

DePaul University  
SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING

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**AFRICAN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM : IN 307: ADVANCED ELECTIVE SEMINAR**

Spring, 2009, Loop Campus, **Wednesdays, 6.00-9.00 pm Lewis**

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**Description:**

The aim of this **Advanced Elective Seminar** is to study one of the world's invaluable sources of **Knowledge and Wisdom: the African Indigenous formation tradition**. We shall explore the meanings that Indigenous people give to **knowledge and wisdom**. We will have the opportunity to see the world through their lens: **a holistic worldview that sees all of life and ALL that is as Inter-connected and Inter-dependent**.

Through a documented case study of one of the ethnic groups of Tanzania, East Africa, the course will gradually **walk** students through several fundamental cultural vessels seen by these people as transmitters of knowledge and wisdom, namely: **stories, proverbs, riddles, music, dance, rituals, role playing, and art. The awesome and profound reflections of Sobonfu Some will season the case study in a way that gives students a taste of indigenous knowledge and wisdom from two corners of Africa: East Africa and West Africa**. Students are invited to see this as a journey through Africa in which they are called forth to fully engage themselves with the people and with the cultures that they meet.

Students taking this Seminar will deepen their experience of life as **holistic and inter-connected**. In fact, all indigenous cultures have always understood life and all that is as such, so this will be a unique opportunity for each one in the class to remember and reclaim this life enhancing and cosmic sustaining dimension of life.

Throughout the seminar the professor and students will dig into this indigenous well of knowledge and wisdom so that armed with new findings and insights they may experience life as harmonious and holistic. In the final analysis the seminar will sharpen the abilities of students to: analyze new findings and insights from a global perspective; appreciate the power of stories, proverbs, riddles, music, dance, art and rituals in the transmission of culture and values; and assist them to translate these timely and timeless emerging values into their own spiritual development.

**Competences Offered: E1 and E2 Competences:**

The Advanced Elective Competences will reflect the holistic and inter-connected nature of living in Indigenous Africa. Students will be able to demonstrate superior knowledge and understanding of the formative power of story telling, proverbs, riddles, music, dance, rituals and art and thus be able to appreciate the intimate and inseparable link between knowledge and wisdom.

**E-1: Can understand the indigenous worldview of knowledge and wisdom as inter-related, and how knowledge and wisdom are passed on from generation to generation.**

**E-2: Can relate the new findings and insights to other cultures and experiences and identify universal values that are timeless and yet timely; can demonstrate how values and culture are handed on from generation to generation and from culture to culture, and can translate the new findings, insights and wisdom into their own spiritual life and that of others.**

### **Expected Outcomes:**

Upon the successful completion of the seminar, learners will have:

- **a good grasp of the African Indigenous Worldview**
- **a keen awareness of the view in this and other indigenous cultures that knowledge and wisdom are inseparable;**
- **a profound respect for the interconnectedness of all that is;**
- **a great appreciation of stories, proverbs, music, rituals and art;**
- **an opportunity to apply these findings to their spiritual development;**
- **a new awakening to values that are timeless and timely in our times;**
- **a renewed respect and appreciation for all cultures and worldviews.**

### **Learning Strategies:**

Students will have the opportunity to explore a variety of sources in order to achieve the Expected Outcomes: **study and reflection of required books; readings on e-reserves at the DePaul University Library website; engaging actively in class discussions and proceedings; a visit or visits to: the Timbuktu Shrine on 1919 Irving Park Road, and the “Africana Center” in the Northwestern University Library; The Art Institute of Chicago; one-to-one sessions with the professor; four short academic/reflective papers (3 or more pages); a class presentation in groups or as an individual; and a final Integrating Paper (about 5 pages) as will be directed later in this syllabus and in class. Your presentation will be a one-page summary of one of the four short papers.**

### **Required Learning Tools:**

All books listed below are available at any large bookstore. They can also be purchased from Amazon.com or bc.com (Barnes and Noble), and from the Loop Campus Bookstore.

1. R.Sambuli Masha, *The Heartbeat of Indigenous Africa*. New York: Taylor and Francis Publishers, 2000. (your prof. in this Elective Seminar).
2. Sobonfu Some. *The Spirit of Intimacy. Ancient Teachings in the Way of Relationships*. N.Y. William Morrow and Co., 1999. (Sobonfu is from Burkina Faso in West Africa.)

### Evidence and Criteria for Evaluation:

**Class Attendance and active participation** in discussion and other activities **are mandatory**. There is no substitute to a missed in-class experience. An absence will be excused on condition that the instructor is informed before class or soon after, followed by an **official document substantiating the absence**. Any other absence will result in a **loss of five (5) points for the first one, an additional 5 points for a second one, and a failure of the course in case of a third absence**. Also please come to class in time as **tardiness is unacceptable**.

**Participate fully in discussion and other class activities; and make use of the opportunity to meet one-to-one with the instructor as will be planned during the quarter.**

### FOUR SHORT ACADEMIC/REFLECTION PAPERS: (a min. of 900 words)

1. SHORT PAPER ONE: Select one of the four aspects of the African Indigenous worldviews, study it, reflect on it, and enriched by class discussion and your own life experience, **highlight new findings and insights**, and relate it to your own life and life long learning commitment. Throughout this paper and **all papers written for this Seminar**, be systematic and scholarly, making references to literary and non-literary materials and making the **appropriate acknowledgements of all sources used**. **Due, Wed. April 15<sup>th</sup>, 09.**
  
2. SHORT PAPER TWO: Select two key agents/mentors/players in your childhood growing experience and reflect on how they helped you to acquire knowledge and wisdom. Relate your reflections to the two texts and other sources whenever relevant, making the appropriate acknowledgements. Examples are: **mother, father, grandparent, uncle, a religious leader, a friend of the family, a mentor, a teacher or another key person in your childhood or early schooling**. **Discuss with professor before making a selection. This paper is due on We. April 29, 09. (a minimum of 450 words per selection).**
  
3. SHORT PAPER THREE: Design a 30 minute talk to High School Juniors on how they can grow up to be **good and responsible citizens**. Use one of the following as a means of making them understand your point and your intention to reach their minds and hearts: **story telling; proverbs; music; art; role playing; and rituals**. **Be sure to use a simple language they can understand. DO NOT USE THE LANGUAGE WE ARE USING IN CLASS. The language of Sobonfu is a good example, but even this language needs to be simplified. Remember: these are high school students! (minimum: 900 words)**  
**This paper is due on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 09.**

4. **SHORT PAPER FOUR:** Using the two texts, class discussion and your experience as references, **evaluate and critique** the educational program that you went through from K to 12. Answer questions like: How were you helped to acquire wisdom and spirituality? Were you prepared to be a good citizen? How? What were the strong points? What were the weaknesses? How would you change it or improve on it?  
**This paper is due on Wed. May 20<sup>th</sup>, 09. Min. 900 words.**

**A CLASS PRESENTATION IN THE LAST TWO SESSIONS:** Prepare a one-page summary of ANY OF THE FOUR SHORT PAPERS and present it to the class **either in a group or as an individual. Conclude your presentation with one or two main insights from the Final paper.**

**A FINAL INTEGRATION PAPER (A min. of 1500 words), due on the last day of class, Wed, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, highlighting, in a scholarly and reflective method, the main findings, insights and awakening moments** that have emerged for you from the entire Seminar experience. Your sources for this paper will be: **all readings; all class lectures, discussions, and activities; visits to various sites; your class presentation; and your reflection on all these. As your paper progresses, each of these sources MUST be acknowledged in the proper scholarly way. Append an annotated bibliography of all relevant sources.**

**ASSESSMENT AND GRADING:**

<b>1. Preparation, and active participation:</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>2. Attendance:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>3, Four Short Papers, each</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>4. Class Presentation:</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>5. Final Integrating Paper:</b>	<b>20%</b>

**GRADING STANDARDS:**

The instructor will use the following cut-off percentages and University grading standards when awarding points for student achievements on assignments and when assigning course grades:

<b>A</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Below 63%</b>

- A Accomplished the stated objective of the seminar in an EXCELLENT WAY.**  
**B Accomplished the stated objective of the seminar in a VERY GOOD WAY.**  
**C Accomplished the stated objective of the seminar in a SATISFACTORY WAY.**  
**D Accomplished the stated objective of the seminar in a POOR WAY.**

**F Did NOT accomplish the stated objective of the seminar.**

**IN Given only when there has been a written agreement between student and Instructor.**

**YOUR WRITTEN PAPERS:**

Please note that each of your written work is expected to meet the highest standards of writing. Papers must be well organized, systematic, and scholarly. Properly acknowledge other peoples' ideas and all sources. **EACH AND EVERY STATEMENT THAT YOU MAKE SHOULD BE TRACEABLE TO YOUR OWN REFLECTION, OR TO ANOTEHER LITERARY OR NON-LITERARY SOURCE.** Include in all your papers ample references to the required readings, to other sources, to your experience and to your reflection on all of them.

Please submit your hard copy papers in 12 font size, double spaced, pages numbered and stapled.

Each paper should have a cover page, which should include: DePaul University, SNL, Title of Course, name of quarter, date of submission; your name, phone numbers, email address; and **A CREATIVE TITLE FOR THE PAPER.**

Begin your paper with a proper **INRODUCTION**, in which you will identify your topic, your intention in the paper, and how you intend to achieve that intention. In the main body of the work, make good use of **SUBTITLES TO SHOW SUBSECTIONS OF YOUR WORK.**

End with a section clearly entitled **CONCLUSION**, in which you will highlight main findings and insights, lessons learned, and tentative resolutions.

Please read and re-read this section of the syllabus as you will read and re-read **EACH SECTION OF THIS SYLLABUS.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:**

This seminar will be conducted in accordance with the University's guidelines on academic integrity that may be found in the student handbook.

**CALENDAR/SESSIONS:** At the beginning of each class you will be given an outline/agenda for that session, including information on readings and activities to be done in preparation for the next session.

**SESSION ONE: Wed. April 1st, 2009:**

A class visit to the **TIMBUKTU SHRINE** at **1919 W. Irving Park Road**, Chicago. Please pay \$10.00 for the tour of the Shrine and explanation by the owner and Spiritual Director, Chief Khalilu of Sierra Leone, West Africa. Take the Brown Line from down town, get off at the Irving Park "L" station, and walk to 1919 W. Irving Park Road. Tour starts at 6.00 pm and ends at 9:00 pm. Each one of you should **select two different pieces of art** and get as much information as possible from the Chief, detailing from which country it comes from, its spiritual message and meaning. Each student should pay attention to the explanation being given to all other students. Chief Khalilu's phone: 773-665-4672. **PLEASE CALL CHIEF KHALILU BEFORE HAND SO HE KNOWS YOU WILL BE THERE ON THIS DATE.**

**SESSION TWO: Wed. April 8<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. Introduction to one another and to the Seminar
2. Discussion on Seminar goals and requirements
3. A brief introduction to the African continent
4. The African Indigenous worldview

**SESSION THREE: Wed. April 15<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. Knowledge and wisdom in Chaggaland, and the **ipvunda concept**.
2. **Key mentors, parents, g/parents, family, the community.**
3. **Handing on knowledge and wisdom: stories, proverbs, music, art, ritual,**
4. **Discussion in small groups**
5. **First Short Paper due.**

**SESSION FOUR: Wed. April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 09:**

1. The extensive use of **ritual**,
2. The place of role models, mentors, role playing in handing on the tradition.
3. Discussion in small groups.

**SESSION FIVE: Thu. Wed. April 29<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. Formation in integrity and responsibility: **Reverence, Self Control and Silence.**
2. **Discussion in small groups.**
3. **Second Short Paper due**

**SESSION SIX: Wed. May 6<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. Formation in integrity and responsibility: **Courage, Hard work and Communality.**
2. Discussion in small groups

**SESSION SEVEN: Wed. May 13<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. An evaluation and critique of our own educational experience
2. Discussions in small groups.
3. **Short Paper Three is due.**

**SESSION EIGHT: Wed, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 09:**

1. Designing and proposing an educational program that is more holistic, that forms students into responsible citizens, locally and globally.
2. Discussion in groups

**SESSION NINE: Wed. May 27, 09:**

1. **Presentations in class**
2. **Short Paper Four is due.**

**SESSIONS TEN: Wed. June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 09:**

1. **Remaining class presentations**
2. **Final Integration Paper is due.**
3. **Concluding the Seminar.**

**SESSION ELEVEN: Thu. Mar. 13, 2008:**

1. Remaining class presentations,
2. **Concluding the Seminar.**
3. **Hand in your final Integrating Paper.**

**INSTRUCTOR BIO:**

Raymond Sambuli Mosha, born and raised in Tanzania, East Africa, is currently teaching at the School for New Learning, DePaul University. He received a B.A. with a double major in Philosophy and Theology at Kipalapala Philosophy and Theology College in Tanzania; later got three M.A. degrees in **Theology**, **Education** and **Spirituality** from, respectively: Maryknoll School of Theology, New York; Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J.; and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pa. He also received a Ph.D. in **Philosophy** from Duquesne University.

Prof. Mosha has taught various interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate courses and seminars in Universities in Tanzania, Kenya, and in the USA at: Duquesne University; Xavier University in Cincinnati; Loyola University Chicago; Georgetown University in Washington D.C., and now at DePaul University. He enjoys teaching courses in these areas: Spirituality; African Indigenous Spirituality and Education; African Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom; Great World Thinkers; Christian and Non-Christian Spiritual Classics; Counseling and Spiritual Direction; Spirituality, Justice and Peace; Graduate and Undergraduate Research Seminars; and various courses in Theology, Faith and Religions. In 2000 he published *The Heartbeat of Indigenous Africa*, and currently he is working on a forthcoming book to be entitled: *The Pearls of Kilimanjaro-Chagga Proverbs*. In this book he will document over two hundred and fifty Chagga proverbs and articulate how each of them is a powerful instrument of handing on Knowledge and Wisdom in the experience of the Chagga people of Northern Tanzania. This year, his chapter on "The Spiritual Aspects of an International Adult Education Program" appeared in a book entitled *Handbook of Blended Shore Education*, published by Springer, N.Y., 2009.