Student Comments

Contemporary Novels by African Women

On the first day of class, students answered the following questions: What do you know about Africa? What do you expect the novels to be about? What do you know about Women’s Studies?

On the last day of class, students answered the above questions again.

Here a few of the responses…

“These novels were about a multitude of things—love, war, death, society, imperialism, life. Namely, however, these novels each had a common theme: African women expressing themselves as best as they could. These novels were about agency in the face of adversity, individualism in the face of conformity, and self-love in the face of societal expectations.”

“Women’s Studies is a subject that focuses on addressing and coming to terms with issues facing women, with the end goal being reinforcing a positive and equal standing/image of women. There are different schools of thought within Women’s Studies that attempt to solve the problems surrounding women. For instance, in this course, the solution that many of the novels sought was incremental in nature, and not as direct as we are used to in the U.S.”

“Many of the authors were feminists, empowering women while not desiring to put men down at the same time.”

“Women’s Studies is extremely necessary but often overlooked or not taken as seriously as other subject areas. Women’s Studies classes in American universities usually center around American feminism and I believe it should be normalized to teach feminism as a universal concept.”

“Africa has a long, rich history. I learned that there was something called the Bush War and about long-standing traditions like female circumcision and breast ironing.”

“These novels were very explicit and opened up the dark truth that women face in Africa.”