



**KSUAfricanist Faculty Learning Community presents:**  
**TEACHING AFRICA IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup>**  
**CENTURY CLASSROOM**



# PROGRAM

Friday, April 16  
12:00 – 5:00 PM

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**12:00 – 12:15 PM, Opening Remarks:** Brandon D. Lundy, Kennesaw State University

## PRESENTERS:

**12:20 – 12:50 PM**

**Dan Paracka** is director of the Education Abroad Office and associate professor of education at Kennesaw State University. His Ph.D. is in International Education Policy from Georgia State University. He is the author of *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College* and has an established record of publications in the field of global learning. In addition to administrative duties, he regularly teaches a freshman course aimed at helping students develop strategies to internationalize their college experience as well as a senior seminar course where students reflect on their global learning experiences and create e-portfolios. Dan is a past-chair of NAFSA: Association of International Educators for Region VII. He also served with the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone from 1985-1987 and taught English in China from 1987-1989.



**Title:** A Case Study of Study Abroad in Africa: From Independence through the Cold War

**Abstract:** While it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully evaluate the policies and effectiveness of international educational exchange (or study abroad to Africa) in relationship to government funding and political agendas, it does seem reasonable to suggest that the soft diplomacy of personal relationships forged through study abroad programs such as that between Kalamazoo College and Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone were efficacious in promoting cross-cultural understanding. One Kalamazoo administrator reported, “I remember being told by a Sierra Leone educator that the presence of our students at his university was probably worth the equivalent of one million dollars in AID funds.” What is interesting to note is that neither the U.S. nor the Sierra Leone governments seemed particularly interested in fostering such programs, especially the program’s more broadly applied goals of enriching undergraduate students’ understanding of other cultures. Funding tended to support high profile projects or advanced study. In reviewing the historical context surrounding the Kalamazoo/Fourah Bay program, it is possible to better understand how African studies evolved and how political considerations tended to interfere with and corrupt the process.

**12:55 – 1:25 PM**

**Jean Ngoya Kidula** is associate professor of music (Ethnomusicology) at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. She previously worked at Kenyatta University in Kenya. Her current research is in historical, contemporary, and popular spiritual and ritual music and musicians in Africa with a focus on Kenya and Tanzania. The arenas for examination include ethnic, religious, academic, urban, and industrial spaces.



**Title:** Stereotypes, myths, and realities about African music in the American and African Academy

**Abstract:** The music in Africa influenced the growth, development, and creativity in repertoire of global styles most significantly in the 20th century. The various media that appropriated these musics exploited a few features considered the most generally salient and distinctive of the continent and its Diaspora for scholarship, education, and performance. Despite its ubiquitous presence and given the variety of musical performance and

scholarly resources available, the musics of Africa continue to be considered outside mainline canonic musicology classes, or are relegated to an elective offering under music and culture, or as a topic in a world music survey class, as required classes for an African minor, or as an option in ethnomusicology.

In this discussion, I will engage various stereotypes, myths, and realities that contribute to the place of, and attitude towards, and approach to course offerings in musics of Africa. While I will rely on some of my encounters as a performer, student, scholar, and educator of musics of Africa in the African and American Academy, I will also draw on my findings from surveys of course offerings and interviews of leading African music scholars. I will ultimately collate some ways scholars have debunked myths, confirmed or negated stereotypes, and explained the realities of African music in the Academy. I will then suggest ways to (re)invigorate scholarship, education, and performance of African music in the Academy.

1:30 – 2:00 PM

**Renée Schatteman** is associate professor of postcolonial literature at Georgia State University. She is co-writer of a three-volume curriculum guide to African literature entitled *Voices from the Continent*, published by Africa World Press (2003). Her articles on southern African literature include “A South African Consider US Racial History: An Interview with Zakes Mda” (2009), “The Xhosa Cattle-Killing and Post-Apartheid South Africa: Magona’s Mother to Mother and Mda’s The Heart of Redness” (2008), “An Interview with Sindiwe Magona” (2006), “The Stories She Writes: An Interview with Sindiwe Magona” (2004), and “Fanon and Beyond: Tsitsi Dangarembga and Nervous Conditions” (1999). In addition, she co-authored “Women’s Literature from South Africa and the American South: A Comparativist Pedagogy” with Safundi in 2004.



**Title:** Teaching the American South and South Africa: A Comparative Pedagogy

**Abstract:** An effective means of engaging students in learning about Africa is to ask them to participate in comparative study of American South and South Africa. Over the past few decades, considerable work has been done by scholars about the significant parallels that exist between these two regions, despite their geographical, demographic, and historical differences. Comparisons between South Africa and the American South—for example, between the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-apartheid struggle—have great pedagogical potential because they can bring both contexts into sharper focus. As Andrew Offenberger, the founder of an academic journal devoted to this topic entitled *Safundi: the Journal of South African and American Comparative Studies*, has argued, “looking through the mirror of one country, we gain perspective on another.”

Working from a belief in the value of comparative study, I had the chance co-direct a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute in 2002 on “Race, Rights, and Resistance in Literature of the American South and South Africa.” I co-taught this same material in an undergraduate English course at Georgia State University in 2004 and in a graduate English course in 2006. At the core of our program was a comparative study of four women writers, two from South Africa (Nadine Gordimer and Sindiwe Magona) and two from the American South (Eudora Welty and Alice Walker). We selected these writers, who came from different generations, races, and educational backgrounds, because of the complexity and honesty they brought to their writing on matters of race, rights, and resistance. We supplemented this with two additional writings: Ann Moody’s autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, about her involvement with Civil Rights demonstrations and Lauretta Ngcobo’s novel *And They Didn’t Die*, about the women’s resistance movement in South Africa from the 1950s through the 1980s. In the graduate course, we extended our comparative considerations beyond the literature by asking students to read and report on various *Safundi* articles that covered a broad range of topics and represented numerous disciplinary perspectives, including history, education, religion, sociology, politics, and social movements.

The benefits of comparative study are multiple. Students come to better understand and appreciate their own historical grounding at the same time that they discover universal truths about power, difference, and human relationships. When American students read about the complexities of racial struggle in a foreign context, especially in a country such as South Africa where the story of resistance has been written so large, they can look at their own culture through a more critical lens and read beyond commonplace interpretations of the nation's past. The study of South Africa's history of struggle, a history that grows increasingly unfamiliar to American students, also expands their vision and shows them how their own national history is connected to the global narrative of colonialism and liberation. Also, the comparative work of seeking out likenesses and dissimilarities teaches the essential critical thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating, and questioning that are needed to examine the relationships that exist across race, across culture, and across continents.

This paper will reflect upon the many successes that resulted from this comparative study in all three settings, not the least of which was the comfort that the students and NEH participants said they felt when entering into deep and relatively uncharted discussions about race, presumably because of the directness around racial topics that they encountered in the literature. The paper will also suggest other, more contemporary avenues for comparative study of literature from South Africa and the American South, in particular on the topic of HIV and AIDS. This illness has manifested itself in the two societies in vastly different ways and the literary responses to it have also been markedly different. (Most notably, it is gay writers who have chronicled the story of the illness in the US while it is considered a heterosexual disease in South Africa.) But striking parallels do exist, in particular around the culture of silence and shame that emerged in the early years of the outbreak in each context and in the slow and even negligent governmental response to the crisis. Examining these two culture's responses to this global epidemic, as well as the writers' efforts to use literature as a means of processing the societal reaction to it, will undoubtedly unveil meaningful insights into South Africa and the United States and will help to promote a feeling of connectedness across these two contexts.

2:05 – 2:35 PM

**Brandon D. Lundy** is an assistant professor Sociocultural Anthropology at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. Dr. Lundy received PhDs in 2009 from both SUNY at Buffalo, NY and *Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille*, France. His dissertation is titled *Making a Living in Kassumba, Guinea-Bissau*. From 1999 to 2001, Dr. Lundy was a U.S. Peace Corps community development volunteer in the rural farming community of São Domingos in the West African island nation of Cape Verde. Dr. Lundy's research is shaped by the practice of everyday life, conceptions of cultural identity, globalization, and political economy. His work demonstrates how local inhabitants negotiate their historical and contemporary realities in order to adapt to economic deprivations. He has authored a number of articles and national and international conference papers including a Field Notes feature in the American Anthropological Associations' newsletter, *Anthropology News* (Feb. 2010).



**Title:** Making Africa Accessible: Bringing Guinea-Bissau into the University Classroom

**Abstract:** While a growing literature documents African history, cultural diversity, and contemporary trends, there is a glaring lack of accessible work on the initiatives of individuals and institutions currently tackling problems of Afro-pessimism and Afro-ignorance among much of the U.S. populace. This paper employs a substantive case study from first-hand ethnographic research in Guinea-Bissau to trace real connections between what is going on at the ground level in a marginalized part of the world and how this knowledge can be transmitted to American university students. This paper is intended to foster a deeper understanding of the various ways in which Americans understand Africa's new global position. It focuses on the relationship between pedagogy and political economy – politico-economic structures of power and localized agency. This

paper advances a ground level perspective on teaching culture and livelihood. Topics to be discussed in this paper include: (1) female circumcision; (2) cultural diversity; (3) religious syncretism; and (4) local Georgia connections to the transatlantic slave trade. These themes are described in relation to a small village in southern Guinea-Bissau. This work demonstrates how American students can come to understand Africa's civil society as successfully navigating the margins of globalizing terrains and how they develop their own unique spaces from which to act.

**2:40 – 3:10 PM**

**Linda M. Johnston** is the director of the Master of Science in Conflict Management Program, the director of the Center for Conflict Management, and an associate professor of Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta, Georgia. Her research interests include racial and ethnic conflict, bullying, sports-related violence, health-related conflict, narrative and discourse theory, and world view theory. She is a trained mediator, negotiator, ombuds, and facilitator. She works both domestically and internationally. She has received a grant from the Southern Poverty Law Center to do workshops on Teaching Tolerance. She has had a Fellowship to begin a dialogue between Egyptians and Americans. She has also done conflict resolution work in Ukraine, Republic of Georgia, Barbados, Nigeria, Egypt, and in the US. Dr. Johnston is the President of the International Peace Research Association Foundation, serves on the Small Research Grants Committee, and administers the International Senesh Fellowship Program. She is also on the Board of Hands along the Nile and the on-line Advisory Committee for the UN School of Peace in Costa Rica.



**Oumar Cherif Diop** is an assistant professor of Postcolonial African literatures and literary theory in the English Department at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. Dr. Diop joined Kennesaw State University after more than twenty years of teaching in Senegal and the US. In 2000, he was appointed West Africa Regional Coordinator of World Links, a grant-based education program initiated by the World Bank in 1997. He supervised the World Links' program in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, and Senegal, working with ministries of education, policymakers, school administrations, teachers, and students. His research interests include violence and trauma in African literatures.



**Title:** African Literature: Violence and Conflict Management

**Abstract:** The prime aim of African literatures of violence is to unveil the mechanisms which lead to the victims' loss of their historical perspective and sense of humanity. The writings of Laguma and Fugard are counter-discourse to violence as a set of political, ideological, cultural, and discursive strategies. Their works go beyond the mimetic representations of violence to understand the performative mechanisms that oppressors use to control their victims. The collection of literature of violence under consideration is out to deconstruct the discourse of violence in its various forms and substance.

Thus, by unmasking the oppressors' discursive strategies which allow them to mystify and manipulate their victims, the literature of violence functions as a two-edged sword that deconstructs the language of oppression, sheds light on issues of structural violence, and at the same time, subverts tyrannical rule. If the language of oppression is removed, the new resultant narrative that develops as a result of the subsequent conflict is fundamentally different from the original, both in structure and in purpose. Thus, the challenge in fictionalizing violence is less to re-present violence than to unmask the oppressors' political and discursive strategies, and the ongoing effect and impact of post-colonialism.

Thus, implied in the literatures of violence are suggestions to put an end to the infernal cycles of violence throughout the continent. In that regard, our paper will show how the literature of violence fits in a

conflict management approach that addresses the root causes, issues, types, sources, and outcomes of violence. This two-pronged approach to the literature of violence allows a systematic analysis of the conflicts it dramatizes and the literary techniques used in that endeavor. For that reason, it has proven efficacious in teaching modules on South Africa in our World Literatures and African Literatures Programs.

**3:15 – 3:45 PM**

**Solomon Negash** is an associate professor of Information Systems in the College of Science and Mathematics, Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at Kennesaw State University (KSU). His research focuses on classroom technology, technology transfer, and knowledge management. He has published over a dozen journal papers, edited book, several book chapters, and over three dozen conference proceedings. His research contribution has earned him the 2007 distinguished intellectual contribution award at KSU. Dr. Negash has over 20 years of industry experience working as a manager, consultant, and systems analyst; managed large projects and grants. His teaching area builds on his industry experience focusing on project management, systems analysis, and application development. His innovative online teaching methods have earned him the 2005 and 2007 distinguished e-Learning award at KSU. Dr. Negash earned his Ph.D. in Information Systems from Claremont Graduate University; in addition he holds three masters degrees including information systems, MBA, and mechanical engineering from Claremont Graduate University, Pepperdine University, and California State University—Pomona, respectively. His passion for teaching and ability to bring real world experience to the classroom has earned him the 2007 distinguished graduate teacher award at KSU. Dr. Negash is active in global initiatives. He is the recipient of the International Goodwill and Understanding award for his efforts in promoting education in Africa. His research on technology transfer and e-Learning bridges the knowledge gap between high-income and low-income countries. He served as coordinator for the Information Systems PhD program at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; co-director of an initiative for African higher education to advance development; founder and first chairman of the Ethiopian Information and Communication Technology advisory body, and founder of a charitable organization that has delivered over 350,000 books and 3,000 computers to Ethiopian colleges and libraries. As a result of his professional and community service Dr. Negash was featured in the December 2006 Georgia Trends Magazine and nominated for the 2008 and 2010 Distinguished Service award at KSU.



**Title:** An African PhD Program in Information Systems: The Case of Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

**Abstract:** This case study is about the first Information Systems PhD program in Ethiopia and the region, a collaborative effort of thirteen universities around the globe. Fifteen faculty members traveled to Ethiopia to launch the program for classes, which will start in 2009. This paper depicts the program design and program development and an outline of the overall program. The authors share their personal experience in the development of this unique IS PhD program.

**3:50 – 4:20 PM**

**Lucie Viakinnou-Brinson** is originally from Benin (West Africa). She holds a B.A in English literature, masters degrees in French and in English literature and a Ph.D in French and Educational Studies from Emory University, Atlanta, GA. She envisions the classroom as a learning community where students are encouraged to learn from each other's experiences and are challenged to thrive and blossom linguistically and cognitively in a cooperative, nurturing and supportive environment. Her areas of research include: Second Language Pedagogy, French, Francophone African and Caribbean literatures and cultures.

**Title:** Contextualizing the Teaching of Africa in the 21st century: A pluralistic Pedagogical Approach to Demystify Africa as the “Heart of Darkness”

**Abstract:** Despite the advances in technology and the growing role of the media in attempting to present Africa in a more sophisticated light, there remains a wide spread “Afro ignorance” among American students concerning Africa. As we move in the new millennium and have to contend with an increasingly globalized world, it becomes imperative and even more urgent, to combat stereotypical and pessimistic views of Africa. In this paper, I will show how I draw from personal experiences as an African student in American Universities, including my first encounter with Joseph’s Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and subsequently as a Professor of French and Francophone literature and culture, to incorporate in my classes balanced images of Africa and to foster deeper understanding, connections, and appreciation of its literature, its culture and its people. I will present literary and cultural activities conducted for beginning, intermediate and advanced French classes as well as students’ reflective comments on such activities. Some of the literary activities include parallel teaching of African and European texts, for instance *Souffrance ou l’épopée mandingue* and *La Chanson de Roland*, *La Fontaine’s* fables and African tales. Some of the cultural activities include asking students to enter the culture of the “other” through writing activities such as letters, interviews, and children’s books. Lastly, I will demonstrate how global simulation in an African context can be used as a pedagogical tool to expand students’ knowledge of Africa.

**4:25 PM, Concluding Remarks:** Brandon D. Lundy

**4:30 PM, Reception**