issues discussed in this class.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of multiple cultural, religious, social, artistic, literary, and political traditions.
4. Understand ways in which race and ethnicity affect human behavior and public policy.

**Readings**

I. Required Textbook

1. AFRICAN WOMEN IN REVOLUTION, W.O. Maloba  
Publisher: Africa World Press, Inc.; First edition (March 26, 2007)  
ISBN-10: 1592214460; ISBN-13: 978-1592214464
2. WOMEN IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT: The Challenge of Globalization and Liberalization in the 21st Century, Edited by Sylvain H. Boko, Mina Balamoune-Lutz and Sitawa R. Kimuna  
Publisher: Africa World Press (April 1, 2005)  
ISBN-10: 1592211976 ; ISBN-13: 978-1592211975

3. AFRICAN CULTURE AND THE QUEST FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, ed., Dorcas Olu Akintunde, Ibadan, Sefer Books, 2001; ISBN:978-35753-1-7
4. WOMAN'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, Ester Boserup, earthscan Publications Ltd., London, new edition, 1989 (original, 1970); ISBN: 1-85383-040-2
5. A fifth book (*African Market Women and Economic Development*) has been ordered but won't be available now.

II. Journal articles will be provided by instructor

### **Requirements**

- Class Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend and participate in all classes and activities to be done as part of the course requirements
- There will be three examinations and one individual project
  - **1<sup>st</sup> Exam: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 (20%)**
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> Exam: Wednesday, October 28, 2009 (20%)**
  - **Project Due : Monday, November 23, 2009 (20%)**
  - **3<sup>rd</sup> & Final Exam: Wednesday, December 9 (20%)**
- Individual Project  
 Considerations in evaluating the essay will include the significance of the issue, the understanding of the issue reflected in the essay, the clarity of the writing, and the citation and discussion of material from reading assignments and the choice and evaluation of appropriate source material.

### **Emergence Plan: How I will conduct my classes in case of campus closure**

1. By Email:
  - a. Individual reading assignments including lecture notes that will require a completion of short written tests; OR
  - b. Group project(s) (each class divided into 6 small groups) which will require group members working together to complete a specific project; group members will evaluate each member's participation; the project and each member's evaluation will be emailed to the instructor.
2. By Free Teleconference (this will be used together with either one of the above)  
 Hold teleconference on one of the class days (e.g., Monday at the time assigned for the class); the procedure will be as follows:
  - a. Divide class or combine 3 small groups to form two teleconference groups;
  - b. Hold conference for each group for 35 minutes; this will enable all my classes to participate in the teleconference during their assigned class period for that day.

### **Grading**

- Your class attendance (based on class meetings attended) and participation is worth 10% of your final grade.
- The three examinations and one student project will be graded as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Exam: (20%)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Exam: (20%)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> & Final Exam: (20%)
  - Ind. Project: (20%)
  - Quizzes: (10%)
  - Attendance: (10%)

### **The Grading scale is as follows:**

Grading for this course will follow the university grading scheme.

The following guide is followed when grading your written test/work: A grade of “A” provides an outstanding/excellent answer that shows wide appropriate knowledge, understanding and insight as outlined in the course or contains particular appropriate examples or to be technically well written, the best to be expected under examination conditions at this stage. A grade of “B” provides a comprehensive answer that shows wide appropriate knowledge and understanding, contains no lapse in detail or limited evidence of appropriate reading as outlined in the course. A grade of “C” shows appropriate knowledge and understanding that meet the course requirements but with lapses in recall, accuracy, etc. A “D” work has serious omissions and/or mistakes, poor presentation and in parts illogical, but has evidence of sound knowledge.

**Academic Dishonesty:** This class takes seriously the section on academic dishonesty described in the university catalog and any student found acting improperly in this regard (cheating or using another’s work) receives the potential penalties prescribed.

### ***Fall 2009 Class Schedule***

#### **Week 1 (Aug. 24 & 26): Introduction**

#### **Week 2 (Aug. 31-Sept. 2): African Women in Context: Identity & Personality**

- General Overview of Africa—Geography, Economics & Politics: Facts about Africa
- Peoples of Africa—Socio-anthropological view
- Unity and Diversity/Complexity

#### ***September 7: Labor Day Holiday***

#### **Weeks 3 & 4 (Sept. 9, 14 & 16): Identity and personality (continued)**

- Conventional or Traditional Views on African Women
- Video: African music/film on traditional views of African women
- Women in African Religious Traditions—ATR, Christianity, Islam

#### **Weeks 5 & 6 (Sept. 21, 23, 28 & 30): African Women and Family and Society (social order)**

- African (Akan) concept of a person
- Marriage and types
- Family, foundation of society
- African women and rites of passage: birth, puberty (initiation), marriage, death/funeral
- Reflection of Sibongile’s Story
- Movies – *The Price of Peace* OR *Keep My Will* OR any relevant substitute

#### **Weeks 7 & 8 (Oct. 5, 7, 12 & 14): African Women and Socio-economic Development (Reading: Boserup and Boko, et al.)**

- African Women and Work
- African women-founded and led initiative to empower women and their society
- Women and Rebuilding Post-genocide Rwanda: Empowering women in Rwanda and elsewhere
- Music Videos and Documentary on Rwanda (students will answer questions/quiz)

#### **Weeks 9 & 10 (Oct. 19, 21, 26 & 28): African Women and Politics & Civil Society**

- What is politics? What is civil society?
- Women and political culture
- The Rise and Contributions of African Feminist/Womanist Movements
- African women in politics: Selected African Women Ground-breaking/Activists/Revolutionaries

#### **Weeks 11 (Nov. 2 & 4): African Culture and the Quest for Women’s Rights (Reading: Akintunde)**

- Women’s rights in relation to human rights

- Critical areas for consideration: Widowhood, inheritance, FGC (FC), domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse, labor and wage discrimination
- Women against women

**Week 12 (Nov. 9 & 11) : African Women and the Arts**

- Fashion and Beauty
- Music – “African Queen” (students to answer a quiz)

**Weeks 13 & 14 (Nov. 16, 18 & 23): African Women and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Culture**

- Identify the principal elements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century culture (creativity, global culture of inclusion, diversity of cultures, IT, economic creativity, leisure and work), e.g., Post-genocide Rwandan movies
- African women’s presence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- How women can empower themselves: 10 things women can do (from *New African* No.476, p. 80)

*November 26: Thanksgiving Day (No Class on November 25)*

**Week 15 (Nov. 30, Dec 2): Conclusion**

- Voices of Some African Women Personalities (See the PowerPoint)
- Toward a Balanced Society
- A song in honor of womanhood and motherhood (in African thought every woman is a mother)
- 

**Week 16 (Dec. 7-9): Review & Final Exam**

**Total class hrs: 48**

**No. of class weeks: 16**