Message from the Program Chair

As Chair of the Africana Studies Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, it is my pleasure to share our program with you through this newsletter. The Africana Studies Program offers a strong undergraduate program in African, African American, and African Diaspora Studies. The 2011-2013 academic years were exciting and challenging as we underwent changes in leadership and curriculum development.

Our main goal is academic excellence, which we believe can be achieved by a thorough study of African cultures worldwide. We value international education and support all campus endeavors that will produce generations of professionals who are familiar with Africa and its peoples. We invite you to support us in any way you can and we look forward to future collaborations.

Dr. Dawn Duke

If you would like to find out more information about the Africana Studies Program, please visit our website at: web.utk.edu/~africana/
STUDY ABROAD in 2013

This year we’re off to South Africa

Dr. Amadou Sall, Coordinator

The Africana Studies Program continues to support study abroad opportunities by offering life-long learning experiences to our students as well as assistance to those overseas. We have established a study abroad scholarship of $750 for UTK students, which provides financial support to a deserving student who has achieved academic excellence. We will also consider financial need.
Dr. Alexander’s lecture was held the day after the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Alexander explained how easily the rights of African Americans can disappear. The right to serve on a jury and the right to vote can be denied to anyone with a criminal record, realities that face many African American men who have been incarcerated. Dr. Alexander reminded the audience of the rights for which King and his colleagues had fought and asked the audience, “What would King think about us today? Fifty years later, have we fulfilled King’s vision? Are we finally on the path he was traveling in 1963-1968?”

Alexander’s book argues that the rights won by African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement are being taken away by the War on Drugs and the decimation of communities of color. For more information on this topic visit the website at [www.newjimcrow.com](http://www.newjimcrow.com).
April 20, 2012

“African Writers and the French Literary Institution,“

**Presenter:**
Dr. Awa Sarr  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Knoxville  
Modern Foreign Languages & Literatures and Africana Studies

November 6, 2012

“Academic Year in Morocco on a Fulbright”

**Presenter:**
Dr. Karla McKanders  
Associate Professor  
UT-Knoxville  
College of Law

"Student-Teacher Interactions about Grades: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"

**Presenter:**
Dr. Courtney Wright  
Assistant Professor  
UT-Knoxville  
School of Communication Studies

Organized by Dr. Jorge Serrano
April 18, 2013

“Transformable Race and the Literature of Early America”

**Presenter:** Dr. Katy Chiles

Assistant Professor
UT-Knoxville
English Department

and

“Contextualizing the State Mode of Production in the United States: Race, Space and Civil Rights”

**Presenter:** Dr. Josh Inwood

Assistant Professor
UT-Knoxville
Geography Department

Organized by Dr. Jorge Serrano
International Corner

Throughout the year the Africana Studies program co-sponsors specific events on campus organized by various international groups and associations. Below are just of few of the events that we participated in during FY2013.

Dr. Kofi Barima at the 2013 Caribbean Festival

In 1987, Dr. Amadou Sall’s vision led to the creation of the University of Tennessee’s African Students Association (ASA). At the African Gala in April 2013, the ASA recognized Dr. Sall with an award and honored him for his outstanding contributions.
Michelle D. Commander is an Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies. She received her Ph.D. in American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California, where she was a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellow and managing editor of the American Quarterly. Recently, Professor Commander presented the paper, “We Love to Be Africans’: Black American Travelers’ Diasporic Flights to Bahia, Brazil,” at Vanderbilt University’s Black Migration Symposium. She is currently working on her book manuscript, Speculative Fictions: Black Americans and the African Fantastic, which is an interdisciplinary examination of Black American travels to imagined “Africas.”


Publications


Recent Book

Ideology: The Cuban Story,” at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland in October 2011. She also presented “Magical Sisterhood: Exploring the Writings of Georgina Herrera and Teresa Cárdenas” at the 72nd Annual Convention of the College Language Association in Atlanta in March 2012. She continues to do field research related to her second book on Afro-Latin American women’s activism, literature, and power. Since July 2011 she has traveled to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua.
Chandra Dunn, is a lecturer in Africana Studies. Her research interests lie at the intersection of Africa and global politics. They include African political sociology, the state in Africa, global politics, social and international relations theory and inter-national development. Her current research focuses on legitimization struggles that take place within the discourse on what Liberia is, what Africa is, and the implications for state actions. The research explores identity constructions and deployment in the policy making of the Liberian state during the 1970s. She has taught courses on African History and Politics, World Politics, and Cross-Cultural Communication at the School of International Service at American University and the University of Tennessee. Dunn has given prepared presentations and served as discussant at academic and professional conferences in the United States and on the continent. As a researcher at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) and for the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID), Dunn worked on a wide variety of issues pertinent to Africa including conflict, conflict resolution, economic growth, foreign aid and assistance to Africa and the strategic planning and evaluation of development policies. She has also worked as a consultant to USAID and a business technology analyst for a global consulting firm.

Cynthia Griggs Fleming
(Ph.D. Duke University, 1977), Twentieth Century U.S. Social/Cultural History, particularly the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; U.S. Race Relations, and Black Educational History.

Professor Fleming has written extensively on the civil rights movement of the 1960s. She is the author of Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, which received critical acclaim from both scholars and civil-rights activists. In addition, she has published articles on black activism, black educational history, and African American identity in such journals as The Journal of Negro History, The Tennessee Historical Quarterly, The Journal of Women’s History, and The Irish Journal of American Studies. She is currently writing a book, under contract to Rowman & Littlefield, that examines the impact of the civil rights movement on an Alabama Black Belt county. She also co-authored The Chicago Handbook for College Teachers, which has been widely recognized as an important tool for college teachers, selling 10,000 copies in the first six months after its release. She is also working on an authorized biography of Dr. C.T. Vivian, one of Dr. Martin Luther King’s associates in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

In addition to an African-American Studies survey, Professor Fleming teaches a course on Blacks in Film, a History and Philosophy of African American Education course, an African American Women in American Society course, and a Civil Rights course.

Recent Book
Tricia Redeker Hepner (Ph.D. Michigan State University, 2004) is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Vice Chair of Africana Studies. Her interests focus on forced migration, transnationalism, political conflict, peace building, and human rights activism in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region and their diasporas. Her books include Soldiers, Martyrs, Traitors, and Exiles: Political Conflict in Eritrea and the Diaspora (Penn Press, 2009), Biopolitics, Militarism, and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-first Century, edited with David O’Kane (Berghahn Books, 2009) and Conflict and Peacebuilding in Africa’s Great Lakes Region, edited with Kenneth Omeje (Indiana University Press, 2013). She is also a founding associate editor of the African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review journal. Her research has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, among others. At the University of Tennessee she is chair of the Migration and Refugee Studies division of the Center for the Study of Social Justice, a core faculty member of the program in Disasters, Displacement and Human Rights, and co-director of the Gulu Study and Service Abroad Program, in partnership with Gulu University, Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, Uganda.

Catherine Higgs, (Ph.D. Yale University, 1993) is a Professor of History and Vice Chair of Africana Studies. She teaches and writes about colonialism, women’s history, religion, politics, and policy in modern Africa. She has held fellowships from the American Philosophical Society, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Luso-American Foundation. Her books include The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885-1959 (1997), and with Barbara A. Moss and Earline Rae Ferguson, Stepping Forward: Black Women in Africa and the Americas (2002). Her new monograph, Chocolate Islands: Cocoa, Slavery, and Colonial Africa, was published by Ohio University Press in July 2012 and will be issued in paperback in August 2013. Written for a broad audience, Chocolate Islands is a narrative history that traces the African journey of Joseph Burtt, who was hired by the chocolate firm Cadbury Brothers to determine if it was purchasing—as critics claimed—slave-produced cocoa from the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe. Burtt traveled to the islands, and to Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa. Chocolate Islands explores the competing meanings of the dignity of labor in colonial Africa, and reveals the idealism, naivety, and racism that shaped attitudes toward Africa, even among those who sought to improve the conditions of its workers. Professor Higgs recently completed the research for her third monograph, Sisters for Justice: Religion and Activism in Apartheid South Africa. It is a historical analysis of how soft diplomacy and local measures by minor religious actors can help transform national policy. She spent the 2012-2013 academic year as the John E. Sawyer fellow at the National Humanities Center, where she began writing the manuscript.

Recent Book

Chocolate Islands: Cocoa, Slavery, and Colonial Africa
Joshua Inwood joined the Department of Geography and the Africana Studies Program at the University of Tennessee in August 2010 after three years as an Assistant Professor at Auburn University in the Department of Geology and Geography. He completed his dissertation at the University of Georgia in 2007. He is excited to be part of the university and appreciates the warm welcome he has received. Josh’s current research (funded by the National Science Foundation) explores the United States’ first ever truth and reconciliation commission held in Greensboro, North Carolina. On November 3, 1979 labor organizers in Greensboro were holding a “Death to the Klan” rally and conference at “Morningside Homes,” a local public housing project, to protest Ku Klux Klan activities in the area. The labor organizers were locked in a struggle with local cotton processors over their efforts to unionize the North Carolina textile industry and the recently resurgent Klan had successfully impeded their union organizing efforts. As the rally progressed some members of the local Klan arrived and in the ensuing violence, five labor activists were killed, and several more were wounded. Despite the efforts of local prosecutors and extensive video evidence of the events, no one was ever held criminally liable for the deaths. In 1999 local community organizers began advocating for a truth and reconciliation process modeled after commissions in South Africa and Peru. The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission was assembled through a grassroots democratic process that sought to integrate a diverse community perspective and in 2006 released its report to the citizens of Greensboro. Josh’s research explores the results of this Commission, focusing on the ways that grassroots activists address the legacy and memory of violence, and how violence continues to undergird racial exploitation and frame an understanding of difference in the United States.

Asafa Jalata is a Professor of Sociology and Global and Africana Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. His teaching and research expertise focuses on global studies, development and international inequality, social movements, nationalism, terrorism studies, indigenous studies, human rights, and race and ethnicity. Professor Jalata’s most recent books are Fighting Against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements (Palgrave, 2012) and Contending Nationalisms of Oromia and Ethiopia: Struggling for Statehood, Sovereignty and Multinational Democracy (2010).

He has published and edited eight books and authored more than five-dozen refereed articles in regional and international journals and book chapters. His academic awards include the Oromo Studies Association Award (2002) and the Senior Faculty Research/Creativity Achievement Award, College of Arts and Sciences from the University of Tennessee (2011).
Bertin M. Louis, Jr. (Ph.D. Washington University in St. Louis, 2008) is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies and a 2012 American Anthropological Association Leadership Fellow. Dr. Louis studies the growth of Protestant forms of Christianity among Haitians in the Bahamas and the United States, the subject of his forthcoming New York University Press book, “My Soul is in Haiti: Migration and Protestantism in the Haitian Diaspora of the Bahamas” (2014). He also studies Bahamians of Haitian descent, and statelessness. Dr. Louis teaches courses in Africana Studies and Cultural Anthropology.

Dr. Louis also informs students, faculty, and the public about Haitian history and culture. Since the Haiti earthquake, he has appeared on WATE-6 News at 5:30, Tennessee This Week, The George Korda Radio Show, The Hubert Smith Radio Show and UT Today. He also created the FOCUS ON HAITI website for the Association of Black Anthropologists, which serves as the main Haiti informational website for the American Anthropological Association.


Recent Articles and Book Chapters:

Publications
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Drama and the Kamĩrĩĩthũ Popular Theater Experiment. Trenton, NJ; Africa World Press, 2007.

Edited collections:
- Mũtiiri (Journal of Culture) 8, 2007 (Guest editor).
Faculty and Lecturer Profiles

Awa Sarr’s major fields of study and research interests include Francophone Literature; Sociology of Francophone African Literature, Colonial and Postcolonial Theories and Movements, as well as Women's writings. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2010. Her recent publications include:

- “Au-delà du miroir: Réalisme-utopie et problématique de l’immigration dans Douceurs du berceau d’Aminata Sow Fall.” Nouvelles Etudes Francophones” (Fall 2013)

Awa Sarr’s major fields of study and research interests include Francophone Literature; Sociology of Francophone African Literature, Colonial and Postcolonial Theories and Movements, as well as Women's writings. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2010. Her recent publications include:


Amadou Sall (Ph.D. University of Tennessee, 1999) is a lecturer in Africana Studies. His interests include environmental education, minority student success, African studies, war, violence, and AIDS. He has also studied the issues surrounding disproportionate minority contact and confinement and is a member of the Knox County Disproportionate Minority Contact and Confinement Task Force. With colleagues, he has conducted research on the experiences of African American students in predominantly white universities, with the aim of recommending policy to improve outcomes for struggling students. He has served as a reader for doctoral dissertations, most recently for Waitshega Tefo Smitta Dibapile, “Teacher Efficacy and Classroom Management among Botswana Junior Secondary School Teachers” (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 2012). Dr. Sall’s current research focuses on Study Abroad experiences and transformations.

Program Development

Dr. Sall developed the UTK Africana mini-term program in Ghana and led the first group of students in 2005. This thriving program offers students the opportunity to apply classroom learning in real-world contexts. In summer 2013, Sall led students to South Africa on a second study abroad program he has developed, this time focusing on service learning and social justice in the Guguletu and Langa townships bordering Cape Town. (See page 2 for more on Study Abroad programs.)
Congratulations

On March 18, 2013, Alex Tucker presented “Gender and Mother-Child Interaction in Informal Settlements of Kenya” to the Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (EUReCA), a competition sponsored by the Office of Research to promote and showcase undergraduate research across the UT campus. Alex graduated in May 2013 with a BS in Child and Family Studies and a BA in Africana Studies. Congratulations Alex!

Emily Alexandria Tucker
Major: Africana Studies

2013 Study Abroad Scholarship Recipient

This year the Study Abroad Committee selected Eboni Gude, a junior in psychology, as the winner of 2013 Study Abroad Scholarship. She is co-president of the Black Law Student Association and the treasurer for the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and a First Year Studies Peer Mentor.

Eboni will be traveling to South Africa to realize her goal of becoming “even more diverse and rooted in a culture other than my own, particularly the South African culture.” Congratulations Eboni!

Eboni Amor Gude
Major: Psychology
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New to the Curriculum

Africana Studies Graduate Certificate

The multi-disciplinary graduate certificate in Africana Studies is intended for currently admitted graduate students wishing to develop knowledge and skills necessary to teach survey and upper-division courses in topics related to Africa and the African Diaspora.

Prospective candidates for the certificate may take up to 6 hours of certificate classes before making formal application to the Office of Graduate Admissions for admission to the certificate program.

Candidates must complete 18 hours of course work, taken for graduate credit and chosen from at least two different departments. Students may choose from the following courses: ANTH 414, ANTH 419, ANTH 432, ANTH 454, ANTH 523, ENGL 443, ENGL 552, ENGL 560, FREN 573, GEOG 541, GEOG 663, HIST 543, HIST 561, HIST 563, PORT 430, PORT 432, SOCI 452, SPAN 484, SPAN 586, SPAN 587. Topics and independent study courses where appropriate, and courses in the Department of Child and Family Studies and in the Department of Public Health in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, may be applied to the Africana Studies certificate with the permission of the certificate coordinator.

Administrative Staff Changes

Nanette Rodgers

The Africana Studies program is pleased to welcome Nanette Rodgers as our accounting specialist III for the main office. Elizabeth Oguguam is our part-time work study student. Please join me in welcoming them into their new roles.

Support Africana Studies

To support the program, please visit: web.utk.edu/~africana/.
Africana Studies

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