

What can you do with an AADS degree?

A few weeks ago, during an advisement session, one of our students asked me, timidly but seriously, "What can I do with this degree?" This got me thinking: If this is coming from one of our students, what could I expect from an undeclared student? It is fitting to address this question in this newsletter, the first by the Center for African and African Diaspora Studies, both to reassure the students who are already in the program and to educate well-meaning students, faculty, parents, and other stakeholders.

So, what can you do with a degree in African and African Diaspora Studies?

Anything you can do with a liberal arts degree, and then some

The AADS major is an interdisciplinary, liberal arts degree. It was interdisciplinary before "interdisciplinary" became hip—it is KSU's first thoroughgoing interdisciplinary major built from the ground up. Through interdisciplinary studies, the AADS major educates students on the Black experience. In addition, AADS students obtain the general knowledge of the social sciences and humanities necessary for graduate work in this field and in other more traditional disciplines.

You can do with the AADS degree what you can do with a degree in the liberal arts, humanities and social sciences, such as history, political science, geogra-

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KSU Signs MOU with KU

Kennesaw State University recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kenyatta University. The signing took place on April 23, 2007. A major highlight of the Kenyan Diaspora Conference, the linkage agreement between KSU and KU would enhance global understanding, collaborative research, faculty and student exchange, and other partnership initiatives between the two institutions. Speaking just before the signing, President Papp expressed KSU's interests in advancing global learning through this and similar partnership agreements. "We share many interests with Kenyatta University, and we are

pleased with the possibilities that this agreement holds for faculty, students and staff in our two institutions," he added.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the U.S., His Excellency Peter Ogego, thanked the administration of KSU not only for the agreement but also for supporting Kenyan students and programs. He remarked KSU's commitment to international education is already demonstrated by the number of Kenyan students, the programs of the "Year of Kenya" and the Kenyan Diaspora Conference.

Several KSU, KU and Kenyan Government representatives were in attendance at the signing. They include Ambassador Ogego; Ambassador Amina Muhammed; and Hon. Amos Kimunya, Minister of Finance. KU representatives were Dr. Caroline Langat-Thoruwa, Director of Linkages and International Education, Dr. Charity Gichuki, Director of Research, and Dr. Eric Aseka, Fulbright Scholar. Dr. Lendley Black, KSU's Provost and VPAA, other Vice Presidents and several deans were in attendance at the signing.

The signing of the KU-KSU linkage brings to eleven the number of MOUs that KSU has with African educational institutions. These other agreements are Ghana

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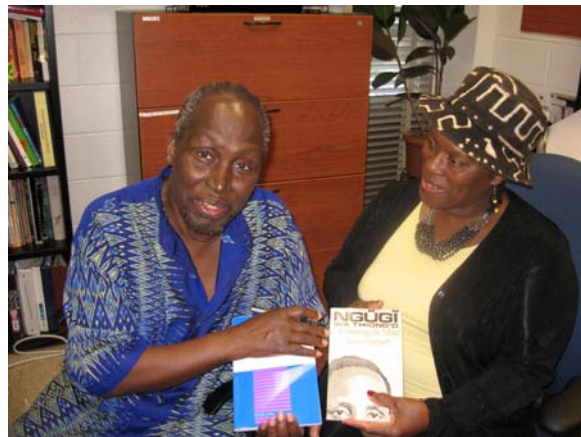
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Help Name this Newsletter

Enter the contest to name this newsletter. Contact Dr. Akanmu Adebayo at 770-423-6646 or aadebayo@kennesaw.edu.



Professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o visited the Center in 2006. Pictured here with Dr. Rosa Bobia, Director, Center for African and African Diaspora Studies.

Meet the AADS Faculty

Dr. Francine Allen graduated from high school with a certificate for perfect attendance. From first grade to high school, she never missed a day of class. Her research interests derive from her doctoral work, which is on the Christian spirituality of James Baldwin.



Dr. Francine Allen

While she is still working on issues connected to Baldwin, she has begun research on the ways in which African and African-American literary artists parallel one another in their fictional depiction of racial and gender oppression. Over the summer she hopes to work on an article or series of articles that discuss the ways in which Christian philosophical thinking has influenced African and African-American writers, particularly considering the religious justification for slavery and colonialism. Since spring semester, she has been teaching world literature, African literature, and literature of the African Diaspora.

Dr. William Allen is a great example of the two trajectories that constitute the African Diaspora: displacement from Africa to the Americas as a result of transatlantic slavery and return to Africa after emancipation: his paternal great grandparents were former slaves who returned to Liberia in the 1890s. His research interest is the formation of identities in the Atlantic World. He is presently researching strategies of survival adopted by freed Africans who



Dr. William Allen

reversed sail and returned to Africa: Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, and Afro-Brazilians. His teaching interest is the convergence of cultures in the Atlantic World. Accordingly, he proposed a new course for Fall 2007 called "the History of Atlantic Civilization," which has been approved as a Year of the Atlantic World course.

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Dr. Jesse Benjamin has lived in Toronto, Brooklyn, Minnesota, Israel/Palestine, Kenya, London, among other places. This has fostered an interest in the variable manifestations of global patterns of race, racism, inequality, and their social interconnectedness. His current research focuses on issues of history, identity and Pan-African epistemology in East Africa; the histories of colonialism and decolonization; and in North America, patterns of whiteness and white identity formation in the larger matrix of racial social constructions. He is currently investigating problems of racial and other social divisions throughout Africa, looking for broader theoretical patterns. In the Middle East, his work looks at Bedouin and Kurdish communities, and also at the African Diaspora in Asia. He teaches a variety of courses, including SOCI 3314 "Race and Ethnicity," SOCI 4434 "Emerging Social Issues in Africa," and other Sociology courses which are also listed as AADS and/or AMST courses.

Dr. Marne Campbell is living outside of Southern California for the first time! Her research interest is African American community formation in Los Angeles between 1850 and 1910, examining issues concerning gender, migration, family, and religious life. She is finishing up her database collection of every African American person who resided in Los Angeles in 1910, and working on an article about the Pentecostal movement in LA during that time. Her teaching interests include African American history - Civil Rights Movement, Harlem Renaissance, migration, the Black Church, history of



Dr. Marne Campbell

film, representations of African Americans in popular culture, legal and constitutional history.

Dr. Robert Simon writes poetry in which he combines English, Spanish and Portuguese. Also, he loves to play the saxophone and to sing. His research interests are literature and cultural evolution in Spain and Portugal, which covers the colonial and post-colonial periods in both countries and their ex-colonies. This includes much of Africa (both Arabic-speaking and Sub-Saharan) in each case. Currently, he is applying a post-colonial reading to the evolution of Fado in Portugal and attempting to create a framework by which we may apply Kuhn's theory of the Paradigm Shift to Spanish and Portuguese Peninsular literatures. Also, he is studying how the image of "America" has influenced Iberian Cultures. He teaches Spanish and (in the future) Portuguese language, literatures and cultures, including Iberian, Latin American, Luso-Brazilian and Luso-African literatures and cultures.



Dr. Garrett Smith

Dr. Garrett Smith served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo 1986-89, working with farmers' cooperatives, and as a Peace Corps Trainer in Mali in 1990 assisting with small enterprise development. He liked West Africa so much he did his dissertation research in Burkina Faso in 1992 on the topic, "wild edible plants." His research interests are in cultural geography, geography of religion, and human use of forests. More recently, he has been involved in campus administration as Chair of the Department of Geography and Anthropology. His teaching interests are in World Regional Geography, Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa, and Cultural Geography.

Dr. Eva M. Thompson likes to think of herself as having a green thumb (even though no live plants adorn her office) and gets very excited every spring when



Timbuktu! Have you ever been? Dr. Eva Thompson has, and the above photo proves it. In 2004 she participated in the Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad program which traveled to Ghana and Mali. After a tour of Timbuktu's historic places, Dr. Thompson and other participants rode the "desert limousine" (the camel) to visit a Tuareg camp in the Sahara desert.

her gardenia shrubs are in bloom. Influenced by such African American women writers as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, both of whom argue implicitly and explicitly that the work of the writer is to save lives, which is what Walker did with Zora Neale Hurston and Morrison with Margaret Garner, Dr. Thompson's research interests focus on black men and women born into slavery in the Americas, whose lives were rendered historically unexceptional. And, thus, one interest is the intellectual history of enslaved persons in the Americas. Another is what Morrison refers to as "the site of memory," which is to say geographical spaces for remembering New World slavery, and she has traveled throughout the Americas in search of these sites. Presently, she is working on a creative non-fiction project, which takes as its subject Mary Prince, an ordinary woman born into slavery in a British slaveholding colony, who did a most remarkable thing: She released herself from enslavement in London simply by walking away and then dedicated her lived experience to the British Anti-Slavery Society. Dr. Thompson teaches a variety of courses in the English, African and African Diaspora Studies and American Studies programs, for example, American Literature, Major African American Writers, and 20th Century Caribbean Women Writers. Moreover, with a background in Black Studies, a multi-disciplinary program, she piloted a course on the Modern Civil Rights Movement in Spring 2007 and is planning a course on African Americans and the cinema.



Dr. Dan Paracka

Dr. Dan Paracka served in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone from 1985 to 1987, where he learned to walk and to talk again. Dan lived in the chiefdom headquarters of Wara Wara Bafodia, a farming community of about 200 homes with no electricity. He also learned to tap palm wine. Dan speaks Krio, small small. His research interests include internationalizing the curriculum through research partnerships with African universities, service learning and study abroad, and history of higher education in Africa. He is currently writing on global learning and organizing the Year of the Atlantic World. His areas of teaching interests include West African and pan-African intellectual history. In Fall 2007 he will be teaching KSU 1101: Converging Currents and Cultures of the Atlantic World.

Possible Career Paths for AADS Graduates

- Public and private archives and libraries
- Museums and historical preservation work
- Public policy research institutes
- Congressional or legislative aid
- International aid agencies and philanthropic organizations
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs)
- Military service
- Intelligence branches—CIA, FBI, etc.
- Foreign service
- Mission, humanitarian, aid agency, international NGOs
- Multimedia production—audio, video, documentary, feature film, radio program, etc.
- Inventions to solve critical problems such as water resource management, healthcare, etc.
- Teaching, including researcher or scholar or professor
- Cultural sensitivity training officer for either private or public sector organization
- Adult education
- EFL teaching
- Reporting for radio, television, internet news agency, etc.
- Educational aid and resource production—textbook writer, audio/video production, etc.
- Writer (biographer, genealogist, reporter, blogger, etc.)
- Ethno-musicologist, researcher,
- Activism—human rights activist, environmental activist, civil right activist, etc.
- Business
- Urban planning, development and management
- Rural development work
- Consultant on multicultural issues in the workplace
- Law, accounting, and other professions
- Welfare officer or social worker

What Can You Do with AADS Degree?

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phy, international affairs, music, sociology, English, foreign languages, art, communication, theater, and so on. Like these traditional liberal arts disciplines, the AADS program prepares students for careers in teaching, social work, urban research, law, public service, foreign service, industrial relations, business, community development and leadership, and other comparable employment opportunities.

You can do more with the AADS degree. By understanding the global dimensions of the African experience—in Africa and in the various parts of the world—you gain a better understanding of the human spirit. You learn about dispersal and survival, about cultural births and rebirths, about political and economic development, and about transitions from the past to the present and into the future. You learn lessons that are immediately applicable to societal needs.

Anything you set your mind to

When faced with a similar question about the relevance of its program for job and career, University of Houston's African American Studies department sought answers in positions held by and career paths of their graduates. In one edition of its newsletter, *Ujima*, the de-

partment narrates the story of John Henrik Clarke at the City University of New York and the many students that passed through the Africana Studies program under his direction. Of these graduates, "three became doctors at New York City's Harlem Hospital, 11 became chairs and directors of Africana Studies departments and programs, three became ambassadors, three became cultural attaches, and two became college deans" (*Ujima*, Vol.12, No.1, 2005 p.1). This sample list of career paths is a very impressive one indeed, and can be part of the career projection that an AADS student makes and pursues.

AADS graduates can be gainfully employed in any career. And because of the kind of training and mentoring they receive, they can also chart their own career paths. This much is borne in the testimony by Wesley Snipes—yes, Wesley Snipes—one of John Clarke's students. Snipes narrated a documentary entitled *John Henrik Clarke: A Great and Mighty Walk* in honor of the legendary professor. What Snipes says about Clarke is true of the program as well: "Professor Clarke taught us to think...He taught that not only is reading fundamental, but it is economically sound. It can directly affect your living condition." Students who earn the AADS degree are creative, innovative, and enterprising; they use their brain power to make change—change in their society, change in themselves.

The world is changing quite fast. Hundreds of new employment opportunities are created each year, which require transcendence understanding of different cultural dynamics outside one's immediate environment and cultural group. Graduates of the AADS program will enter into these new employment fields or will be involved in creating these new jobs and careers.

With the AADS degree, you can do anything. Anything at all.

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(University of Cape Coast); Nigeria (University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Jos, Nnamdi Azikiwe University at Awka); Cameroon (University of Buea); South Africa (University of Pretoria, Africa Decade); Malawi (University of Malawi and Leadership for Environment and Development, LEAD); Tunisia (University of Sfax).

For more information on these agreements, please visit the Institute for Global Initiatives' website at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/globalinstitute/>.



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