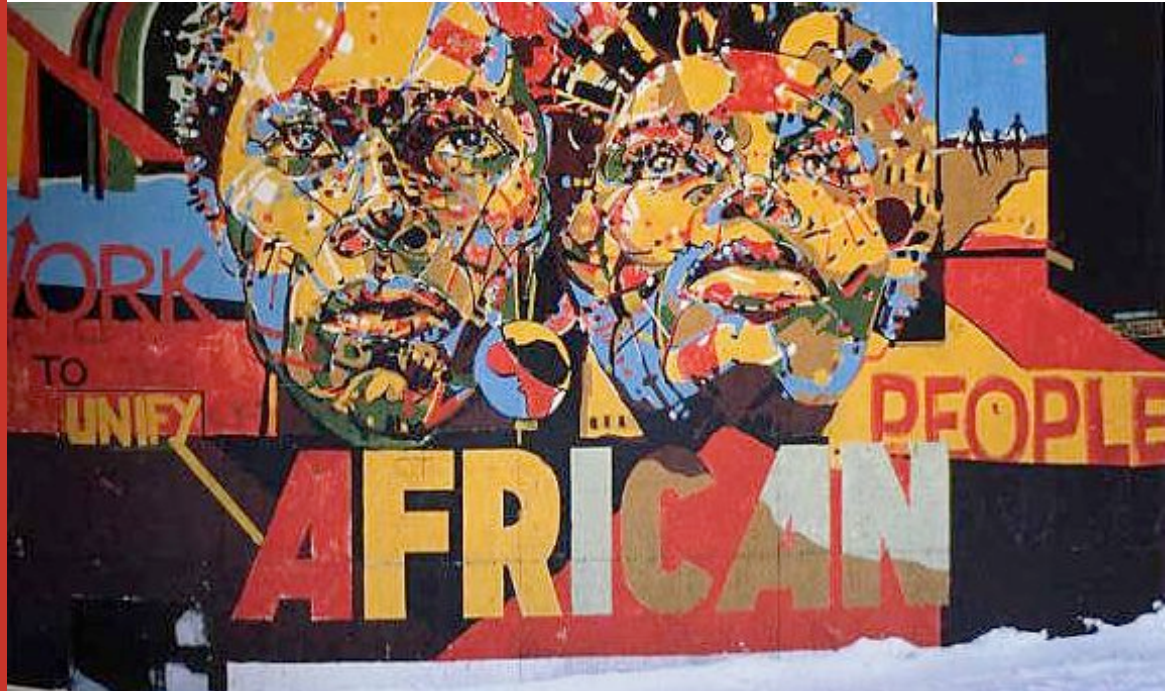


# AFRICANA NEWSLETTER

Department of African and African-American Studies (AAAS) @ The University of Kansas

Fall 2009



Mural by Nelson Stevens

## In This Issue:

Message from the Chair	2
Departmental News	2
Faculty News	3 - 4
Other Noteworthy News	4
Student News	4 - 5
News from Allied Centers	5

## About AAAS @ KU

We are where Africa, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East meet.

Founded in 1970, the Department of African and African-American Studies seeks to educate students to function in a multicultural environment and in a global community. In pursuing this goal, our Department contributes in vital ways to the University of Kansas' general education requirements, providing undergraduates throughout the College as well as in other schools with courses through which they can deepen their knowledge and enrich their understanding of the history, culture and experience of African people in Africa as well as the peoples of African descent in the Americas. Our undergraduate and graduate programs recognize the centrality of Africans to the initial establishment of these United States and the continuing significance of their descendants to the nation's social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual growth and vigor. These realities our Department teaches as integral to the American experience. Our programs (minor, BA, BGS, Graduate Certificate, and MA) also seek to impart a sound knowledge of Africa and its diaspora in the Americas as a necessary, specialized preparation for effective leadership and service both domestically and internationally.

Our faculty conducts research that not only enhances our teaching of Africana but also establishes KU's leadership in Africana studies locally, nationally and internationally. Ours is the only department of its kind at a public or private University in Kansas and among the Big XII institutions. We provide general service and a specialized interdisciplinary blending of research and teaching that are critically germane to understanding the universality of human intellection, emotion, and development from a pan-Africanist perspective. Though our Department is situated within the humanities in the College, our academic wings are large enough to span a multitude of fields in the humanities, the social sciences and some professional schools. Our allied Centers, the Kansas African Studies Center, the Langston Hughes Center, the Institute of Haitian Studies, and the Africana Leadership Institute, help strengthen our centrality to KU's mission.

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## Message from the Chair: Dr. Peter Ukpokodu

Since the last newsletter, the Department has tried to meet the challenges brought by state budget cuts. Our faculty and staff have been generous with their time and expertise, and have taken on additional unpaid responsibilities to preserve the quality of what we do while keeping quantifiable loss to a minimum. We had to reduce or cancel some of our courses and the Langston Hughes Center is yet to be fully established. It is heartening that under these tough economic times, we have been able to welcome our newest faculty member, Dr. Anthony Bolden, and to reopen our KiSwahili faculty search. We admitted our first graduate students this Fall, and our proposal for a new concentration in Arabic and Islamic Studies is pending approval by the Kansas Board of Regents. Professor Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones) delivered the 2009 Marwa Africana Lecture at which the Nigerian Ambassador to South Africa (with authority over Lesotho and Swaziland) was the guest of honor. Our students will still have the opportunity to study abroad in Ghana, Morocco, and South Africa, and to pursue internship opportunities in the US. We are grateful to all our donors and sponsors whose generosity has enabled us to give scholarships and to perform other tasks. The Depart-



### Departmental News:

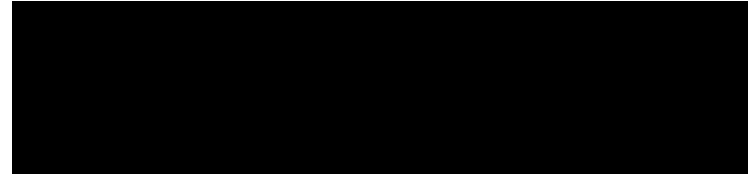
**Tony Bolden** -- The Department of African & African-American Studies welcomes Tony Bolden to its faculty. Dr. Bolden, an Associate Professor of AAAS, earned his Ph.D from Louisiana State University in 1998. He is also a graduate of Dillard University (BA in English) and the University of Iowa (MA Afro-American Studies). Before joining the faculty of the University of Kansas, Professor Bolden

taught at the University of Alabama, Dillard University, and the University of Iowa.

Professor Bolden's research and writing interests are in the areas of African American literature, music, dance, and popular culture. His publications include, *Afro-Blue: Improvisations in African American Poetry and Culture* (The University of Illinois Press, 2004) and *The Funk Era and Beyond: New Perspectives on Black Popular Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). He has also published original works of poetry and has conducted a number of interviews, including one of Yusef Komunyakaa for *Furious Flower II: The Black Poetic Tradition -- Toward the 21st Century*.

**Inaugural AAAS M.A. Class** -- On January 15, 2009, the Kansas Board of Regents approved the establishment of a Masters of Arts degree program in African & African-American Studies at the University of Kansas. The Program began in the Fall of 2009 with our inaugural class of students. Pictured in the right

ment invites our benefactors to establish endowed scholarships in their names or in honor of others. The Department is planning its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary for next academic year; the Kansas African Studies Center is preparing for the next Title VI grant application, the Langston Hughes Center is laying foundations for research and outreach activities, and the Africana Leadership Institute is planning and recruiting for its next workshops. I want to express our sincere gratitude to our colleagues, Cedric Rowan and Sami Seraj, for their dedication to duty while they were with us, and to wish them success in their future endeavors. I thank Dr. Shawn Alexander and Ms. Lisa Brown for making this edition of the newsletter possible.



column, left to right, are the students: Devon Lee (B.S., University of California, Davis); Elizabeth Brickson (B.G.S., University of Kansas); Hassan Bailey (B.A., University of Kansas); and Alexandra Fuller (B.S., University of Tennessee).

The African and African-American Studies M. A. program is designed to take two years of full-time study. A total of nine graduate courses, in addition to a thesis or additional course work for a non-thesis

option, are required for the degree -- 33 credit hours in all. There are four core courses, Introduction to Africana Studies I: African-American;

Introduction to Africana Studies II: African; Research Methods in Africana Studies; and Seminar in Africana Studies. The students are then expected to choose five courses (fifteen credit hours) within their area of specialization. Students are able to take six credit hours outside of the Department in related course offerings including, among others: American Studies, Anthropology, Art, Communications, Economics, Education, English, Geography, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Religion, Sociology, Theater, Film, Law, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies.



## Faculty News:

**Tony Bolden**, Associate Professor of AAAS, published an edited volume, *The Funk Era and Beyond: New Perspectives on Black Popular Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

"*The Funk Era and Beyond* is the first scholarly collection to discuss funk music in America and delve into the intricate and complex nature of the word and its accompanying genre.



While pleasure and performance are often presumed to be mutually exclusive of intellectuality, funk offers immense possibilities for a new critical rubric. As these writings demonstrate, funk is reflected in myriad forms and context and has been the catalyst for stylistic innovation. Contributors employ a multitude of methodologies to examine this

unique musical field's relationship to African American culture and to music, literature, and visual art as a whole."

In addition to editing the collection, Professor Bolden contributed two original pieces, "Theorizing the Funk: An Introduction" and "Blue/Funk as Political Philosophy: The Poetry of Gil Scott-Heron."

**Majid Hannoum**, Assistant Professor of AAAS and Anthropology, has completed a book, entitled *Violent Modernity: France in Algeria*, which is set to appear in Spring 2010 on Harvard University Press. Professor Hannoum also published two articles, "Notes on the (Post)Colonial in the Maghreb" in *Critique of Anthropology* and "The Harraga of Tangier" in *Encounters: International Journal for the Study of Culture and Society*, and one book chapter, "The (Re) Turn of the Native: Ethnography, Anthropology, and Nativism" in *The Anthropologist and the Native: Essays for Gananath Obeyesekere*. In addition, Professor Hannoum delivered a paper at the Caribbean Philosophical Association, entitled "The Harraga of Tangier" and is co-organizing an international conference called "Why Do We Migrate? Interdisciplinary Exploration of Human Migration," which will be held at KU in March 2010.

**Beverly B. Mack**, Professor of AAAS, is currently interviewing Muslim women who have been KU students for an on-going research project on definitions of knowledge of Islam. She has also been invited to present a paper at a conference at Rutgers University on the Yan Taru Muslim women extension teachers in the United States. Professor Mack also helped organize a presentation of Rumi's poetry, "Under the Spell of Rumi," with Pardis Haghdoost, which took place at KU on November 7.

**Dorthy Pennington**, Associate Professor of AAAS and Communications, was one of five women scholars in communication whose scholarship was recognized and discussed on a panel titled "Discourses of Stability and

Change: Women of Color in the Field of Pedagogy, Intercultural and Rhetorical Communication" at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, held November 12-15, 2009.

Professor Pennington also presented papers titled "Personal Identity and Religious Symbolism in 'Crisis Race' Speeches: An Analog Between Booker T. Washington and Barack Obama," and "Five Years Out: Navigating the Tensions Between Stability and Change in Black/African American Scholarship." She also served as chair and respondent to the panel titled "Back Down Memory Lane: Explorations of Absence, Presence, and Institutional Memory," a panel that explored African American public communication in terms of convergence, and parrhesia in black comedy.

**Garth Myers**, Professor of AAAS and Geography and Director of KASC, has a Humanities Research Fellowship from the Hall Center for the Humanities for Fall 2009 and will be on sabbatical in Spring 2010 to work on a book, tentatively entitled *African Cities: Alternative Visions of Theory and Practice*.



**Gitti Salami**, Assistant Professor of AAAS and Art History, has received a Smithsonian Postdoctoral Fellowship at the National Museum of African Art and the National Museum of Natural History, where she will take up residence from January to August 2010, to work on a monograph on Yakurr culture (Nigeria).

**Elizabeth MacGonagle**, Associate Professor of AAAS and History, completed an essay (co-authored with Kim Warren) on identities and encounters between African Americans and West Africans. It will be published in the edited volume, *African Hosts and Their Guests: Cultural Dynamics of Tourism in Africa*. Professor MacGonagle also presented a paper on "Imagining the Past at Great Zimbabwe" at the African Studies Association meeting in November 2009. In addition, she is writing a related essay that will appear in an edited volume titled *Memory, Public History, and Representations of the Past: Africa and Its Diasporas*. This work is part of a larger book project that examines intersections between history and

memory at several UNESCO World Heritage Sites on the African continent.

**Shawn Leigh Alexander**, Assistant Professor of AAAS, published an essay, "Vengeance Without Justice, Injustice Without Retribution: The Afro-American Council's Struggle Against Racial Violence" in an edited volume, *African Americans on the Great Plains*. He also participated on two panels entitled, "New Negroes in a New Light: Black Activism in the Upper South, 1918-1929" and "Re-examination of Black Leadership in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. In addition, Professor Alexander is completing his manuscript, *We Know Our Rights and Have the Courage to Defend Them: African American Civil Rights Organizations in the Age of Accommodation, 1883-1909*, for the University of Pennsylvania Press.

## Other Noteworthy News:

### 2009 Marwa Africana Lecture

On November 3, 2009, Amiri Baraka, poet, playwright, novelist, music critic, and political activist, presented the fourth Marwa Africana Lecture. His lecture was entitled "Racism, Imperialism, and the Obama Presidency: Lecture & Poetry Readings." The guest of honor was Dr. Mohamed Buba Marwa, the Nigerian Ambassador to South Africa, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

**The Marwa Africana Lecture Series (MALS):** Established in 2003 through a generous donation by Dr. Mohamed Buba Marwa, a Nigerian businessman, politician, and philanthropist, MALS brings in a speaker annually to address matters related to Africa and/or the African Diaspora.

Previous speakers in the Marwa Africana Lecture Series have been: Martin Bernal, (2008), Molefi K. Asante, (2005), and Ali Mazrui, (2004).

### Africana Leadership Institute

The Center for Black Leadership (CBL) is inviting applications for admission to the 2010 Africana Leadership Institute (ALI) at the University of Kansas from May 18-27, 2010.

The ALI is a two-week workshop designed in the form of a roundtable where current and aspiring leaders in the public and private sectors and in various fields are brought together to discuss and learn matters related to Africana leadership, especially in African countries north and south of the Sahara, and the Caribbean. The workshop explores leadership and discusses governance from multiple perspectives—educational, civil, legislative, judicial, economic, environmental, health, religious, and municipal—especially as they adapt to a multicultural and global world. Matters

related to ethics, social justice, accountability, transparency, and good governance in these various spheres will be addressed.

The Institute is open to legislators, public service personnel, department heads in private and public sectors, educational leaders (deans, department heads, registrars, deputy registrars, school principals), city leaders, local government council chairmen and chairwomen, state attorneys and judges, religious leaders, business leaders, law enforcement agents, officials of customs and immigration, health care providers at the senior management level, state commissioners, board leaders, and leaders of political parties at the local government and state levels.

Participants will visit the Kansas State Legislative Assembly and observe legislators at work if they are in session, visit the Governor's mansion in Topeka, the Kansas City Mayor, the Dole Institute of Politics, the Museum of Natural History, the Boeing Aircraft Corporation of Wichita, Pendleton Farms of Lawrence, the Lawrence Memorial Hospital, and the Kansas State University School of Agriculture. The Institute thus matches discussion with practical observation.

Registration deadline is January 30, 2010. For more details go to <http://www2.ku.edu/~afs/ali/index.shtml>

## Student and Alumni News:

**Arabic Summer Institute** -- Dr. Naima Boussofara led AAAS and KU students to the Arabic Summer Institute at Al-Akawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, in June 2009. Apart from studying Arabic intensively, the students visited interesting sites in Casablanca, Marakesh, Meknes, and Fes.

**Darnell Jackson**, who earned his bachelor's degree in AAAS, recently visited Lawrence to work with and encourage kids at the Boys and Girls Club. Darnell currently plays in the NBA with the Cleveland Cavaliers.

**Derrais A. Carter**, an alum of the program and currently a graduate student in American Studies at the University of Iowa, attended the Association for the Study of African American Life and History annual convention and presided over a panel on Black Popular Culture.

**Elizabeth "Libby" Brickson**, who graduated with honors from our program last year, is currently pursuing an MA degree in AAAS at KU. During the Fall term she attended the annual convention of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in Cincinnati, OH.

## Africana Club

The Africana Club is a social and intellectual gathering of AAAS majors and minors, and of students interested in Africa, African-America, and the African Diaspora in general. It is also affiliated with the Global Awareness Program (GAP). As an active member of the Africana Club, a student could receive 5 points per semester and an additional 5 points for each event that the student participates in. Officials of the club represent students in departmental matters.

For more information please contact the club at [africana@ku.edu](mailto:africana@ku.edu)

**AAAS would like to hear from its students and alumni!**

**Please send us news about yourself to:**

[afs@ku.edu](mailto:afs@ku.edu)

## News from our Allied Centers

### Kansas African Studies Center (KASC)

**Glenn Adams, Acting Director and Associate Professor of Psychology.**

This semester has been a busy one at the KASC as we prepare our proposal for the next cycle of the Title VI National Resource Center funding competition. Amid the buzz of grant renewal activity, we have maintained our commitment to provide a dynamic intellectual space for discussions of things African. In October, we hosted an Africa Trade and Development Conference, papers from which will appear in a special issue of the Journal of African Development co-



edited by Elizabeth Asiedu and Mohamed El-Hodiri. Our Fall 2009 seminar series focused on the theme of "Resources and Social Justice", including presentations on economic policy and food security in West Africa (William Moseley, Macalester

College), competing constructions of "piracy" in Somalia (Abdi Samatar, University of Minnesota), and HIV support groups in Northern Nigeria (by our new colleague in the KU Department of Anthropology, Kathryn Rhine).

For more information about KASC including programming and scheduling go to <http://www.kasc.ku.edu/>

### Langston Hughes Center (LHC)

**Shawn Leigh Alexander, Interim Director and Assistant Professor of AAAS.**

The Langston Hughes Center (LHC), formerly the Langston Hughes Resource Center, relaunched its activities at the University of Kansas and throughout the region in 2008-2009. In its first year as a revived center, the LHC co-sponsored a seminar series with KASC, "Come to Africa and It's Here: African Americans and Africa," held a nationally recognized symposium in February 2009, *Fight for Freedom: A Century of the NAACP and the Struggle for Racial Equality* and sponsored eight brownbag presentations throughout the year.

This Fall the LHC continued its Jesse B. Semple Brownbag series with three lectures, "Forging an American Pluralism: The Mexican Revolution and American Civil Rights" (Ruben Flores, KU), "Remembering John Hope Franklin, Ronald Takaki, and Kenneth Stampp" (David Katzman, KU), and "Rights, Race, and Recognition" (Derrick Darby, KU).

The Center is currently working with African Americanists and scholars generally interested in the study of race and culture in American society at KU to outline the future activities of the LHC. Central to those activities will be the LHC's commitment to becoming a strong academic research and educational center built upon the legacy and creative and intellectual insight of African American author, poet, playwright, folklorist and social critic, Langston Hughes. The Center's director will work with African Americanists at KU to seek grants and funding to carry out these activities.

For more information about the LHC including programming and scheduling go to <http://www2.ku.edu/~lhcaas/>

**If you are receiving this newsletter via mail and would like to receive it electronically, please contact AAAS and provide us with your email address.**

[afs@ku.edu](mailto:afs@ku.edu)

# Support AAAS

## Why support African and African-American Studies @ KU?

By giving to AAAS, you contribute to the continued development of African and African-American academic activities, outreach, lectures, seminars and research programs at KU and throughout the region. You also strengthen our international outreach.

Your donations will also aid in supporting student scholarships, faculty research, teaching awards, service awards, and overall improvement of the Department.

To support AAAS please send your donation, clearly marked for the **Department of African and African-American Studies**, to the following address:

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Lawrence, KS 66044-0928

or go to: <https://www.kuendowment.org/GiveNow/> and select AAAS as the destination of your donation.

**Thank you for your support.**



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