

CAMPUS THIS WEEK

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA NEWSLETTER

17 - 23 MARCH 2017

Students and faculty engage in vigorous discussion of post-modernism and post-colonialism



Javier Serrano (Assistant Professor of Spanish and Literature) speaks during a session on Seminar on Postmodernism and Post-Colonialism in Philosophy, Literature and Film on Friday, March 10.

The sixth edition of the USIU-Africa Seminar on Postmodernism and Post-Colonialism in Philosophy, Literature and Film was once again hosted by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences from March 3-11. The annual forum featured students and faculty engaging in critical discussion of pressing academic topics such as post-colonial identities (in Africa, America and India), the relationships between knowledge and power under the post-modern perspective, the complexities of multiculturalism, the current status of education in the region, the positioning of feminism along with other critical theories.

These topics were tackled from a deliberate multidisciplinary perspective combining different fields from History, Sociology and Literature to Cinema and Philosophy, in order for attendees to relate abstract theories (for example functionalism) with specific practices (for instance in culture or politics).

While Dr. Mikhail Gromov (Assistant Professor of Literature) pinned down the complicated notion of hybridity on the particular case of women writers in Swahili, Prof. Mathew Buyu (Professor of Literature) impressed the audience not only with his elaborated rhetoric but also with his presentation on the binary opposition between the rural and urban contexts. The potential of post-colonialism as an intellectual tool for deconstructing and reconstructing international politics but also cultural and individual identities was masterfully displayed by Dr. Fatma Ali (Program Director and Associate Professor of International Relations) and, whereas Mr. Serrano (Assistant Professor of Spanish and Literature) contextualized all these critical trends under the umbrella of postmodern thinking.

Along with the attendees, several members of the

faculty took part in the seminar and contributed with insights and comments. Dr. Margaret Munyae (Program Director - General Education and Assistant Professor of Sociology) emphasized how this kind of seminar contributes to the university's mission of fostering critical thinking and a multicultural perspective; while on the other hand, Dr. David Mwambari (Assistant Professor of International Relations) sparked a debate around the politics of knowledge by pointing out how knowledge of Africa is more available outside the continent and among the diaspora that within it.

The Seminar is organized every year by Javier Serrano (Assistant Professor of Spanish and Literature) and is open to all majors, subject to limited sitting.

Library begins publishing lecture series

The Library & Information is this Thursday, March 23 hosting Mr. Fredrick Wekesa for the Center's first ever Scholarly Communication and Publishing Lecture at the Library Conference Room from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. Mr. Wekesa, a Research Officer at the Africa

Population and Health Research Centre, has authored several scientific papers in respected journals, and as such is expected to enlighten library users, especially graduate and doctoral students, on the requirements and resources required for successful academic publishing.

Every semester, the Library organizes literacy classes in accessing and fully-utilizing library resources such as electronic resources (Open Access System – OPAC), proper usage of references and citations, and now scholarly communication and publishing.

Mr. Wekesa holds a Master of Science in Medicine degree in Population-Based Field Epidemiology from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Epidemiology at the University Medical Center of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

Those interested may register their attendance by email (askalibrarian@usiu.ac.ke)

Norwegian students make annual trip to USIU-Africa

Dr. Michael Kihara (Psychology Programs Director and Associate Professor of Psychology) is hosting sixteen students and two faculty members from NLA University in Norway from Wednesday, March 15.

While officially opening the three-day visit on Thursday, March 16, Vice Chancellor Prof. Paul Zeleza highlighted the need for all people in the world to network and work together. He provided a brief outline of the university's programs including those about to be launched. He lauded the cooperation between USIU-Africa and NLA University, stating his wish that such partnerships should be beneficial to all parties.

His brief remarks preceded those of Mr David Jourdan, a Political Counselor from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nairobi, who spoke on Kenya-Norway relations.

Other facilitators included Mr Moses Onyango (Director, Institute of Public Policy and International Affairs and Lecturer of International Relations) who discoursed on "The complexity of multiculturalism and

violent extremism in the global age", while Dr. Fatma Ali (Program Director and Associate Professor of International Relations) gave a talk titled, "Women agency and Peace building: The case of COVAW".

Intercultural Studies students from NLA University's Burgen and Kristiansand campuses, have been part of the annual exchange program between the university and USIU-Africa – a program initiated by retired journalist-in-resident Mr. Joe Kadhi six years ago.

This year's group was so impressed by the excellent facilities and infrastructure enjoyed by current students, that two members of the group have indicated their desire to return to Kenya for a longer exchange program. On their final day on campus, Mr William Mwangi will deliver a final talk on "Cross-Cultural Communication in an African Context" at 9am in the Science Center's Lecture Theater III.

Dr. Mwambari speaks on human rights and African reconciliation mechanisms

Assistant Professor of International Relations Dr. David Mwambari delivered a lecture at the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights – Spring 2017 edition held at Oxford University from March 12-18. Dr. Mwambari's address to a mixed audience of students and faculty, dwelt on the tension between international human rights laws and traditional mechanisms of reconciliation in post-conflict African countries.

Dr. Mwambari and Dr. Elijah Munyi (Assistant Professor of International Relations) led a delegation of students to the Fall 2016 edition of the Oxford Consortium on Human Rights organized by Oxford, Yale, and Quinnipiac universities in New York and New Haven, Connecticut (USA) in October 2016.

Indeed USIU-Africa will host this year's fall edition of the Consortium in collaboration with Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict and the United Nations Office at Nairobi.



Dr. David Mwambari with some of his fellow participants at the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights – Spring 2017 edition held at Oxford University from March 12-18.

Alumni Association holds first "Affinity Evening"

The USIU-Africa Alumni Association on Friday, March 10, organized a meeting between members of the Alumni Association and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Paul Zeleza at the Vice Chancellor's residence in Nairobi. The evening dubbed "Affinity Evening" was conceived as an opportunity for the Vice Chancellor to interact with members of the Alumni Association and senior university officials in an informal set up.

The Vice Chancellor expressed his delight in having the association work together with the university to achieve common goals, while reiterating the university's commitment to supporting Association activities.

The event was also attended by members of the Management Board including Mr. Jared Raburu (*Director of Administration*) Mr. James Ogolla (*Director of University Advancement*), Ms. Helen O. Ambasa (*Director of Legal Services & Company Secretary*) Ms. Jane Muriithi-Thomas (*Chief Manager - Marketing and Communications*) and Mr. Scott Bellows (*Chair - Faculty Council and Assistant Professor of Management*).

The Affinity Evening is expected to become a monthly event at the Vice Chancellor's residence between the Vice Chancellor and members of various interest groups within the Alumni Association.

Institutional Review Board to be launched this Thursday

The long-awaited launch of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) will take place 8.30am this Thursday, March 23 at a ceremony to be held in the Freida Brown Student Center's third floor restaurant area.

The Board, which was formed following the university's accreditation by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) in November 2016, is mandated to review, approve and oversee research proposals involving primary data. The launch cements the university's commitment to fostering innovative interdisciplinary research and improving USIU-Africa's research profile.

IPPIA partners with youth movement to discuss SDGs and Agenda 2063

USIU-Africa's Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IPPIA) has partnered with the Afrika Youth Movement (AYM) to host a Youth Empowerment Forum on the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and African Union's Agenda 2063.

The day-long forum on Monday, March 20, will actively seek to interrogate both the Goals and the Agenda,

with a view to articulating out the African youth's role in their achievement.

The keynote address by Irungu Houghton, Associate Director, Society for International Development at the University of Dar es Salaam to the over 100 expected participants will set the tone for a meeting, that is expected to yield a developmental model that will engage young people in the attainment of both SDGs

and Agenda 2063 at regional and national levels.

Afrika Youth Movement (AYM) is a pan-African, action-oriented, youth-led movement that advocates for the active participation and leadership of African youth to transform Africa and achieve their rights to peace and social justice.

International journalists join journalism class panel discussion

Dr. Lucy Gichaga (Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication) invited a panel of seasoned journalists for a forum discussion on Tuesday, March 7 dubbed International Mass Media Guest Panel Forum in the Chandaria School of Business Lecture Theater II. The forty-minute panel session discussed various issues and realities of being international correspondents especially during a host nation's elections.

Dean of the Graduate School of Media and Communications at Aga Khan University's Nairobi campus Mr. Michael Meyer, who is a former Newsweek bureau chief and Communications Director for former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, drew from his field experiences - such as coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991 - to urge his audience, to pay attention to the small details and to be sensitive to the bigger perspective. He described a new era with a huge opportunity to tell the truth, manage national transitions, and finally to draw Kenyans into seeing themselves as part of a global story with attendant conversations to sustain.

Mr. Mayer, in response to a question on fake news, noted the need for journalists to verify facts that they might hold as sacred. He was echoed by his fellow panelist Mr. Hannington Osodo - a Reuters journalist with over 20 years' field experience in the field. Mr. Osodo, who had a brief stint as bureau chief in Nigeria, referred to the Reuters tradition of verifying facts of a story 10 times before a story was published.



Journalism class panel discussion

While lauding the growing number of women entering the international news business, Mr. Osodo pointed out that international news organizations tended to serve the dominant elites at the expense of the rest. This, in his view, has created opportunities for local media outlets to share the untold story. Though Mr. Osodo also underlined the need for journalists to frequently update their skills to ensure effective coverage and preparation for dangerous news coverage assignments, he asked the journalism students in his audience to join organizations with values consistent with their own.

Mr. Dismas Ong'ondi, a ICT professional with the UNDP - Crisis Response Unit Roster of Experts on Elections Ghana and Zambia, related how he had to stand up to his superiors to protect data integrity, pointing out that responsible telling of the story of elections is a humongous job that needs the help of data visualization to be effective.

Mr. James Kimani demonstrated using the Kenyan elections data story how data assists in getting credible, interesting stories ahead of competition.

In response to a question of whether he has had to mask his emotions while on assignment, Idris Muktar - a Journalist with the CNN East Africa bureau - related his harrowing experience covering the Garissa University terror attack - an assignment he described as his toughest moment on the field. He mentioned how appreciative he was, for the support his CNN supervisors accorded him; a key factor in his quick recovery.

The forum is held every semester as part of the International Mass Media (JRN 3006) undergraduate class. Members of the class handled forum moderation, camera crew roles and protocol facilitation.

FEATURE

The history of African education is one of constant struggle

By Macharia Munene

There is no society on earth that does not have an education system. The difference is that some systems are more elaborate than others, depending on the complexity of the societies.

For a society to exist, or to be, the people in it must have decided to have an organised living arrangement and then to have developed an identity based on common values that distinguish them from other societies.

They hold that identity and values so dear that they are willing to defend and propagate them to people in other organised living settings. One way of defending those values is by way of an education system.

The primary purpose of education in a society is to reproduce itself, maintain its identity and to perpetuate its best through time. An education system that is a copycat that ends up reproducing identities of other societies is an enslaving system because it serves other people rather than itself.

Every African society, from the most ancient onwards, had an education system that strove to reproduce itself, perpetuate its "culture" or way of life, and safeguard its values and identity.

Each system taught children what should or should not be, the values, the taboos, and the differences with other societies. Often, the system was generational, with great-grandparents or grandparents at the apex as the custodians of societal heritage.

Generally, the grandparents become the teachers for their grandchildren and this is done for two good and interrelated reasons. First, as the custodians of the society heritage, they would have lived through imbibing and internalising the society values.

They would, therefore, know all that is best to be perpetuated, and what is negative to be downplayed. Their teaching method, therefore, would be experiential, example-setting, and role-modelling.

The second reason is that while their general body strength is less than what it used to be, their mental alertness, emphasised by collective society wisdom, is at a very high level and they can see or smell danger from afar.

A saying among the Agikuyu of Kenya, Muthuri aikareire njung'wa oonaga haraya gukiira kihii ki muti-iguru, meaning that an elder sitting on a stool sees farther than a boy sitting on a tree branch, is reflective of this belief in the value of the elderly to a given society.

On its own, education is a useful tool for managing society but it can vary with who it is that is using it and for what purpose.

States tend to have at least two instruments of influence on their publics. These are the education system and the media, whose effect is to control thinking and possible challenges to existing order.

AFRICAN WAYS OF LIFE

Of the two, the critical one is the education system, for it influences the behavior of the media operators. Through the education systems as public controlling instruments, governments indoctrinate the young to accept certain beliefs as gospel.

When such youth become adults in the media, they instinctively propagate the same beliefs as news and opinions or purported education.

Those who use the education system to guide thinking included assorted tyrants, conquerors, and imperialists. It happens almost everywhere as the conquerors try to establish "new world orders" in which they glorify themselves and suppress diverse views that might question that self-glorification.

They engage in creating new "realities" by deliberately forcing themselves as well as the conquered to "un-remember", or have selective amnesia of the past.

Schools and assorted education systems then become tools for creating new realities that are then forced into the heads of children to internalise as they grow to maturity.

The establishment of colonial rule falls into this pattern, whereby the European colonialists in Africa went out of their way to create new realities by destroying as much of the African ways of life as possible.

This entailed forcing Africans to imbibe and internalise every European value while despising their own beliefs, thereby becoming good "natives" who accepted positions of inferiority as natural.

The new colonial educational system was a good tool for stressing the subordinate role of the Africans as types of technicians but not as thinkers, philosophers, and decision makers.

Colonialists in Africa learned a lot from their cultural extension in the United States that had figured out an educational way to force African-Americans to accept inferiority as natural.

CONQUEROR'S LOGIC

In the same way that education can be a tool of oppression, it can also be an instrument of liberation. Often, the reaction of the conquered, once they accept the fact of being conquered, tends to be of two types.

First, are those who completely surrender their conscience as they internalise new realities of the mental, social, and political type, believing they have no alternative but to comply with everything that the conqueror demands, they elevate the conqueror to semi-divine status.

Second are those, after accepting the fact of being conquered, that engage in serious soul-searching to find out why they lost and strategise on how to regain freedom.

This soul search leads them to develop two responses. They devise ways of challenging the order by studying the conqueror's logic, strengths and weaknesses, contradictions and inconsistencies. One such way is to embrace the new education system and learn everything that it has to offer without being sucked into it or losing one's identity.

Such are the people who become "freedom fighters" and liberators of their respective communities.

Using education as a tool of political liberation produced fruits in the name of independence such that many European colonies in Africa ceased being colonies in the early 1960s. They entered the post-colonial period with a lot of high expectation in the education field.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

FEATURE CONTINUING...

Symbolically, such mzungu schools as Prince of Wales, Duke of York, Highlands, Kenya High, St. Mary's, and Limuru were opened up for the children of the new African elite, and even the names were Africanised.

People in colonised Africa exhibited the two types of responses. There were, and are, those who virtually surrendered everything to the coloniser, irrespective of which one, and received an education that conditioned them to accept that they were in every way inferior to the mzungu and abandoned thinking.

NEW AFRICAN POLITICAL STARTS

Another group of natives decided to accept the new education system as a tool of liberation by identifying mzungu weaknesses and questioning the new order. Kenyan "natives" had the two types of reaction but it was the second type that forced changes.

In the process of decolonisation, a few Africans set the pace, questioning of the Euro distortions of the African past. George James and Cheikh Anta Diop accused the Euros of intellectual thievery and disfigurement of history.

At independence, the few lecturers at universities embarked on Africanising all levels of education and thinking disciplines such as history, literature, theology and philosophy, and political discourses.

They wrote to decolonise academic disciplines in Africa, to prove the colonialists wrong, and to assert the African presence. In the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, there emerged new African intellectual stars that included Ali Mazrui, Bethwell Ogot, John Mbiti, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Walter Rodney, Jacob Ajayi, Godfrey Muriuki, Gideon Were, Simeon Ominde, and Okot p'Bitek.

They had a lot of logistical and financial support from national governments as well as extra-continental mind controllers who funded knowledge production. The countries developed excessive dependence on extra-continental financial and policy support.

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, something went wrong in the African countries and their budding universities, with the mind controllers seemingly pulling the plug from African intellectual sockets at the universities, resulting in a nosedive in knowledge production.

This was with active encouragement from International Financial Institutions that imposed structural adjustment programs, and virtually cut funding for university ability to generate and disseminate knowledge.

FAULT FINDING

Many universities deteriorated into glorified high

schools where student spoon feeding became the norm, and some of the spoon feeders needed spoon feeding. Since whatever knowledge African students needed, African universities were seemingly advised, could be given or imported at low costs, there was little need for funding research.

This was high level international politics using "education" to stifle independent thinking which then explains the decline of universities in the latter decades of post-colonial history.

The history of education in Africa, therefore, is one of constant struggle that is still going on with regard to who should determine and interpret African interests. One group of Africans appears to be beholden to external forces and end up imbibing and reproducing Euro thinking.

Through educational systems, they tend to be properly seasoned to internalise Euro thinking and

ways, and to defend vigorously the right of the Euros to interpret African interests and to impose policies.

They become busy fault finding, just as the Euros do, and often have problems seeing anything positive about fellow Africans. In the opposite camp are those who tend to be selective in what they accept from extra-continental forces, assert that they have a right to make their own interpretation of what is best for Africans, and want to promote knowledge production in African universities rather than simply import it.

They stress independence and question external mind control that stifles knowledge generation in Africa while masquerading as intellectual aid. This struggle at the intellectual level percolates downward to policy and then to implementation, and it is not new. It is a constant in the history of African education

USIU-Africa celebrates the life of Dr. Gale



The USIU-Africa community held a memorial at the Library Bookshop on Friday March 10, to celebrate the life of Dr. Thomas Sheridan Gale (*Professor Emeritus of International Relations*) who served as a faculty member for 26 years.

Former members of faculty and staff who worked closely with him during his tenure at USIU-Africa described an affable, kind and again generous man, whose thrifty lifestyle enabled him to donate his

earnings to the foundation named after him – a foundation that has funded scholarships for countless young people who had no other means of continuing their education.

Both students and teachers from several primary and secondary schools in Nairobi County gave glowing tributes to the man they described as more than a father to them. The Ministry of Education's Ruth Owuor recounted how Dr. Gale's support for the education of girls made a difference to countless young women who today owe their futures, to his generous support.

Dr. Gale joined USIU-Africa in 1974 and taught history, international relations and political science but later retired as a Political Science Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, in 2013.

Aside from his rich baritone voice that was the hallmark of countless commencement ceremonies in USIU-Africa, Dr. Gale will be remembered for being an intellect, a sportsman and a philanthropist who made a difference to the communities he lived and worked in. He leaves behind a rich legacy that will continue inspiring former students, fellow residents at the YMCA, and countless other lives he touched in the course of his colorful life of selfless service.

Library to host E-resource week

Libraries the world over are grappling with the growth of online resources that have now eclipsed traditional volumes of thick tomes that with which university libraries were synonymous. Though the USIU-Africa Library and Information Center has about 10000 square meters of floor space spread on three floors and a basement, its users have gravitated towards using the widely accessible electronic resources in which the university has been steadily investing.

A three-day sensitization event will be hosted by the library to raise awareness of its over 100000 online journals, and 400000 e-books, and that's not all. Over 14000 non-print media and 51 electronic databases, mean the library's vast resources can support our entire student, faculty and staff population in their search for knowledge.

The event dubbed "*E-Resources Week*" will run from March 27-30 on the library's front lawn, where the curious and the hungry for knowledge can learn new digital paths to the knowledge that has made USIU-Africa's library rank consistently at the top of Africa's leading citadels of information.

Sports

Last Saturday, March 11, the men's rugby team thoroughly thrashed South Coast Pirates 27-0 in the ongoing Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) Championship League match in Mombasa last week. The men's rugby team will seek to cement their dominance when two teams meet again here on campus on Saturday, March 18.

There were no goals scored when men's hockey team met Kenyatta University during the Kenya Hockey Union (KHU) Premier League match at City Park on Saturday, March 11. This Sunday, March 18, the team will meet Nakuru Athletic at same venue.

On Saturday March 11, USIU-Africa's lawn tennis team, participated in the Humara Tennis mini-series tournament in preparation for the Maestro Challenge scheduled to take place this year. The lawn tennis team, which is classified as a voluntary sporting team on campus, has three training sessions a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 3pm to 6pm. This weekend, the team of fifteen has signed up for yet another tournament at Kenyatta University.

Media mentions

March 14: The Star newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*Police, Orange off to flying start.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/709-the-star-police-orange-off-to-flying-start>

March 13: Dhahabu Kenya mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*Ashoka to open continental office in Nairobi.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/710-dhahabu-kenya-ashoka-to-open-continental-office-in-nairobi>

March 13: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Daily Nation in an article titled "*The history of African education is one of constant struggle.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/711-daily-nation-the-history-of-african-education-is-one-of-constant-struggle>

March 13: The Star Newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*USIU race from behind to hold Kenya University as season gets underway.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/714-the-star-usiu-race-from-behind-to-hold-kenya-university-as-season-gets-underway>

March 13: USIU-Africa was mentioned in an article titled "*Hockey: KU share spoils with USIU-A.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/715-standard-digital-hockey-ku-share-spoils-with-usiu-a>

March 12: USIU-Africa was mentioned by the Standard Digital in an article titled "*American outfit sets up office in Nairobi to boost start-ups.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/712-standard-digital-american-outfit-sets-up-office-in-nairobi-to-boost-start-ups>

March 11: The Star newspaper mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*Police and Orange headline league opens at City Park.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/713-the-star-police-and-orange-headline-league-opens-at-city-park>

March 11: The Standard Digital mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*Universities brace for key changes as CUE chiefs' tenure end.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/716-standard-digital-universities-brace-for-key-change-s-as-cue-chiefs-tenure-end>

March 10: The Daily Nation mentioned USIU-Africa in an article titled "*Champions Telkom Orange prey on Chase Amira in season opener.*"

<http://www.usiu.ac.ke/on-campus/news/media-mentions/717-daily-nation-champions-telkom-orange-prey-on-chase-amira-in-season-opener>