



THE DRUMMER

Newsletter of the Africana Studies Program

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<http://www.as.miami.edu/africanastudies/>

From the Desk of

Dr. Edmund Abaka, Director of Africana Studies

Africana Studies provides an excellent opportunity for students to learn about continental Africa and the experiences of people of African descent in the Black Atlantic societies of North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Europe. Africana Studies courses explore the multifaceted political, economic, social, and cultural traditions of Africans and peoples of African descent.

The program provides rigorous training to students who are considering admission to graduate school, professional careers in education, journalism, law, management, politics and social work.

The Africana Studies program currently offers courses in African history, African-American History, Caribbean Studies, African-American literature, American studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Musicology, Art and Art History among others. The name of the program has been changed from Afro-American Studies to Africana Studies. While African-America is still the core, the larger African Diaspora as a new frontier of scholarship and research is our focus as we continue to build and expand the program. We are not doing anything different other than recognizing the fact that our work is in actual fact already cast in the context of the African Diaspora. Additionally, the broader field is rife with cutting-edge research by scholars as exemplified by numerous symposia, conferences and papers over the last few years.

A National Council of Black Studies (the national professional organization of scholars of Black studies) task force report notes that "The variety of labels under which Africana Studies is conducted generally reflects different areas of concentration." The terms Africana, Black Studies, Afro-American, African-American Studies etc. have all been used respectively to describe the field.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	3/1	3/2	3/3	3/4

Schedule of Events

- **January through May**
Book Exhibition "Blacks in Florida" at Ground floor of Richter Library
- **January 20th through February 23rd**
Charles H. Nelson's Invisible Man Art Exhibition at the College of Arts and Science Gallery
- **February 10th at 7pm** "Black Art, Black Existence" Talk by Dr. Lewis Ricardo Gordon at Temple University
- **February 22nd at 7pm** "[African/World] Art and/in Education" Talk by Gene Tinnie at College of Arts and Science Gallery.
- **March 2nd at 7:00pm**
"The Legacy of the Solomic Dynasty of Ethiopia" Talk by Prince Ermias Sahle-Sellase Haile Sellase at the University Center, I-Lounge, 2nd Floor.

Ten Reasons Why You Should Major or Minor in Africana Studies

1. Expand career opportunities. Ken Burn's career in making documentaries on Jazz and Jack Johnson illustrates such a possibility. Mr. Ken Burn's film career illustrates the unlimited possibilities available to students who study Africana studies as majors or minors. Mr. Burns screened a documentary on the life of Jack Johnson on PBS. Think about what you can do with your major or minor in Africana Studies. A lot of Africana Studies majors and minors have

employers who are seeking graduates who can think critically and who also have an intercultural perspective.

2. Increase your understanding of the United States and the world. We can no longer afford to rely only on the embedded news media to tell us what we should know about our communities in the United States. Changing demographics in the U.S. dictates that we must acquire a cultural competence and appreciation of diversity in the

United States. While Africana Studies can be a vital link to being culturally competent about the United States, it is also an integral part of intercultural relations competence.

3. Broaden your experience by learning about the culture of Africans and people of African descent who have been an integral part of the United States from its inception.

4. Understanding Africans and people of African descent from

Ten Reasons Why You Should Major or Minor in Africana Studies

their own point of view. Increase your cultural literacy by learning about people from different backgrounds and cultures different from yours. Classes in Africana studies will introduce you to issues which you will deal with in life and work. An Africana Studies major or minor will help you to understand Africans and people of African descent. It will challenge you to change, and give you opportunities to become an informed person who is sensitive to cultural issues, and it would make you a better human being as you rid yourself of old views formed under the condition of insularity.

5. Increase your income potential. A major or minor in Africana Studies on your resume will definitely give you a competitive edge. As some national and state institutions have legal mandates to serve African Diaspora communities and as businesses are trying to increase their market shares many of these institutions are looking for competent professionals with the cultural competence to deal with the African Diaspora community efficiently.

6. Explore new interests. Talk to your advisers, administrators, and students who have had exposure to Africana Studies and people of African descent.

7. Learn about specific issues related to your career, Blacks and the law, Blacks and the Media, Blacks and the Criminal Justice System. In the future as we expand our program offerings you will have opportunities to learn African languages and study abroad in Africa.

8. Gain new perspectives on imminent events while enjoying new relationships. By breathing and consuming African Diaspora culture through studying its diverse composition you will begin to understand the complexity of

the American experience.

9. Integrate with a dynamic world of Africans in Central and Latin America. While African Americans represent 13% of the total population of the United States, over 600 hundred million Africans reside on the continent of Africa. A good understanding and interactions with the African Diaspora through literature, history, social and political writings, and understanding of the African Diaspora culture will fully integrate you into the larger and dynamic world of Africans in the South and Central Americas, Asia, South Pacific, and the Caribbean.

10. Discover what you want to do with your life. Study in Africa, the home of humanity, for a semester. Join the Peace Corps in Africa after your graduation. Many students who have had experiences studying and living in Africa have reported that it was a life transforming experience which opened to them many new career choices.

(Adapted from mail sent by Abdul Salau

“Discover what you want to do with your life...”



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Community Outreach

Opa-Locka, Black Archives
Ponce de Leon Middle School

Martin Luther King Junior Excellence
Awards February 25th 2006

For more information on any IDS program
please visit
<http://www.as.miami.edu/africanastudies/>

Representations, Roles, and Realities: Women's lives in Benin, West Africa

By: Cecily K. Dennis

Women learn about their gender ascribed responsibilities through a variety of mechanisms including religious education, observations of popular culture, and most importantly learning from their mothers. In some instances, women's idealized roles are difficult to carry out in reality. In this project, I examine the various ways that gender ideology, representations, and reality are connected in a West African context. My central question is: What is the relationship between the representation of women in popular culture (magazines, television, movies, news media, music), religious iconography, the ideas women maintain about their duties to the society in which they live and the reality of

women's daily activities? I examine these relationships through assessment of popular culture outlets (e.g. television, magazines, news, etc.), identification of women's beliefs about their idealized roles, and discussions with women about their daily lives. I draw on interviews with Beninois women about their perceptions of their idealized roles relative to the reality of their daily lives. In addition, I use participant observation of popular culture including collecting magazines and relevant newspaper articles to examine representations of women. Through critical discourse analyses of these, I examine how the gender ideology and women's realities are changing in Benin. This topic is important

because as women are (re)constructed, their responsibilities become ambiguous and/or fluid, creating opportunities for redefinition.

