3 credits (1 cr on-campus; 2 cr in field)

Instructors:
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Course Description:
Land is a scarce resource in much of the developing world. It is also vital to many people's livelihoods, both for subsistence and for income generation. Women in southern Africa play key roles in agricultural production, in income earning, in childcare and other important economic and social matters. Many measures of gender equality indicate that southern Africa is highly unequal. Lesotho, however, is considered by some to be a bright spot, regularly appearing on lists like "surprisingly good places to be a woman" (Foreign Policy). This course uses the lens of land to investigate women's status in Lesotho. Students will spend 8 weeks on the UIUC campus studying introductory Sesotho culture and theoretical understandings of land, gender and 'development.' Students will work in small groups to use the readings and conversations with your peers and the instructors to understand the theoretical and policy imperatives of land reforms. Those ideas will then be used to form a fuller understanding of the land reforms underway in Lesotho.

During December/January Break, the course moves to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, where we will spend three weeks meeting with Basotho officials in government and parastatals, researchers in academia as well as those who seek to benefit from land in urban and rural areas. Students will engage in ethnographic research with those contacts to determine the nature and purpose of Lesotho's land reforms, particularly as they relate to women. The course will finish with each group presenting its recommendations on policy legislation and execution to a panel of officials from the Land Administration Authority, Federation of Women Lawyers, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy, National University of Lesotho, among others.

Within two weeks after we return to the U.S., students will each complete individual papers (2,000 to 2,500 words) that will serve as part personal reflection on the course and part upper-level research paper. Further details will be provided as the semester progresses.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
1. Understand the importance and multiple uses of land in a developing country context
2. Understand the importance of gender in a developing country context
3. Understand their own relationships to the developing world on both a micro and a macro scale
4. Apply the tools of qualitative research methods to gain data from people across various cultures
5. Evaluate how public policy shapes the links between gender and natural resources
6. Analyze the complicated reality of 'development' projects and their aims
7. Analyze the modern state of Lesotho in the context of history and global political economy

Course Schedule

Pre-departure:

Week 1: Introductions and Contexts
- Introductions of instructors & students
- Format of course/syllabus discussion
  - Tentative travel agenda
- Introduction of Lesotho
- Introduction of gender and land as concepts

Week 1 readings (to be read before this week's class):
- None

Week 1 videos:
- Voices of Basotho: http://vimeo.com/64863129
- Learn Sesotho: http://vimeo.com/37720616

Week 2: Us and Them: a false but vitally important binary
- Africa: still not a country [see also www.africasacountry.com]
- Understanding positionality and privilege
- A short history of Lesotho and the Basotho people

Week 2 readings (to be read before this week's class):
- Selection from King Leopold's Ghost

Week 3: Land and natural resources in the global South
- How does land become property?
- What is land for?
- Whom is land for? That is: How is land allocated and exchanged?

Week 3 readings (to be read before this week's class):
- Selection from Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*
- Ferguson, J. "How to do things with land"
GLBL 298: Global Studies in Lesotho


**Week 4:** Gender and identity in the global South

- Sex and gender and social construction
- Gendered Domestic Product: The mismatch between work and valued work

**Week 4 readings (to be read before this week's class):**

- Selections from hooks's *Feminism is for Everyone*

**Week 5:** The meeting point of land and gender

- Who does what work on the land?
- Who benefits from that work?
- How are the terms that govern land access determined in a historically contingent political-economic context?

**Week 6:** Development, development and 'development' in Lesotho

- What are the multiple meaning of development and whose interests do those meanings serve?
- What do Development projects look like on the ground in Lesotho?
- What relationship between Americans and Basotho is exemplified in the public and private sector money that flows from the U.S. to Lesotho?
- The Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) as an exemplar of the problems with "one size fits all" development projects

**Week 6 readings (to be read before this week's class):**

GLBL 298: Global Studies in Lesotho

- A close reading of the UNDP, Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID and other web pages on Lesotho, to be assigned

**Week 7: Field-based research methods**

- TBD

**Week 7 readings (to be read before this week's class):**

- TBD

**Week 8: Closing of campus-based portion of class, preparation for departure**

- What do you expect from Lesotho?
- What makes you anxious about traveling to Lesotho?
- What makes you most excited about traveling to Lesotho?

**Week 8 readings (to be read before this week's class):**

- Recent articles (6+ weeks) from Lesotho's English-language newspapers
  - *Public Eye*: [http://www.publiceye.co.ls/](http://www.publiceye.co.ls/)
  - *Sunday Express*: [http://sundayexpress.co.ls/](http://sundayexpress.co.ls/)