

Film festival to highlight work of Nollywood's Femi Odugbemi

The Program of African Studies' Nollywood Working Group and Northwestern University's Block Museum of Art will cosponsor a Nollywood film festival on October 26–27. The event will highlight



the work of acclaimed Lagosian filmmaker Femi Odugbemi.

Long recognized as a film industry leader in Nigeria and beyond, Odugbemi has served as president of the Independent Television Producers Association of Nigeria (from 2002 to 2006) and chaired the Lagos International

Forum on Cinema, Motion Picture, and Video in Africa. He has been an Emmy Awards juror and served on film festival boards and juries in South Africa, Uganda, and Ghana.

Born in Lagos in 1963, Odugbemi traveled to the United States in 1979 to study film and television production at Montana State University. After receiving his BS in 1984, he worked as a

producer at a local TV station but grew increasingly uncomfortable with the derogatory representations of Africa and African culture that he saw in US media. Determined to counter these misrepresentations, Odugbemi returned to Nigeria, convinced that he must “live [the African] experience, not just carry its identity.” His return coincided with the economic devastation of Nigeria’s structural adjustment policies that, ironically,

spurred a resurgence in grassroots cultural production—including the birth of the Nigerian film industry that came to be known as Nollywood.

After his mandatory year in the National Youth Service Corporation, Odugbemi joined the staff of the Nigerian Television Authority, gaining experience in producing and directing a wide variety of programs. Since 1999 he has worked as an independent producer and director, and in 2008 he cofounded and coproduced *Tinsel*, a long-running Nigerian TV drama that remains one of sub-Saharan Africa’s most popular programs. He has also produced commercials and noteworthy Nollywood films, including *Maroko* (2006) and *Gidi Blues* (2016).

Making Odugbemi unique among Nigerian filmmakers are his documentaries. Works including *Ibadan—Cradle of Literati* (2009), *Bariga Boys* (2009), and *Literature, Language, and Literalism* (2013) range widely across the Nigerian cultural landscape, from the intellectual production of Ibadan-based writers and publishers, to Lagosian street performers, to the Yoruba novelist Daniel O. Fagunwa. Odugbemi’s documentaries have won numerous accolades, including best film at the 2009 Abuja International Film Festival and the 2010 US National Black Programming Consortium’s AFROPOP Prize for documentary.

In 2010 Odugbemi cofounded iRepresent International Documentary Film Forum, where he is also executive director. The forum’s conceptual theme of “Africa in self-conversation” drives its mission to use documentary film as a tool to foster sociocultural education and encourage participatory democracy in Nigeria and other African societies. At the 2016 festival, Odugbemi asserted that “documentary cinema is a tool for empowering new voices and new perspectives—a desirable ‘ideology’ embracing diverse voices and realities. It insists on reflection. It invites debate.” He passionately believes that the genre advocates responsibility, elevates accountability, defends human rights and freedoms, and exposes the vestiges of disease, poverty, and illiteracy.

More information about Northwestern’s Nollywood film festival will be available on the PAS website this fall.

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PAS cohosts lecture featuring music icon Thomas Mapfumo

By Stephen C. Hill

Zimbabwean music icon Thomas Mapfumo, together with University of California historian Mhoze Chikowero, will give a lecture and lead a discussion on April 7 at Northwestern that will highlight the role of music—especially the *Chimurenga* music Mapfumo developed—in Zimbabwe’s anticolonial struggle. Cosponsored by PAS and Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music, the event will precede a live performance the next evening by Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited at the Old Town School.

Born in 1945 in Marondera, Mashonaland East, in what was then Southern Rhodesia, Mapfumo spent his first 10 years in this rural district before his family moved to Mbare, a high-density black suburb of Salisbury (now Harare). By age 16, he was singing around Salisbury in bands playing covers of global pop hits, including those of Elvis, the Beatles, and Otis Redding. It was while fronting the Hallelujah Chicken Run Band that Mapfumo began integrating elements of the *mbira dza vadzimu* (Shona spirit-possession music) and *ngoma* (drum) traditions into an electric-pop band format. In addition to Euro-American pop styles and the *mbira* pieces, Mapfumo used sounds from South Africa, the region’s musical colossus.

Mapfumo coined “Chimurenga” to describe his *mbira*-inspired sound. The term relates to the Shona word for “struggle”—a label that came to be synonymous with the increasingly violent anti-Rhodesian rebellion of the 1970s. By the early 1980s, Mapfumo, with guitarist Joshua Dube, had fully integrated Shona *mbira* elements into *Chimurenga* music, and he sang almost completely in Shona. His band, the Blacks Unlimited, featured a full complement of Western pop instruments along with amplified *mbira dza vadzimu* and a rattle called *hosho*.

Mapfumo’s staunch musical opposition to the Rhodesian UDI government in the mid-1970s and his subsequent



Thomas Mapfumo, the “Lion of Zimbabwe”

ongoing antagonism toward Robert Mugabe’s independence government of Zimbabwe burnished his credibility among liberal scholars and Western world music fans as a musical revolutionary. This profile, combined with his eminently accessible and danceable pop musical style, won international fame for Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited during the 1980s and ’90s—including tours, festivals, recordings, and scholarly attention. At the same time, Mapfumo’s criticism of the increasingly autocratic Mugabe made life in Zimbabwe difficult.

By the late 1990s, Mapfumo and some of his bandmates moved to Eugene, Oregon, where he still lives. He received an honorary doctorate from Ohio University in 2001 for his contributions to music and his stature as “an icon and symbol for liberty and justice to the oppressed.” He was also the subject of at least three scholarly monographs and several articles. While his time in the world musical and scholarly limelight appears to have passed, his presence in the history of African music is assured.

Stephen C. Hill is senior associate director in the Office of Fellowships and an occasional lecturer in anthropology.

Students perform at Jabulani Culture Show

Assistant professor of instruction Michael Wairungu and his Swahili students performed the popular “Jambo Bwana” song and three more Swahili choruses at the African Student Association’s annual Jabulani Culture Show at Norris University Center in February. Performance groups at the show included another Swahili group along with the Unity Choir from Chicago’s Living Waters Community Church. Also performing were the Northwestern-based dance team Afro Thunder and two Chicago-based groups, Khalida’s North African Dance Experience and Ayodele Drum and Dance. African models wore handmade outfits by Jennifer Akese Burney, a Chicago-based designer. The event culminated in a feast featuring various African dishes. A video of highlights can be viewed at vimeo.com/204317329.



News from the Herskovits Library

Distinctive Collections welcomes new staff member



Florence Mugambi has joined the Herskovits Library as the African studies librarian for the Distinctive

Collections work group. Her main responsibilities are in instruction and outreach.

Previously, Mugambi served as the public services librarian at Anderson University in Indiana; prior to that she was an information services and instruction librarian at Indiana University—Purdue University.

Mugambi has 10 years of experience in collection development, reference, and instruction. Her recent

research and presentations reflect her interests in the instructional delivery preferences of students and the relationship between reading habits, availability of materials, academic achievement, and libraries. She holds a master’s degree in library science from Louisiana State University and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Nairobi.

For several years Mugambi has served on the Africa Subcommittee of the American Library Association’s International Relations Committee, highlighting the concerns and work of Africa-based librarians within the ALA. She is also the founder and project director of Ontulili Literacy and Resource Center (ontulilireads.org), an organization that promotes literacy and the establishment of libraries in rural Kenya. In 2013 Mugambi received a grant from Rotary International to support this project.

Mugambi is based in room 5688 in the Herskovits Library. She can be reached at 847-497-6057 or florence.mugambi@northwestern.edu.

Librarians hold spring meeting

On April 19–21, the Herskovits Library will welcome participants to the annual spring meeting of the Africana Librarians Council. Africana librarians from across the United States meet twice yearly to explore current trends and challenges in the field. Discussions focus on cataloging and classification, access to materials, trends in user instruction, and preservation, as well as selecting the recipients of the Gretchen Walsh Book Donations Award. More information about the council’s work can be found at africanalibrarians.wixsite.com/alcasa.

Scholars hold forum on challenges facing African democracies

A three-day forum on “Democracy and Insecurity in Africa” in March brought scholars to Northwestern to reflect on the state of governance in three of sub-Saharan Africa’s largest democracies: Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa. Participants reflected on the persistence of democratic institutions and practices in the context of growing

insecurity; setbacks to democratic consolidation; and the formulation of socioeconomic policies to overcome those setbacks.

Scholar-practitioners John Campbell, Wale Adebani, and Attahiru Jega (via video conferencing) joined local experts in the proceedings.

Campbell is the Ralph Bunche Fellow for Africa at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink* (2011/2013) and *Morning in South Africa* (2016). He served as US ambassador to Nigeria from 2004 to 2007.

Adebani, the incoming Rhodes Professor of Race Relations at Oxford University, has published extensively on Nigerian politics, society, and culture. His books include *Authority Stealing* (2012); *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: Critical Reflections* (coedited, 2013); and *Yoruba Elites and Elite Politics in Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo and Corporate Agency* (2014).

Jega, formerly vice chancellor of Nigeria’s Bayero University, served as chairman of Nigeria’s Independent Electoral Commission from 2010 to 2015 and is currently a visiting scholar at Oxford University (see sidebar).

Other forum participants included Northwestern political scientists Richard Joseph, Rachel Riedl, Marina Henke, Moses Khisa, and Salih Gercek, as well as law professor Juliet Sorensen. Also participating was Funmi Olopade, associate dean for global health at the University of Chicago.

The forum was cosponsored by Northwestern’s Program of African Studies, Department of Political Science, Transportation Center, and Center for International Human Rights; the Chicago Council on Global Affairs; the University of Chicago’s Institute of Politics; and the MacArthur Foundation.

Attahiru Jega (PhD ’85)



Attahiru Jega is renowned not only as an influential academic scholar but also as a public intellectual. He served on the committee that recommended electoral reforms prior to Nigeria’s 2011 general election, and in 2010 he was named chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, a position he held

until 2015. He administered the elections of 2011 and 2015.

During the turbulent 2015 election campaign, Jega bore the brunt of aggressive criticism from both the ruling and opposition parties. On March 31, however, General Muhammadu Buhari was declared the victor with 54 percent of the vote, marking the first peaceful handover of power from the ruling party to the opposition party. National and international observers acclaimed the result as a victory for democracy.

Jega completed his PhD in political science at Northwestern in 1985. He returned to his undergraduate alma mater, Bayero University in Kano, working in various capacities before being named vice chancellor, a position he held from 2005 to 2010. He is the author or coauthor of many works, including the volume *Election Management in Nigeria: Selected Commentaries on the Evolution of the Nigerian Electoral Process, 2010–2015* (2015).

Historian, PAS pursue collaboration



During a week-long visit to Northwestern in March, historian Insa Nolte, a lecturer in African studies at the University of Birmingham's

department of African studies and anthropology, discussed the ongoing collaboration between that department, PAS, and the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The cooperative effort aims to strengthen teaching and research on Islam in Africa at all three institutions.

A specialist in Yoruba history, culture, and politics, Nolte is the author of *Obafemi Awolowo and the Making of Remo: The Local Politics of a Nigerian Nationalist* (2009). Her current research explores the concept of religious tolerance through investigation of the gendered nature of Muslim-Christian relations in southwest Nigeria. Nolte serves as principal investigator on the European Research Council grant "Knowing Each Other: Everyday Religious Encounters, Social Identities, and Tolerance in Southwest Nigeria," based at the University of Birmingham and Nigeria's Osun State University. The project recently published *Beyond Religious Tolerance: Muslim, Christian, and Traditionalist Encounters in an African Town* (2017), edited by Nolte, Olukoya Ogen, and Rebecca Jones.

Manuscript workshop participants selected

Eight Africa-based specialists have been selected to participate in the workshop "Working with African Arabic Script Manuscripts," to be held August 14-19 at PAS and the Herskovits Library of African Studies:

Mohamed Ahmed Salem Ahmedu, independent calligrapher and manuscript researcher, Trarza, Mauritania

Souleymane Gaye, conservator, Documentation Center, Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal

Mohammed Hafiz, lecturer, coordinator, and head, Arabic Section, College of Humanities, University of Ghana

Hassen Muhammed Kawo, lecturer, Arabic Program Unit, Addis Ababa University; doctoral candidate, historical studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Omar Sheha Khamis, archivist and curator, Zanzibar National Archives, Tanzania

Mahmood Mohammad Jimba Moshood, lecturer in Arabic and director, Center for Ilorin Manuscripts and Culture, Kwara State University, Nigeria

Chapane Mutiua, junior researcher, Center for African Studies, University Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique

Saadou Traore, Mali-based independent scholar; head of cataloging, Djenné Manuscript Library, Mali

Their collective expertise will enrich instruction during the first three days of the workshop, when US-based scholars, researchers, and librarians will receive training in working with Arabic manuscripts from Africa. The workshop's final three days will be dedicated to the specific needs of the African participants, including cataloging, preservation, and digitization adapted to local needs, and developing a guide to assist in conducting similar training at home.

Organized by the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, the University of Illinois Center for African Studies, and the University of Hamburg Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, the workshop is supported by PAS and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's US Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center Grant. Workshop participation by the eight Africa-based specialists is made possible by a grant to ISITA from the Gerda Henkel Foundation.



Migration studies center to convene sixth summer institute

Northwestern’s Center for Forced Migration Studies (CFMS) summer institute is an academically rigorous certificate (nondegree) program that offers participants an interdisciplinary comparative understanding of the causes and consequences of forced migration and refugee situations. Focused each year on a key issue in the field, the summer institute offers expertise and a team-based forum where students develop new approaches, policy recommendations, and implementation strategies through lectures, discussions, workshops, films, and simulation exercises.

The 2017 summer institute will introduce participants to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol refugee regime, the international legal basis for refugee status, and the variations in how the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The Summer Institute of the Center for Forced Migration Studies at the Buffett Institute for Global Studies will take place August 1–11. The institute’s two-week course, Refugee Protection and the Rights and Process of (Re)Settlement, will cover the processes of both refugee status determination and refugee resettlement. The course is designed for government officials, nongovernmental organization personnel, lawyers, refugee service providers and practitioners, university faculty, and graduate students (advanced undergraduates may seek permission to attend). Registration closes July 15. Limited scholarships are available; inquire at cfms@northwestern.edu.

and authorities in various countries determine refugee eligibility and processing, with a particular focus on the US system. In the first week, students focus on decision-making and analytical skills, country-of-origin research, procedural issues, and case preparation, including taking testimony, documenting evidence, working

with trauma victims, and dealing with credibility issues. Special topics of discussion may include unaccompanied minors, LGBTI-related cases, and gang-related asylum claims. Students will also become familiar with the elements of strategic litigation.

The second week concentrates on the resettlement process. Students

International conference to draw experts on African Sahel

Northwestern University and Sciences Po (Paris Institute of Political Studies) will convene a May 19 conference to examine postintervention governance and security in the African Sahel.

Following the 2011 regime change in Libya, the 2012 territorial takeover in northern Mali by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, and the international intervention to push back militants and restore electoral democracy in Bamako, the Sahel region has undergone dramatic changes in state institutions, civil society, military strategy, and associational organization. These evolving new dynamics have unleashed various preexisting forces and provided transformational opportunities for mainstream ideas in the state, civil society, and the military.

Experts on the Sahel will discuss the implications of regional recalibration for state actors, security strategies, military engagement, and continuing rebel groups. Participants will also examine domestic political strategies to utilize resources and shape the domestic political environments, including reform strategies by both the incumbent regimes and their opposition, in a postintervention context that may embolden new actors. In addition, the conference will explore how civic associations mobilize to maintain social relevance, build support, and shift political outcomes.

The conference will consist of three panels: the state; civil society; and military strategies and security actors. Sciences Po participants include Richard Banegas and Roland Marchal. Sciences Po Bordeaux participants

explore the local context of resettlement in countries of first asylum in the Global South, the UNHCR framework, and comparative models of national resettlement, with a focus on the US program. Through an innovative Design for America workshop, students also learn how to apply human-centered design to resettlement challenges.

Since the founding of the summer institute in 2011, the CFMS has hosted nationals from many African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The CFMS remains dedicated to its mission of creating and facilitating understanding of the conditions of refugee movement across state borders, protection practices, underlying social disfranchisement, and the international community's response to refugee needs. The CFMS will continue to engage cross-national and interdisciplinary groups to reconceptualize refugee protection.

—Annie Zean Dunbar

include Celine Thiriot and Vincent Foucher. Northwestern participants include Martha Wilfahrt, Juliet Sorensen, Will Reno, and Marina Henke. Other participants include Sebastian Elischer and Leo Villalon (University of Florida), Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem (University of Nouakchott), Jaimie Bleck (University of Notre Dame), Abdoulaye Sounaye (Université Abdou Moumouni de Niamey), and Yacouba Dème (Near East Foundation, Mali).

Recent visiting scholars



Chiara Pagano is a PhD candidate in African history in Roma Tre University's doctoral program in European and international studies. She has been an associate PhD student at the Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain of Tunis. Her research project concerns Tripolitanian Berber groups and the emergence of ethnic

discourse in colonial Libya (1911–43), emphasizing the historical construction of “identity” and “otherness” as instruments of political control, identification, and mobilization. It assesses how Berber and Arab ethnic groups have been historically constructed and manipulated for political purposes in colonial Libya, both by Italian authorities and by local groups of Tripolitania's complex society. Pagano has conducted field and archival research in Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia. While in residence at Northwestern during winter quarter, she used the rich resources of the Herskovits Library of African Studies to deepen her understanding of Ottoman, Italian, North African, and specifically Libyan colonial history, ethnography, and anthropology.



Tasew Gashaw is a PhD candidate in the field of peace and security at Addis Ababa University's Institute for Peace and Security Studies. His dissertation project is “Understanding the Nature of Cross-Border Intergroup Conflicts: A Study of Murle and Their Neighbors along the Ethiopia–South Sudan Border.” For his

2010 master's degree from Addis Ababa University, his thesis examined Anyuaa traditional conflict resolution (2003–13). A former lecturer at Gambella Teachers Education and Health Science College (2013–14), Gashaw has served as special secretary to the president of Gambella People's National Regional State. He is in residence at Northwestern for the spring quarter.

Fifty years later at Ghana's Institute of African Studies

By Charles Stewart

It's a rare opportunity to return to your alma mater 50 years after graduation. Actuarial tables alone can predict that none of your mentors will be on hand, and even in our electronic universe, few former classmates are still reachable. So what compelled me to give a lecture at the University of Legon this past January, other than the symbolic act of presenting a copy of Volume 5 of *Arabic Literature of Africa* on behalf of the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa to the university's Institute of African Studies (IAS)? Perhaps it was simple curiosity, perhaps nostalgia.

The need to look presentable, despite lost luggage, was my first reminder of Ghana's exquisite but good-humored sense of formality. Acquiring a coat and tie at short notice catapulted me directly from the airport into a country that has undergone a seismic demographic change—a fivefold population increase—since I was a student there in the early 1960s. Chaotic traffic that I associated with the area around the lorry park in Accra now stretched, as does Accra itself, all the way to Legon and beyond. In fact, the traffic sometimes stretches nearly all the way to Aburi—as I discovered a few days later on an outing to the Aburi Gardens, one of the few sites that has remained protected from the waves of commercial development washing their way up the Akwapim Ridge. Shopping centers, strip malls, fast food outlets, street

food vendors, and roadside help for any conceivable vehicle malady jostled with endless small businesses once confined largely to Accra's central market. And the cacophony of sights and smells and sounds has kept pace. Billboards advertised trousers and evangelism, medical cures and suitable bread, help for my kidneys and my financial affairs. None of this was entirely new, but now its volume was on steroids.

My lecture, "The Changing Significance of Arabic Manuscript Documentation and Preservation in West Africa," had been designed for a small clutch of students in the Arabic section of the modern languages program and religion department. But the IAS generously scheduled the lecture for its Thursday seminar series as a courtesy to Mohamed Hafiz, head of the Arabic section—and, I suppose, in recognition that a really old "old boy" had returned to IAS. (I am told the lecture will soon be posted on the Thursday seminar page of the IAS website.)

In keeping with seminar protocol, Hafiz had asked Sheikh Osman Braimah Bari, a retired diplomat and scholar from Accra, to chair the event, but his scheduling problems (or Accra traffic that morning, I'm not sure which) delayed the lecture by two hours. So it was a surprise to my host that the IAS Nketia Lecture Hall was packed with what he estimated at 300 attendees. At least half the audience came from off campus, including the Islamic University College in East Legon and the Qur'anic College; a vanload of students had even driven down from Kumasi. At lunch after the talk, reporters from an Accra Hausa radio station showed up to do interviews.

This attention to Ghana's Arabic past clearly struck a chord in a Muslim community that is much more visible now than 50 years ago. One of the main points of my remarks was that the first meeting of Arabists from across West Africa (then Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria) on the importance of Arabic documentation was held at Legon in 1964 (Paulo Farias and I had huddled in a corner as student observers). An additional goal was to rekindle Ghanaian students' interest in their own heritage of Arabic writing. Having learned



Accra skyline

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=4369409>



From left: IAS research fellow Mjiba Frehiwot, IAS director Dzodzi A. Tsikata, Charles Stewart, and University of Ghana Arabic Section lecturer Mohammed Hafiz

that Salaga (northeast Ghana) was called the “Timbuktu of the South” in recognition of its status as a center for Islamic learning, I urged my audience to exploit that nomenclature, just as Timbuktu’s denizens have so successfully attracted funding for manuscript cataloging and preservation in that city.

My main “takeaway” on how Ghana has changed over the past 50 years: Muslims in Ghana have become a much more visible part of a society that was once characterized as a Christian political culture. And my most reassuring discovery was that, despite Accra’s frenetic pace, the Ghanaian national character is still distinguished by its civility, tolerance, good humor, and gentleness—and remains one of the country’s great riches.

Charles Stewart is professor emeritus at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and programming director of ISITA.



Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon

Community news

“Aliko Dangote and Africa Rising,” an article by **LaRay Denzer** (PAS), appeared in *Britannica Year in Review: 2016* (britannica.com).

Richard Joseph (political science) was a keynote speaker at the public forum “Ethiopia in Crisis” at Stanford University in January.

“Managing Elite Defection in Museveni’s Uganda: The 2016 Elections in Perspective,” an article by **Moses Khisa** (political science), was

published in the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10 (2016): 729–748 (tandfonline.com).

In February the Modern War Institute’s website (mwi.usma.edu) featured “Physical Fitness Is Not the Key to Winning America’s Future Wars,” an article by **Jahara “Franky” Matisek** (political science).

“Exploring Reading Habits and Academic Success in Rural Kenya,” an article by **Florence Mugambi**,

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(Herskovits Library) appeared in the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Journal* 41: 353–363 (journals.sagepub.com).

In January PAS director **Will Reno** (political science) conducted research in Iraq for a project titled “Rebels: Inside and Out.” He has given two presentations recently: “The Fiction of the State and the Atomization of Domestic Politics in Fragile States: A Non-Western Approach to Fragility” at an American Academy of Arts and Sciences workshop in Boston last November, and “Populations, Perceptions, Power, and Peace Operations” at the United Nations’ Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs in New York in February.

Research by **Juliet Sorenson** (law) was highlighted in the article “Juliet Sorensen Believes Interdisciplinary Collaboration Is Key to Global Justice,” which was featured in January on the *Northwestern Now* website (news.northwestern.edu).

In January **Charles Stewart** (director of programming, ISITA) delivered the lecture “The Changing Significance of Arabic Manuscript Documentation and Preservation in West Africa” at the

New book by PAS alumnus

In *Islam et modernité: Contribution à l’analyse de la ré-islamisation au Niger* (Paris: Éditions l’Harmattan, 2016), author **Abdoulaye Sounaye** considers the theory of contemporary African dynamics. He revisits the question of contemporary Islam in its multiple relations with modernity in Africa, examining the theory of contemporary African dynamics with a focus on the period after the 1990s. He reflects on recent developments related to the Muslim religiosities in Niger, and he questions the theoretical clothes and conceptual categories that facilitate our understanding of this sociopolitical and philosophical phenomenon. Further contextualization is provided in a preface by Senegalese philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Columbia University) and a postface by Jean Dominique Pénel, a specialist in the literature of the Central African Republic and Niger.

Sounaye completed his PhD in religious studies at Northwestern in 2012. A faculty member at Abdou Moumouni University in Niger and the Boston University Niger program, he teaches Islam, development studies, and philosophy.



University of Ghana and participated in the workshop “The Social Life of Books in North-West Africa: Mobility and Book Production in Timbuktu and Beyond” at the University of Cape Town. In February he presented “The Manuscripts of ‘Timbuktu’: Where Are They and What Do They Tell Us?” at DePaul University.

Noelle Sullivan (anthropology) recently wrote op-eds for two online media sites. “New Administration Must Look to Recent Past for Global Health Lessons” was published in January on *The Hill* (thehill.com), and “The Global Gag Rule’s Impact Goes Far beyond Abortion” appeared in February on *Footnote* (footnote1.com).

Congratulations to alum **Chelsie Yount-André** (anthropology), who successfully defended her dissertation, “Giving, Taking, and Sharing: Reproducing Economic Moralities and Social Hierarchies in Transnational Senegal,” last fall. Her supervisors were **Caroline Bledsoe** (anthropology) and Claude Fischler (École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris). Her article “Indexing Integration: Hierarchies of Belonging in Secular Paris” appeared in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford-Online* 9 (2017): 43–64 (anthro.ox.ac.uk).

“Memories of Blood. To Brother(hood) Dance and All Black Movers,” an article by **Mlonolozzi “Mlondi” Zondi** (graduate student, performance studies) was published in *Propter Nos* 1 (2016): 45–52 (trueleappress.files.wordpress.com).

Alumni voices: “The eternal populist”

By *Jim Sanders*

To those who know them only through media coverage, famous people have a way of becoming almost an abstraction, lacking the tangible reality of people with whom one interacts daily. Such, for me, was the case with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, distinguished clergyman and key participant in South Africa’s long struggle against apartheid.

That quickly changed on January 19, 2004, when the archbishop came to preach at my parish, Christ Church in Alexandria, Virginia, where his daughter Mpho Tutu had been ordained the day before.

Complete nobodies—those on no A-lists—were treated to a royal display of Christian love rarely seen in this colonial house of worship. Bounding through the aisles, exuding energy and radiating an infectious smile, Tutu shattered the stodgy 18th-century decorum of a sanctuary frequented by George Washington and Robert E. Lee, fervently embracing literally everyone he could reach.

On the pulpit, he described himself as an old-fashioned, firm believer in “house visits.” “A house-going priest,” he averred, “makes for a church-going people.”

By visiting people in their homes, priests becomes familiar with every little thing about them, he said, thus expanding their conception of the magnitude and glory of God’s creation. Everything is a gift, he assured his listeners, most of whom kept their eyes glued to him the entire time he spoke. Suddenly, it felt cool to be a “nobody,” and the wellsprings of strength and resilience that reside in common people, and that finally defeated apartheid, became evident.

A populist before the term became a dirty word, the archbishop affirmed that ordinary people really do matter.

Jim Sanders completed his PhD at Northwestern in 1980, having written his dissertation on the 18th- and 19th-century political development of the Fante people. He retired after 27 years as an Africa-area intelligence analyst at the US Department of Defense and the Department of State. After his retirement, he was a guest contributor to Africa in Transition, a Council on Foreign Relations blog. This piece was adapted from Parish Life, the newsletter of Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia.

Events calendar

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at PAS, 620 Library Place, Evanston. Sponsorship information for many events listed here may be found on the PAS website.

APRIL

12 noon–1:15 p.m.

“The Poetics of Voice in Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*,” **Vanessa Guignery** (literature, École Normale Supérieure de Lyon).

14–15

AfriSem conference: “Re . . . Africa: Knowledges, Archives, and Approaches.”

19 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Understanding the Nature of Cross-Border Intergroup Conflicts: A Study of the Murle and Their Neighbors along the Ethiopia-South Sudan Border,” **Tasew Gashaw** (PAS visiting scholar).

20 6–8 p.m.

AfriSem presentation: “An Archaeology of Monsters: Serpents, Cosmopolitanism, and the Ontology of Water in Ancient Ethiopia,” **Dil Singh Basanti** (archaeology).

26 noon–1:15 p.m.

“Detoothing Kampala: Notes on an Emerging Economy of Seduction,” **Erin Moore** (Buffett Institute post-doctoral fellow).

MAY

3 noon–1:15 p.m.

“From Digital Literacy to Social Engineering: Sponsoring and Censoring Nollywood in the 21st Century,” **Noah Tsika** (media studies, CUNY).

4 6–8 p.m.

AfriSem discussion with **Noah Tsika**.

8 2–3:30 p.m.

Discussion of *Jihad of the Pen*, a new anthology of West African Sufi writing, with **Zachary Wright** (history

and religious studies, NU-Qatar) and **Rudolph Ware** (history, University of Michigan).

8 6–8 p.m.

“Un/Clothing African Womanhood: Postcolonial Hauntologies and African Women’s Discourses of the Female Body,” **Ayo C. Coiy** (comparative literature and African and African American studies, Dartmouth College).

10 noon–1:15 p.m.

“On Juridical Colonialism: International Law and the Ottoman Scramble for Africa,” **Mostafa Minawi** (history, Cornell University).

16 6–8 p.m.

“Staging (within) Violence: The Inextricability of Slavery from (Black) Postcoloniality; and Antagonism from Their Dramatic Performances,” **Jaye Austin Williams** (theater arts, California State University, Long Beach).

17 noon–1:15 p.m.

“‘God Has Exposed You’: Discourses of Judgment in Nigerian Hausa Film,” **Carmen McCain** (English, Westmont College).

18 noon–6 p.m.

“Moroccan Exceptionalism: An Interdisciplinary Symposium.” Kresge Hall 1-515, 1880 Campus Drive, Evanston.

18 6–8 p.m.

AfriSem presentations: “Beyond Ratification: Predicting State Compliance with ICC Treaty Obligations,” **Marco Bocchese** (political science); “Measuring Water Insecurity in Africa,” **Godfred Odei Boateng** (anthropology).

19 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

PAS/Sciences Po/French Interdisciplinary Group conference: “Postintervention Governance and Security in the African Sahel.”

23 6–8 p.m.

“Family Nonfictions: On Not Writing History,” **Teresa Barnes** (history, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

24 4–6 p.m.

PAS spring picnic.

31 6–8 p.m.

Red Lion Lecture: “Life with and without Society: Some Thoughts on Contemporary Nigeria,” **Michael Watts** (geography and development studies, University of California, Berkeley). Red Lion Pub, 2446 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago.

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