

AFRICAN FAMILY LIFE
AACS-3030 – 80
Course Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

African families face serious crises today. While they may be under economic, demographic and political pressures; African families are proactive, resilient agents, and creators of change.

This course focuses on the structure, history, and function of the black family on the African continent. It seeks to demonstrate family diversity and complexity, placing the black family in the context of interaction with subsystems that have a direct impact on it. Focus is therefore on the primacy of the family in African traditional and contemporary life. Key articles, texts and ethnographic films will be utilized to provide additional insights into the diverse cultures and ways of life of families in the African diaspora, including the United States.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Gain an appreciation of the diversity and complexity of issues involved in traditional and contemporary African family life;
- Learn about the influence of African culture on black families;
- Understand the influence of global and national transformation on black families;
- Learn to apply the concepts and ideas from texts to concrete black family issues/problems/events; and,
- Gain skills for conducting research on black families.

REQUIRED READINGS /VIEWINGS

You are required to read all assigned work so that meaningful discussion can occur. Specific reading assignments, topics, and pages will be posted on BlackBoard (BB).

1. Nyamnjoh, F. (2012). Potted plants in greenhouses: A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. *Journal of Asian & African Studies*, April 2012. 47:129-154 (posted on BB)
2. Radcliffe-Brown, A. and Daryll-Forde, C. (2011). *African System of Kinship and Marriage*. New York: Routledge. Introduction, pp. 1-85. (posted on BB)

3. Weisner, T., Bradley, C., & Kilbride, P. (eds). (1997). *African Families and the Crisis of Social Change*. Westport, CT: Bergen & Garvey Publishers. Chapters 1-4, 7, 10, 16-18.
4. Movie – Africa’s Daughters, produced by Natalie Halpern
5. Movie – Siri Oko Fo, directed by Ebbe Bassey

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading is essential (and can be fun) for this class. Class discussions and posts are based on reading and participation in discussions is necessary for each student to get full benefit of the course. Assessments will be in the form of attendance and participation; map project; daily responses; midterm; and, book/film review.

Course Policies

- *Aside from documented emergencies, there are no make-up exams unless we have arranged it in advance.*
- *University policy is that cheating and/or plagiarism will result in failure and dismissal from the course. That policy will be upheld in this class.*

Course Assignments

All assignments must be original and well organized. In emergency situations, assignments will be accepted one class after the due date resulting in a full grade reduction; thereafter the assignment will not be accepted. You are expected to complete all reading in its entirety and on time so that meaningful discourse can occur.

Description of Course Assignments

Daily posts:

Each day a question based on the daily topic will be posted on BB. Students are to respond to the question within 24 hours. Responses should be based on a combination of the readings and student experiences. Responses should be at least 5-8 sentences in length. Responses should be in proper sentence format and sources should be cited where appropriate.

Map Project:

Create a descriptive map of the varying ethnic groups found in West, East, South, and Central Africa. In paragraph format, describe each group based on the following:

1. geographic location
2. family life & kinship patterns
3. gender roles
4. language

5. religion
6. artistic representation
7. economic life

Include in your map at least four ethnic groups representing the different areas of Africa - for example the Zulu people would represent Southern Africa, the Igbo ethnic group would represent Eastern Africa, the Hutu people would represent Central Africa, and the Fulani ethnic group would represent Western Africa. Create a glog of your descriptive map. (Sign up as a teacher at glogster.edu). Be sure to make your glog public by the due date.

Book/Film Review:

Choose a book or film from the list below. Create a three page review with the following: 1. A brief description; 2. An explanation as to why you would/would not recommend the item; and 3. It's relationship to family life in the African diaspora. Be sure to allow for most of your review to be an analysis and to provide specific examples.

Book choices:

1. *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe
2. *Zulu woman: The life story of Christina Sibiya*, by Christina Sibiya
3. *Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Movie choices:

1. *Guelwaar*, directed by Ousmane Sembene
2. *The Prodigal Son*, directed by Kurt Orderson

EVALUATION

Grading is as follows:

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
Attendance & Participation	Daily	10%
Map Project	December 27	20%
Daily responses/logs	Daily	30%
Midterm	January 2	20%
Book/Film Review	January 10	20%

Grade point equivalents:

100 - 96 = A; 95 - 90 = A-; 89 - 88 = B+; 87 - 85 = B; 84 - 80 = B-; 79 - 78 = C+; 77 - 75 = C; 74 - 70 = C-; 69 - 68 = D+; 67 - 65 = D; 64 - 60 = D-; below 60 = F

CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES

The [Academic Integrity policy](#) can be found at:

http://ww2.wpunj.edu/StudentServices/policytemplate.cfm?plink=/policies/POLPROC/ACAD_INTEGRITY98.html

The Student Code of Conduct can be found at:

<http://ww2.wpunj.edu/adminsrv/hr/FacultyHandBook/StudentCodeofConduct.htm>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.snagfilms.com

www.nypl.org/locations/schomburg

www.africanart.org

www.culturalsurvival.com

www.africanethnicart.com