

KANSAS AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER  
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR GARTH MYERS

Full 2010 was undoubtedly one of the busiest semesters in the history of KASC. We began it with the renegotiation of our NRC budget and our farewells to former administrative associate director Jane Irungu. We ended it interviewing for her replacement. In between, we hosted two major conferences and a lively seminar series.



I would like to thank John Janzen, Katie Rhine, Glenn Adams and Heather Aldersey for the hard work of planning and carrying out the Medical Anthropology in Global Africa conference. The Mid-America Alliance for African Studies annual meeting came to KU in October. Prof. Fatou Diop from our longtime partner university in St. Louis, Senegal, Université Gaston Berger, gave the keynote address, and colleagues from across our region joined us in Lawrence for the 5th time in MAAAS history. Dylan Bassett led

the African Drumming Ensemble at KU in what I think was the best MAAAS reception party in years, on the roof of the Union; MAAAS was capped off by a nice rooftop gathering at the Oread Inn (must be something about rooftop patios that brings out the best in Africanists). Meanwhile, Shawn Alexander organized and ran the highly successful seminar series

that served as KASC's part of celebrating 40 years of the department of African and African-American Studies, and of Africana Studies in the Midwest region. I thank Shawn and Profs. Michael Gomez (NYU), Madison Lacy (KU), and Ernest Allen (UMASS), whose talks made the program a major success. We had a great set of Ujamaa brownbag talks as well. Attendance was never stellar at the brownbags, but the presentations were consistently so. Let me express my sincere appreciation to Megan Holroyd, Andrew Nussbaum, and Hilary Hungerford for taking the time to produce excellent and stimulating lunchtime talks, and my strongest encouragement to everyone reading this to keep your schedules open for Ujamaa brownbags this term; we owe it to our friends and colleagues to fill the rooms with our passion for African studies!

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In Spring 2011, we have a comparatively more modest program of activities. Our seminar series, headed by Ebenezer Obadare, will include lectures from Ebenezer, John Janzen, and Elizabeth Asiedu, on the theme of assessing 50+ years of independent Africa; we will also host or co-host two other visiting speakers in February: Dr. Maano Ramutsindela (University of Cape Town), Dr. Kevin Durrheim and Dr. Richard Ballard (both from University of KwaZulu-Natal). KASC will collaborate with our fellow KU NRCs in a Film Festival at Liberty Hall throughout the term, and in a workshop for teachers April 16. We will participate in a collaborative conference headed by CREES on security issues, on April 1. Ujamaa brownbags will be offered by a series of KU people, once we have solidified the list!

We are already on the way toward the new collaborative processes between the KU centers for FLAS, and we have worked closely together to produce a new collaborative process for outcomes assessment and program evaluation. My eyes glaze over every time I think about (and meet about, a lot) these issues. How wonderfully symbolic of the ridiculous overkill on assessment that the last NRC competition included more possible points (35) for assessment and evaluation of our programming than for the programming itself (25)! But we are genuinely emerging with new tools for gauging the impact of what we do. Let's hope the tools produce evidence of the general sense that we are having a positive impact, increasing the knowledge base and awareness that KU students and Kansans in particular have for Africa.

Despite some clear high points – giving a keynote address at the Nordic Africa Institute, for example - this past Fall was a difficult and stressful one for me personally. KASC kept running smoothly even with the hectic pace of the calendar. I try to always thank the KASC staff in this newsletter, and I always mean it when I do. But the thanks this time for Craig Pearman, Emmanuel Birdling, Nona Hanna, and Glenn Adams comes with a deeper bow of gratitude than ever, to all of the above, and to Makame Muhajir, Hilary Hungerford, Megan Holroyd, John Oakes, John Janzen, Katie Rhine, Heather Aldersey, Peter Ojiambo, Shiferaw Assefa, Liz MacGonagle, Lisa Brown, Shawn Alexander, Kelley (McCarthy) Lowe and everyone else who pitched in at crucial moments, for me. Ahsanteni sana wenzangu.



Finally, I am delighted to invite all of you to welcome Dr. Christina Lux to KASC as our new Assistant Director. Many of you will know Christina already, since she has been employed in the French program in the Department of French & Italian and is a regular at KASC events. In any case, please come by the center to introduce yourself to her. Christina brings to KASC a wealth of experience with crucial issues for the center: language coordination, teacher training, outreach programming, grant-writing, and graduate student advising. She also has very impressive scholarly Africanist credentials, including both her PhD (ironically, from the University of Oregon, where her predecessor, Jane Irungu, has relocated!) and her publications focused on Francophone Africa literature. Christina spent a considerable amount of time living in Cameroon, and she will serve, in June 2011,

as a Cultural Envoy from the US in the Republic of the Congo. I am very enthusiastic about working with Christina as KASC builds on its great start in the programming for our 2010-14 NRC/FLAS grant.

## A WORD FROM THE FACULTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR GLENN ADAMS

In December 2010, I had the privilege of travelling to Freetown, Sierra Leone to represent KU and the Kansas African Studies Center at the Second International Conference of the Peace Initiative in West Africa. The theme of the conference was “Peacemaking in West Africa: Faith Communities and Their Role in Peace & Conflict.” I presented a paper on “Faith, Community, and Memory in the Aftermath of Civil War: Perspectives from Liberation and Cultural Psychology”. The keynote speaker was the distinguished Islamic theologian, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, who spoke on the topic, “For Sustainable Peace: From Religious Responsibility to Legal Accountability.” Some of you may remember that Prof. An-Na’im was one of the featured speakers in the KASC Seminar Series back in Fall, 2001. He gave one of the most remarkable lectures at KU in recent memory—certainly during my time here—on the topic of “Islam and Human Rights in Africa” less than 10 days after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Towers. The conference was a co-production of the West African Research Association (WARA, based in Boston, MA) and its sibling organization, the West Africa Research Center (WARC, based in Dakar, Senegal). WARA and WARC provide important



Outside the conference hotel in Freetown: (from left) Glenn Adams, University of Kansas; Mbye Cham, Howard University; Steve Howard, Ohio University (Photo courtesy of Fr. Victor Suma).

sources of support for scientific and intellectual work in a region where such activity is often a challenge. WARA is particularly remarkable for its devotion to often neglected features of institutional affiliations in African settings: maintenance of a permanent institutional presence (WARC) and nurturing of local research expertise within the West Africa region itself. These features were strongly in evidence at the Freetown conference, where 20 of the 25 “at large” presentations were from researchers based in the West Africa region.

In recognition of WARA’s unique contributions, the Title VI National Resource Centers (NRCs) for African Studies have adopted it as a central collaborative project. Again, this feature was in evidence at the Freetown conference, where leaders from 4 of the 10 Title VI NRCs were in attendance: Steve Howard, Ohio University; Timothy Longman, Boston University; Leonardo Villalon, University of Florida; and me (acting as KASC Associate Director). KASC is proud to be an institutional member of WARA and a primary supporter of its activities. This was my first visit to Sierra Leone since August, 1992, when I left after 3 years of service as a Peace Corps Volunteer. (My assignment was to teach math at a secondary school in the provincial town of Kabala in northeast Sierra Leone.) The 18 years since then have been extremely difficult ones for people in Sierra Le-

one, characterized by a particularly violent civil war that left behind many lasting scars on bodies and communities. The conference gave me the opportunity to witness first-hand the remarkable courage, resilience, and vitality that the people of Sierra Leone have shown in rebuilding the country. Indeed, the frantic pace of rebuilding is such that one can barely get around Freetown because of all the road construction, which the government hopes to complete in time to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Sierra Leone's independence from the UK in April, 2011.

One of the highlights of the trip for me was the opportunity to re-unite with one of the other speakers: Fr. Victor Suma, student at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, who presented a paper on the topic "The Place of Memory in Peace Building. A Roman Catholic Church Perspective on Conflicts in West Africa and Attempts at Peace with a Particular Focus on the Sierra Leonean War and Its Aftermath." When I last saw Fr. Victor, he was Salifu Suma, student in my math class and my next door neighbor on the grounds of Kabala Secondary School. Because I was a single teacher without a family to take care of me, the Suma family adopted me into their everyday meal routine. Each day around 3pm, Salifu would arrive at my door with a plate of rice and bowl of sauce cooked from the common pot. It was an intensely amazing experience to see him again, fully 2 feet taller, presenting a paper at this international conference. I hitched a ride with him to Kabala for a quick one-day stay, where I renewed my acquaintance with people and places that I knew 20 years ago, but thought I would never see again.

When Fr. Suma completes his studies, he will return to Sierra Leone to take a position in the Department of Communication Studies at the new University of Makeni, which specializes in issues related to community development. For KU affiliates who wish to conduct research in Sierra Leone, the University of Makeni presents one of three possibilities for affiliation that emerged from institutional visits during this trip. The other possibilities are the Peace and Conflict Studies program at the University of Sierra Leone, Fourah Bay College and Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (e.g., for research on re-integration of former child combatants or research in disability studies on accessibility issues related to amputees and other victims of war). For more information about these and other opportunities for study and research in Sierra Leone and other African settings, contact the Kansas African Studies Center.

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS

The Kansas African Studies Center would like to welcome its new Assistant Director, **Christina Lux** to the center!

**Giselle Anatol**, associate professor of English, had a busy 2010 during which she made four presentations at conferences:

*“The Perils of the High-Tech Classroom: Incorporating Second Life Technology into a Toni Morrison Survey Course”*

*“Race and Ambiguous Place in Rowling’s Harry Potter Novels”*

*“The Mermaid Figure in Nalo Hopkinson’s The New Moon’s Arms”*

*“The De-Sexualization of the Black Male in The Jackal.”*

Anatol also participated in a pedagogical workshop sponsored by the NEH: *Language Matters IV: Teaching Toni Morrison in Translation*, last November in Paris.

Currently, Anatol is editing a collection of analytical essays on Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight series. The book is titled Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon, and is due out in June.

**Raj Bhala**, a Rice Distinguished Law Professor, taught Islamic Law this Fall 2010 based on his new book Understanding Islamic Law (Shari’a) at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Special Operations Forces commanders and Intelligence Officers. Bhala also delivered a presentation on “Four Strategies for Building Human Capital and Developing Legal Talent” at the Arab Thought Foundation Conference in December in Beirut, Lebanon, and thereafter having dinner with Bhala’s fellow

panelists with the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, at his palace (the Grand Serai).

**Christina Lux** presented "Pacifying the Subject: Cumulative Effects of Translating Race and Gender in Maryse Condé's *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*" at the National Women's Studies Association in November, 2010. Also in November, she facilitated an NEH-sponsored workshop, "Language Matters IV," in Paris. The workshop was directed by Dr. Maryemma Graham and focused on teaching Toni Morrison in translation. While in Paris, she moderated a panel, "Languages and Landscapes / Le langage et les voix/voies de la langue," at the Toni Morrison Society Conference.

**Beverly Mack**, professor of African Studies, has been invited to present at two conferences: “A Legacy of Women’s Scholarship in Muslim West Africa, circa 17th to 20th C”, for presentation at the Conference “Islamic West Africa’s Legacy of Literacy and Music to America and the World” and “Slavery and its Legacy” jointly sponsored by Tougaloo College and the International Museum of Muslim Cultures, Jackson, Mississippi (Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities), 19-22 February 2011; and “Muslim Women Teaching Muslim Women: A 19th C Model for 21st C American Muslimahs” at the conference on 7-11-2011: East Meets West, Virginia Military Institute, 23-25 March 2011.

Locally at KU, Mack will be presenting: “African Roots of American Islam: Muslim American Women’s Nigerian Model” for the KU Faculty Seminar: Islam in a Global World, Spring

2011; and "Muslim Women Re-presenting Islam in America" KU Mini-College, June 2011.

Mack will be on sabbatical this Spring 2011, during which she will be working on three manuscripts:

Nana Asma'u: Her Life and Legacy (with Jean Boyd); and Muslim Women's Scholarship; and Yan Taru and Other Models of American Muslim Women.

**Jeremy Miller**, current FLAS awardee, in his first semester of FLAS funding continued work on his thesis, an account of his experience teaching English in Mauritania, West Africa, for two years. With this book he hopes to present the country, which few in Anglophone countries are aware exists, to English speaking audiences from a familiar perspective in hope of demystifying the place and the people while highlighting contemporary issues such as development work, neocolonialism, and Islam. Toward this goal, he hopes to receive a Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country this summer.

**Garth Myers**, KASC Director, published an article in Fall 2010 in *African Affairs* based on the 2006-08 NSF-funded research on land reform in Zanzibar. Myers also sent off the final version of his book, *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Urban Theory and Practice*, which will be published in May 2011 by Zed Books. He presented a keynote address at the workshop, "Beyond Dysfunctionality: Pro-Social Writing on Africa's Cities," held at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, in October. NAI also published his paper from the workshop as a Discussion Paper, "Seven Themes of African Urban Dynamics." Myers also presented chapter 4 of his book to the Baraza seminar at the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida in November and to the MAAAS conference here at KU in October. He will be making presentations this Spring at the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers and the seminar series in the Geography department at the Univer-

sity of Minnesota, and a conference on African cities at Columbia University in New York.

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: JAMES TIMBUAK



James is a visiting researcher at the University of Kansas where he is working with the Anthropology Department, focusing on biological anthropology.

### Qualifications:

Bachelor and Master degrees in Anatomy (Ahmadu Bello Univeristy, Zaria) and currently undergoing doctoral training/research.

Working experience: Lecturer with the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine at the Ahmadu Bello University, in the northern Nigerian town of Zaria in Kaduna State since 2005. Engaged in the training of students in the field of anatomy.

### Research Interest:

Biological/genetic anthropology. It is an interesting mixture of social, biological and molecular genetic studies. It has two primary concept areas; human evolution and human biosocial variation. This covers human evolution, from our origins and diversity in the past to our probable future as inhabitants of this planet. I have carried out research on relationship between anthropometric variables in children, sociocultural and environmental factors.

With recent advances in DNA and computer technologies, the field of anthropological biology has been broadened to include anthropological and molecular genetics, which deals with the molecular revolution and how DNA markers can provide insight into the processes of evolution, the mapping of genes for complex phenotypes and the reconstruction of the human diaspora. Consequently, I am presently visiting with the Laboratory of Biological Anthropology at the University of Kansas carrying out the laboratory aspect of my doctoral thesis on mtDNA and Y-chromosome variability of some ethnic groups within Kaduna state of Nigeria.

## DAPHNE JOHNSTON

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND SCHOLAR SERVICES

Between October 2 through 22, 2010, I represented the University of Kansas as part of a U.S. State Department delegation during a three-week trip to South Africa and Nigeria, as one of five members of the African Reconnect-Plus delegation to participate in a unique educational diplomacy effort. Our group included representatives from US public and private institutions of varying size, location and scope, including Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis, North Hennepin Community College, the University of Kansas, Tulane University and Wesleyan University. The EducationUSA Reconnect-Plus Program was designed to increase awareness and interest in US higher education, focusing on countries not normally on the recruitment circuit for admission representatives. Additionally, the delegations were charged with the mission to promote linkages and partnerships for exchange and research between U.S. and local universities. We spent one week in South Africa at the Triennial African EducationUSA Advisors Conference, where we networked with advisors from 46 African countries and U.S. admissions officers from over 50 institutions and I presented two sessions. The activity concluded with a large EducationUSA university fair hosted in Johannesburg. Our delegation traveled for two weeks in Nigeria,



visiting sixty secondary schools and ten federal, state & private universities. We met students, parents, counselors, teachers and faculty and participated in five additional undergraduate and graduate EducationUSA university fairs. We established strong connections with the Lagos and Abuja EducationUSA advisors as well as a number of the key staff in the US Consulate and

Embassy Departments of Consular and Public Affairs in Lagos and Abuja, who attentively coordinated all of our activity in Nigeria. We estimate that we easily met over 5,000 students in the cities of Lagos, Ibadan, Ofada, Abuja, Zaria, Kaduna, Minna, and Keffi. The US is the first-choice destination for most Nigerian students

who want to study abroad. According to the IIE Open Doors Survey, Nigeria is the largest African sending-nation and number twenty on the list of countries that send students to the USA. In 2009-10, there were 6,568 Nigerians on student visas enrolled in US institutions of higher education. It was an honor to be selected and indeed I learned a great deal through this cultural and educational diplomacy effort. I am quite certain that KU and many other public research and teaching universities throughout the USA, which I was sent to represent, will benefit from our delegation's efforts, as will private universities, small private liberal arts



colleges, and community colleges that were also represented by our delegation. We will see more well-prepared students from Nigeria and other African countries enrolling in U.S. universities and colleges in the years to come, hopefully beginning in our next admission cycle.

The EducationUSA Reconnect-Plus delegation to Nigeria and South Africa, funded by the U.S. State Department and administered by the College Board, was a pilot program designed to provide information and guidance to students and families through admissions workshops about higher education opportunities at U.S. accredited institutions and to develop or enhance linkages between US and Nigerian institutions. The project offered a new and expanded aspect of the EducationUSA Reconnect visits for experienced representatives of accredited US colleges and universities that have served as campus hosts for the US Based Training Program and related initiatives. KU had hosted a USBT delegation in April 2010 year under my facilitation, which established priority for my application and KU to participate in the Reconnect-Plus delegation. I offer my thanks to the KU International Recruitment Advisory Committee for supporting aspects of my participation that were not covered by the US State Department and the College Board and to faculty and staff of the Kansas African Studies Center in helping me prepare for the journey.

# MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN GLOBAL AFRICA

JOHN JANZEN

Medical Anthropology in Global Africa: Current Trends in Scholarship & Practice  
Conference convened by the Kansas African Studies Center  
University of Kansas  
September 17-18, 2010

Some fifty presenters and discussants/panel chairs from Rhode Island to California, Canada, UK, Cameroon, and Ghana, gathered for two days to examine current trends and issues in the medical anthropology of Africa. The conference had been planned for several years as part of the overall program of the University's Kansas African Studies Center, one of twelve National Resource Centers for Africa in the United States within the U.S. Department of Education Title VI program of International Studies. Sessions were held in The Commons, an interdisciplinary meeting space in Spooner Hall, and in Spencer Museum of Art, where the exhibition "African Healing Journeys," featured African objects from Kansas collections around the themes "Measure of Humanity in Health and Suffering," "Living in Balance with Nature," "Divination: The Interpretation of Misfortune," and "Sickness When Something else is Going On."

The conference's central theme of "global Africa" was elaborated by Professor Carolyn Sargent of Washington University in St. Louis in her keynote address entitled "Voices from the West African Diaspora in Paris: Bintou's Story and the Prospect for Global Ethnography in Medical Anthropology." Professor Sargent sketched the general outlines of globalization theory and illustrated its nuances via an extended case study of a Malian woman living in the French capital enmeshed in family issues, preoccupation with daily life, health concerns of her family and herself, and the pressures of survival for herself and her family. Professor Sargent demonstrated how ethnography of multiple sites and perspectives can illuminate theoretical issues of the movement and linkage of people, resources, communication, diseases, and different ways of seeing the world.

In order to identify current approaches to Africanist medical anthropology, conference organizers cast the invitation for papers broadly, yet invited scholars with specialized understanding of particular topics to discuss panel papers in relation to their own work and general theoretical perspectives. Thus, Kristin Peterson of the University of California, Irvine, discussed the panel "Biomedical Research, Technologies, and Ethics" in light of her research. Claire Wendland, of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, discussed her work and related theory in the panel "Policies, Professionals, and Healthcare Institutions." Daniel Smith of Brown University discussed papers in the panel "Global Aid, Development, and Governance." Ama de-Graft Aikins, of Cambridge University, presented her work in connection

with the panel on “Human Development, Disability, and Chronic disorders.” University of Kansas faculty took on similar assignments: Majid Hannoum, “Geography, Global Mobility and Health Trajectories;” Sandra Gray, “Violence, Trauma, Memory and Spirituality;” Kathryn Rhine, “Gender, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health;” Glenn Adams, “Youth, Family, Friendships, and Health Politics;” and John Janzen, “Local Medical Knowledge and Global Health Policy.”

Like a late summer market under the blue skies of Kansas, the richness and diversity of Africanist medical anthropology was on full display for two days in the conference. Globalized Africa may be unique in its special health challenges, but the methodologies and theories that have been developed in this context enrich scholarship and practice concerning health, sickness, and healing everywhere.

The organizing committee included Kathryn Rhine, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, John M. Janzen, Professor of Anthropology, Glenn Adams, Associate Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of the Kansas African Studies Center, and Heather Aldersey, PhD student in Special Education and African Studies. The exhibition African Healing Journeys was curated by John Janzen with the assistance of Celka Straughn, Andrew Mellon Director of Academic Programs, and other Spencer Museum of Art staff members.

# SPRING 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Go To [www.kasc.ku.edu](http://www.kasc.ku.edu) for more event information

## **January 31, 4:00 - 5:30 pm**

Stereotypes and the Social Psychology of Repression; Kevin Durrheim, Department of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Kansas Room, Kansas Union

## **February 1, 3:30 - 5:00 pm**

Implicit Prejudice in Mind and Interaction; Kevin Durrheim, Department of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Centennial Room, Kansas Union

## ***Postponed***

Rehabilitating the “Noble Savage:” Cultural Turns in Transborder Conservation. Maano Ramutsindela  
Room 310, Geography Department

## **February 5, 8:00 - 5:00 am**

Graduate Student Symposium  
Alcove F & G, Kansas Union

## **February 17, 3:30 - 5:00 pm**

Richard Ballard of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Research Fellow: University of Maryland)  
Pine Room, Kansas Union

## **February 17, 7:00 pm**

Screening of the film “Bongoland, Tanzania”  
Liberty Hall, 644 Massachusetts St.

## **February 23, 3:30 - 5:00 pm**

African Studies Seminar  
Nigeria at 50+; Ebenezer Obadare, Department of Sociology, University of Kansas  
Jayhawk Room, Kansas Union

## **March 3, 3:30 - 5:00 pm**

African Studies Seminar  
Ghana at 50+; Elizabeth Asiedu, Department of Economics, University of Kansas  
Centennial Room, Kansas Union

## **March 10, 3:30 - 5:00 pm**

African Studies Seminar  
Congo at 50+; John Janzen, Department of Anthropology, University of Kansas  
Parlor ABC, Kansas Union

## **April 1**

Migrations, Shadow Economies, and Security Issues on the World’s Borders

## **April 16**

Collaborative Teacher Workshop

## **July 5-15**

Teacher Summer Institute

*\*Spring Seminar Series: “Africa at 50+”*

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