

Rwanda: Gender Politics and Women's Rights II

AFRS-3500 (3 credits)
On-site in Kigali, Rwanda

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

The course will build on the content of Rwanda: Gender Politics and Women's Rights I (the summer 2020 online seminar) and emphasize experiential learning. During the three weeks that students will spend in Rwanda (December 28th 2020 to January 15th 2021), they will be able to compare and contrast the documented achievements of Rwanda in terms of gender equality and the reality on the ground. They will explore the extent to which the general Rwandan culture is supporting equality between men and women and the social as well as political implications of that equality on Rwandans' daily life and relations. Students will visit different organizations that work on gender related issues and will be able to interact with Rwandan rural and urban women (and men) to learn from their own experiences in their communities. Living with a Rwandan family for 10 days will also add to students' experiences as they will directly get involved in family life and learn more about how gender roles work at that micro level.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Determine the extent to which gender politics in Rwanda impact the lives of ordinary women;
- Identify key pending issues related to women rights and gender parity in Rwanda;
- Suggest measures (through a study project) for the country to increase gender equality in the future; and
- Demonstrate awareness of complexities around women empowerment and gender equality in different cultural contexts.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but some field visit activities will involve translation from Kinyarwanda to English.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching model is student centered and it is grounded in the experiential learning theory. The program content and the teaching process considers the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, as well as the cultural backgrounds of individual students. To accomplish that, a wide variety of educational methods, assignments and instructional strategies will be used. Students will be encouraged to fully participate in different scheduled learning activities and through a thorough reflection on that experience, they accept to have their own assumptions and beliefs challenged in order to generate new knowledge, skills and values. We don't draw a line between academic and non-academic spaces and activities and students should expect to learn from all components of the program including the homestay.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

Assignments description

1) Weekly reflection paper (30% of grade)

Students will write three short reflections about what they learn each week. Each reflection paper should be two double-spaced pages in length and should draw from course activities/materials of the week (e.g., lecture, reading, trip, etc.). Reflections will be due at the end of each week and will be submitted electronically to the academic director.

2) Participation (10% of grade)

Contribution to class discussion, active listening, attentiveness, conduct within the classroom, conduct within the homestay, respect for staff and program resources, time keeping, timely completion of assigned readings, and adherence to program rules.

3) *Class Blog (20% of grade)*

Students will be blogging about their experiences for friends, family members, and others interested in this program theme. Each student will be expected to contribute one (or more depending on the number of students) blog post throughout the program on behalf of the class, which will involve writing a few short paragraphs about the day's activities and, when possible, posting photos to the class website. Students will receive detailed instructions about the blog post and which day each one is assigned to post and other details about this.

4) *Individual study project (40% of grade)*

Every student will write a ten-page paper, responding to the study question(s) they developed as part of online seminar assignments. During the three weeks in Rwanda, they will be working with the academic director to collect primary data through observations, everyday interactions discussions and any other applicable methods of data collection. Students will analyze and interpret the collected data and add their own reflection to come up with a comprehensive paper that will be considered as the main course assignment. Rubrics and more details regarding this paper will be provided.

Grading

Papers and discussions will be graded on style and form, content, depth of analysis, and understanding of readings, lectures and other course activities as demonstrated by their appropriate incorporation into assignments. Participation will be graded by observing attendance, attitude, preparation, active involvement in class discussions, and culturally appropriate behavior on excursions.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	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
below 64	F

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

**Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

Module 1: Towards an understanding of gender roles in Rwandan culture

The purpose of this module is to introduce students to the local culture and to daily life in Kigali (where the program will be based) and Rwanda in general. It emphasizes the most important values Rwandans live by and how they may differ from American values. Students discuss the dos and don'ts related to the local culture and the post-genocide context. The module will highlight the most important gender aspects of Rwandan culture and will prepare them for a successful stay in the homestay family.

Readings:

Oberg, K. (2006). "Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environment" in *Practical Anthropology*, 7: 177-182

Robert Kohls, L. (1984). From *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, 2nd ed., Intercultural press
Kohls R. (1988) *The Values American Live By*

Module 2: Life of a Rwandan woman in post-genocide Rwanda

Under this module, students will visit different historical museum especially the genocide memorials to refresh their minds about the events of 1994 genocide against Tutsis. They will also start excursions and site visits to different women organizations to discuss with them the gender aspect the post-genocide reconstruction process. Students will be able to understand the context in which all reforms took place and the opportunities as well as challenges related to that unique context.

Excursions and site visits:

- Genocide Memorials
- Different Women's cooperatives and associations (in rural and urban areas)
- Female entrepreneurs' initiatives
- AVEGA agahozo
- Pro-Femme Twese Hamwe

Readings:

Sandole D.H. & Auerbach C.F (2012). Dissociation and Identity Transformation in Female Survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda: A Qualitative Research Study. *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*. Sperling C. (2006). Mother of Atrocities: Pauline Nyiramasuhuko's Role in the Rwandan Genocide. *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, Vol. 33, p.637.

Hogg N. (2010). Women's participation in the Rwandan genocide: mothers or monsters? International Review of the Red Cross. Vol 92, number 877.

Nkomo S. M. & Ngambi H. (2009) African women in leadership: Current knowledge and a framework for future studies, International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity, 4:1, 49-68, DOI: [10.1080/18186870903102014](https://doi.org/10.1080/18186870903102014)

Burnet J. E. (2008). Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda, *African Affairs*, Volume 107, Issue 428, July 2008, Pages 361–386, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adn024>

Burnet J.E. (2012). Genocide lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda. The University of Wisconsin Press.

Burnet J.E. (2012). Situating Sexual Violence in Rwanda (1990-2001): Sexual Agency, Sexual Consent, and the Political Economy of War. *African Studies Review*. Cambridge University Press.

Module 3: Can Rwanda do better to achieve gender parity?

Under this module, students will have discussions with young adults (both female and male) about the Rwanda they want to see in the future in relation to equality between men and women. They will discuss the downfalls they see currently and what should be done to achieve more. They will also engage with local human rights activists to place women's rights into the global human rights framework and see what is yet to be achieved and what it will take in terms of behavior change. Students will also get enough time to finalize their study projects through collecting data from different primary and secondary sources.

Excursions and Site Visits:

Akilah Institute
Human Rights First Rwanda Association
Rwanda Men's Ressource Center
Imbutu Foundation
National Women's Council