Greetings from the Africana Studies program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In fall 2013 and spring 2014 our faculty and student body worked to develop intellectual and cultural activities that took our program in many directions. Africana Studies is blessed with distinguished faculty who are nationally and internationally renowned for their academic scholarship and leadership. Our accomplished faculty work closely with students to ensure they reach their academic goals, and also offer long term support to help guide students toward their professional aspirations.

In 2013-2014, we added to our course offerings, further enhancing a curriculum dedicated to training students about Africa while strengthening their critical thinking skills. To this end, we were pleased to add courses proposed by new research and teaching faculty in the departments of Psychology and History. There is no doubt that their presence will open up exciting new course and outreach possibilities within our interdisciplinary field, and extend our goal to provide students with an in-depth appreciation of the African world across the globe.

Students taking Africana Studies classes may opt for a major in Africana Studies or a double major combining Africana Studies with another major. They can also choose to do the minor or take our courses as electives to complete their general education requirements. In addition to on-campus study, students can apply to participate in summer study abroad programs to South Africa, Ghana, or Uganda; these travel opportunities we believe, are a vital component in learning about and understanding Africa, its cultures, and peoples.

We invite you to become involved in our program, and help our students to achieve their goals, both academic and professional.

Dr. Dawn Duke
Kortney Williams, a double major in Anthropology and Africana Studies, won the undergraduate poster competition for her project, “Traveling by Car during the Jim Crow Era,” at the Inaugural Geography Symposium held at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, on Feb. 21-22, 2014. The judges noted her skill in talking them through her research results. Kortney was advised by Dr. Derek Alderman, head of the Geography Department, and Dr. Josh Inwood, an associate professor of Geography and Africana Studies; she also did an internship at the Beck Cultural Exchange Center in Knoxville. Kortney graduated in May 2014, and won a five-year fellowship to Binghamton University (SUNY), where she plans to complete her Ph.D.

Why I chose Africana Studies as a major

My name is Zachary Seay, and I am a second-year senior majoring in Africana Studies and minoring in English. I chose this major because it is a subject that I found interesting and beneficial to understanding my identity as an African American man. Since the Africana Studies program is interdisciplinary, it spans different content areas and gives students a well-rounded educational worldview. I have learned about the African American experience and the influence that race plays in American society. After I graduate in December 2014, I plan to attend graduate school in Elementary Education to prepare me for a career teaching in urban schools. Dr. Josh Inwood’s Africana Studies/Urban Communities class intensified my dream to work with this population of students.

Research opportunities for Africana Studies students

Loren Coleman is an Africana Studies major and student of Dr. Michelle Commander. Coleman’s fall 2013 research project analyzed how culturally-produced, negative stereotypes and stigmas such as the mammy, sapphire and jezebel figures perpetuated racism and reinforced supposed Black inferiority for centuries. These perceptions are still evident in today’s society and ultimately affect how African American women are expected to behave. Loren concluded that if media outlets refrained from encouraging and broadcasting these centuries-old, negative stereotypes of African American women, then true upward mobility might be possible for that population.
2014 Study Abroad Award Recipient

The AFST Study Abroad committee selected Omar Musa King, a junior majoring in Economics with a minor in Business Analytics, as the winner of the 2013 Study Abroad Scholarship. King is an intern at a local Knoxville advertising startup, WeScore.com, and pledge class vice president of the business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. He plans to graduate in May 2015, and hopes to volunteer for the US Peace Corps in Africa.

Welcome to Africana Studies (AFST)

Field Specialties:

Ancient Africana Studies, The Ge’ez Language (Classical Ethiopic), Nile Valley Cultural Continuity, Globalization in the African World

Current Research:

Dr. Spencer’s research focuses on classical and ancient African history in general, and the classical Ethiopian language of Ge’ez in particular. His dissertation was entitled, “The Eighteenth Century Ge’ez (Classical Ethiopic) Manuscript, A Trinitarian Theological Treatise from the Monastic Order of Daqiqa Estifanos (The Children of Stephan).” The manuscript is largely a collection of stories elaborating upon biblical narratives and rules for certain religious and cultural observances. Dr. Spencer is currently finishing an article entitled, “Matrifocal Retentions in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tawahido Church.” Dr. Spencer’s Master’s studies focused upon the writings of Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop. He earned his BA in Philosophy and Religion from Northwestern University and his PhD from Howard University under the direction of Prof. Abdel Batran. He joined UTK in January 2014.

Field Specialties:

Civil Rights Movement, the Black Church in America and African American Politics.

Current Research:

Dr. Watson’s research interest focuses on the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the role that the Black church played in supporting the movement. Dr. Watson earned a PhD from the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is a contributor to the anthology Writers of the Black Chicago Renaissance (University of Illinois Press, 2011), edited by Dr. Steven C. Tracy. He is currently working on a book manuscript with Professor Amos Jones of Campbell University that focuses on the life and activism of Reverend Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker, who was the chief of staff to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). He joined UTK in January 2014.
AFST Faculty News

Dr. Michelle Commander, Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies, is completing her book, *Afro-Atlantic Speculation: Flight, Mythmaking, and Imagined Africas*. Commander discussed her research in an interview with UTK’s *Quest* magazine. The article can be found at [http://quest.utk.edu/2014/moving-experience/](http://quest.utk.edu/2014/moving-experience/).

Dr. Dawn Duke, Associate Professor of Portuguese and Spanish, continued to serve as Chair of Africana Studies in 2013-2014. She published two articles in spring 2014: “Beyond the Quilombo: The State of Zumbi’s ‘Palmares’ According to the Poets” in *Obsidian II: Literature in the African Diaspora*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2014), and “Literatura afro-femenina en la República Dominicana: Una indefinida que la define?” in *Revista Iberoamericaniana*, Vol. LXXIX, Num. 243 (Abril-Ju 2013): 559-576. She also co-edited *Artefatos da Cultura Negra no Ceará. Formação de Professores: 10 Anos da Lei 10.639/2003* (Fortaleza, Brazil: Federal University of Ceará Press, 2013). In fall 2013, she became a board member of the Global Initiatives Council at Fort Valley State University. She continues to work on her second book project: “Engendering Violence: the Afro-Latin American Heroine in Literature and History,” and has done research in Benin Republic, Nigeria, Ghana, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. In spring 2014, she gave invited lectures at Western Kentucky University, Fort Valley State University, and Alabama A & M University. Also in spring 2014, she organized a three-day international event at UTK: “The State of the Art: Black Women’s Movements Today,” which included participants from Cuba and Brazil. Dr. Duke also served as the Study Abroad Director for the UTK Spanish Program in Alicante, Spain, in summer 2014. The UTK College of Arts and Sciences awarded Dr. Duke a faculty development leave (a sabbatical) for the fall 2014 semester.


Dr. Josh Inwood earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of Geography and Africana Studies effective August 2014. He has five co-authored articles in press, or forthcoming, in: *Environment and Planning D* (accepted April 2014), *ACME* (two articles, accepted January 2014 and October 2013), *Environment and Planning A* (2013), and *Social and Cultural Geography* (2013). A single-author article, “Bending the Arc of Justice”: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Poor People’s Campaign and the State Mode of Production,” appeared in *Environment and Planning A* 45 (2013): 2120-2134. The UTK College of Arts and Sciences honored Dr. Inwood with a Junior Faculty Research Award in 2013.

Dr. Asafa Jalata, Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies, received a U.S. State Department-funded Fulbright award to Botswana for the academic year 2014-2015. The goal of the Fulbright exchange program is to increase understanding between the United States and 150 participating countries.

Dr. Bertin Louis, Jr., Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies, was interviewed by USA Today’s White House reporter about President Obama and race. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Civil Rights icon Julian Bond were also interviewed for the article: [http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/02/26/obama-race-african-americans-legacy/5841201/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/02/26/obama-race-african-americans-legacy/5841201/). Dr. Louis also received a Southeastern Conference (SEC) travel award to give a series of talks at the University of South Carolina in March 2014. In his new book, *My Soul Is in Haiti* (forthcoming from New York University press), Dr. Louis combines multi-sited ethnographic research in the United States, Haiti, and the Bahamas with a transnational framework to analyze why Protestantism has appealed to the Haitian diaspora community in the Bahamas. The volume illustrates how devout Haitian Protestant migrants use their religious identities to ground themselves in a place that is hostile to them as migrants, and it also uncovers how their religious faith ties in to their belief in the need to “save” their homeland, as they re-imagine Haiti politically and morally as a Protestant Christian nation. For other interviews with and articles by Dr. Louis, see his January 6, 2014 interview with Matthew Hunter of Global Voices about Louis’s creation of the #ShamelesslyHaitian hashtag on Twitter for Haitian Independence Day (January 1): [http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/01/06/shamelesslyhaitian-on-haitis-independence-day/](http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/01/06/shamelesslyhaitian-on-haitis-independence-day/), and his Legacy of 1804 Interview with Alice Backer (178 minutes): [http://www.blogtalkradio.com/blackwholeradio/2014/02/08/legacy-of-1804-with-dr-bertin-louis-shamelesslyhaitian](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/blackwholeradio/2014/02/08/legacy-of-1804-with-dr-bertin-louis-shamelesslyhaitian).
Dr. Amadou Sall, Lecturer in Africana Studies, was honored with the Hardy Liston, Jr. Symbol of Hope Award at the 2014 UTK Chancellor’s Honors Banquet. The award recognized Dr. Sall for his outstanding commitment to diversity and multiculturalism, which includes his involvement with the African Students Association, the African film series, and his Study Abroad service-learning trips to Ghana and South Africa for UTK students.


Dr. Bertin Louis, Jr.’s new book, My Soul is in Haiti: Protestantism in the Haitian Diaspora of the Bahamas, is forthcoming from the New York University Press in December 2014. Dr. Leslie G. Desmangles of Trinity College praises it as: "A ground breaking study of the evangelical Protestant churches in the Haitian communities of the Bahamas, describing the ways in which these churches provide their congregations with a sense of national and transnational identity. Vital for students of diasporic and transnational studies, anthropologists, historians and sociologists of religion, this book is a comprehensive study likely to be the authoritative source on this topic for years to come.” Dr. Louis is an assistant professor of Anthropology and interim vice chair of Africana Studies.

In a review of Dr. Katy Chiles’ new book, Transformable Race: Surprising Metamorphoses in the Literature of Early America, Dr. Christopher Looby of UCLA writes that it “adds measurably and convincingly to our understanding of the early American understanding of race. Katy L. Chiles shows how early American literature was a venue for many subtle and incisive explorations of racial mutability. Configuring a diverse archive—featuring especially Occom and Wheatley, Franklin and Aupaumut, Crevecoeur, Marrant, Brown, Equiano, Brackenridge, and Tyler—early American literature emerges here as a richly experimental space where the concept of racial mutability was examined, dramatized, questioned, criticized, and itself transformed.” Dr. Chiles is a member of the Africana Studies program advisory board and an associate professor of English.

Dr. John Hodges, associate professor emeritus of Religious Studies, and past chair of the Africana Studies program, has published Delta Fragments: The Recollections of a Sharecropper’s Son (University of Tennessee Press, 2013), a memoir of his childhood growing up in Greenwood, Mississippi, and the journey that took him to Morehouse College in Atlanta. He later earned a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. Dr. Mary Coleman of Lesley University praises Delta Fragments as “Clear, compellingly written, reminiscent of a good novel . . . . What Hodges has done is write a story about a place he adores as home. He brings all the contradictions and longings for a better ‘place’ into his musings.”
In the summer of 2013, Dr. Dawn Duke, associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese, and chair of the Africana Studies program, spent a month at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, where she studied Yoruba literature, language, culture, and religion. The Yoruba make up about one-third of Nigeria’s estimated population of 170 million. Dr. Duke met with professors and students in the departments of African languages and Linguistics, Art, Foreign Languages, English, Religious Studies, and Women Studies, and gave an invited presentation on proposal writing in the humanities.
ROUND TABLE, “The State of the Art Today: Black Women’s Movements in Latin America”

Moderator: Dawn Duke (Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures UTK, Chair of Africana Studies)

Introduction: Dr. Jana Morgan (Political Science, UTK)

Discussants: Dr. Joselina da Silva (Federal University of Cariri, Brazil), Dr. Kimberly Simmons (Anthropology, University of South Carolina), Gisela Arandia Covarrubias (Juan Marinello Institute, Havana, Cuba), Ana Cristina Conceição Santos (Federal University of Alagoas, Brazil)

Translators: Wanessa Martin – (Portuguese), Laura Trujillo – (Spanish)

Africana Studies Hosts ASA Scholar Dr. Mathayo Ndomondo

In November 2013, the Africana Studies program hosted Dr. Mathayo Bernard Ndomondo, who visited UTK as part of the presidential fellows program sponsored by the African Studies Association (based at Rutgers University).

Dr. Ndomondo is a lecturer in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Among his research interests are the intersections between music, gender, religion, and state agency in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Tanzania.

On November 19, 2013, Dr. Ndomondo gave a lively lecture to students, faculty, and members of the public.

In his lecture, “Those who did it have power—music, health, and hegemony in Tanzania: The context of HIV/AIDS,” Ndomondo used images and local songs (in translation) to explain to his audience how local activists used popular and older musical forms to push Tanzania’s government to address the epidemic.

Dr. Ndomondo visited several Africana Studies classes during the week he spent in Knoxville, and also had the opportunity to visit—guided by Dr. Josh Inwood, Associate Professor of Geography and Africana Studies—two Knoxville landmarks: the Beck Cultural Exchange Center and Alex Haley Park.
Two Africana Studies Faculty Pay Tribute to Nelson Mandela, 1918-2013

Dr. Amadou Sall was featured on Knoxville’s WATE reflecting on the life of Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa, who died on December 5, 2013. For Sall, Mandela’s greater significance was that he “dedicated his life to fighting for the voiceless. This is why I always try to get students to think about what they can do in the community.”

In summer 2013, Dr. Sall took the first group of Africana Studies Study Abroad students to South Africa, where they spent a month helping to build a community garden in Cape Town. Students also visited Robben Island, where Mandela spent 18 of the 27 years he was imprisoned for treason against the segregationist apartheid state. A world-wide campaign pressuring the apartheid government led to his release in 1990.

Mandela served as president from 1994-1999. His Mandela Foundation continues to support community and educational opportunities in underserviced urban and rural communities in South Africa.

Study Abroad Student Experience

For Ashley Shafer, visiting Mandela’s jail cell on Robben Island inspired her work in the community garden students helped build in Cape Town: “Mandela sacrificed for his people. He planted a seed within the community. And I feel like a seed has been planted in me. I want to go out and help.”

For Dr. Sall, this is the beauty of Mandela’s life, whose spirit and legacy continue to draw visitors from around the world to serve others. In summer 2013, UT students put Mandela’s words into action: “To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

Meeting Mandela

Professor of History and Vice Chair of Africana Studies Catherine Higgs met Nelson Mandela in the Johannesburg airport in February 1991, a year after he was released after serving 27 years in jail for protesting against the apartheid state. Higgs was passing through Johannesburg on her way from Harare to New York. She remembers: “I was on a pay phone talking to a friend in Johannesburg when Mandela walked into the customs hall with an aide. The immigration officials—then all still white—greeted him enthusiastically. Eventually he and his companion were standing alone. My friend insisted that I hang up and go and introduce myself, which I did. I explained that I was finishing my doctoral dissertation, a biography of another political activist and college professor named D.D.T. Jabavu. Mandela immediately said, ‘Ah, Jili’ (using Jabavu’s clan name). Jabavu had taught Mandela in the 1940s at the University of Fort Hare. Already the consummate diplomat, Mandela said, ‘I would like to read the book when it is finished.’ I said, ‘That is very flattering sir, but I cannot imagine you will have the time.’ He replied, ‘I will read the parts I am interested in; please send me a copy.’ I did send a copy though I doubt he ever found the time to read it. For me it was an amazing experience to meet a personal hero and an iconic advocate for social justice.” In April 1994, Mandela would achieve what many thought was impossible: the peaceful transition of South Africa from segregated apartheid state to multi-racial democracy.
Africana Studies 2013-2015

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Why Africana Studies...

African Studies is the study of the histories, politics, and cultures of peoples of African origin both in Africa and of the African diaspora. The peoples of the diaspora include African Americans, and peoples of African descent living in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Middle East. Newer African diaspora populations are found in Europe and Asia. African Studies encompasses the world. Our goal in the Africana Studies program is to give students a better understanding of these interconnections within the broader framework of the experiences of peoples of African origin.

What can I do with an Africana Studies major or minor?

You will find Africana Studies majors and minors working in the private sector (tech companies, banks, real estate, and insurance), for the government, and in non-profit organizations. Teaching at both the elementary and secondary level is a career choice for many of our graduates. Majors and minors have also pursued graduate studies in law, business, social work, and public administration. In short, the answer to the question, “what can I do with an Africana Studies major or minor?” is, “anything you want!”

We look forward to discussing your degree and career plans with you. Please consult our website, web.utk.edu/~africana/ and come by our office.

Program Contact Information:

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Support Africana Studies

We thank you in advance for your generous support of the Africana Studies program. Your donations help fund lectures, research opportunities, and study abroad programs for majors, minors, and students from the UTK community interested in the peoples and cultures of the African Diaspora, both in the United States and around the world.

To donate to the Africana Studies program, visit the University of Tennessee’s giving page, at: https://web.dii.utk.edu/Alumni/. Select the Knoxville campus, College of Arts and Sciences, and then, Africana Studies Enrichment Fund to complete the remainder of the form online.

If you prefer, you may contact the following office by regular mail or by phone to make a donation to the Africana Studies Enrichment Fund:

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