The teach-in was born in 1965, during the Vietnam War. The first one was held at the University of Michigan and it lasted all night long, with faculty members sharing their expertise and insights with students. Movies and music were included, and the event culminated in a lecture by Arnold Kaufman, a liberal philosopher. The largest one took place at Berkeley the same year, and lasted 36 hours, attracting a wide range of participants, including celebrities, with backgrounds as diverse as history, politics, science, philosophy, fiction, theater, and music. Most recently, the Occupy Movement used the teach-in to educate people about capitalism.

At the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year, I felt compelled to do something at UMass Boston in response to the public violence targeting young African American men and other men of color. Michael Brown being killed in the street and left to bake in the August sun for hours seemed an outrage to me, and I hadn’t forgotten that Trayvon Martin, in 2012, was killed because someone decided he had no business walking in a gated community. And Brown and Martin were by no means the only examples of such premature deaths. Just before Brown was killed, Eric Garner was slammed against the sidewalk, his breath and life ended. And a twelve-year old boy playing in a Cleveland park was killed for waving a gun, which was a toy.

At UMass Boston, the city’s best intellectual bang for a buck, the bright, ambitious young men and women eager for a better future walk through these doors. What are they thinking and feeling about all these bullets that could whiz into their skulls and take their tomorrows in this disturbing time at the start of the 21st
March 18, 2015,  
Passing of Dr. Ben:

Professor Robert Johnson,  
Chair of The Africana  
Studies Department, was a  
student of Dr. Ben; he remembers:

“I use to pick Dr. Ben up from the  
Ithaca airport every Wednesday  
morning when he would fly up to  
Cornell from NYC in the early 70's.  
He would then come to my house  
and share our meal. Through him, I  
was awakened to an area of study  
that I never knew existed and my life  
has been changed forever.”

Dr. Yoseff Ben-Jochannan,  
Professor Emeritus of  
Africana Studies at Cornell  
University passed away at  
the age of 97.

“Dr. Ben” will lie in State at Abyssinian  
Baptist Church on Thursday April 09,  
2015 from 4PM - 9PM.  
The Home Going service will also be  
held at Abyssinian Baptist Church on  
Friday April 10, 2015 at 9:30AM.

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is  
located at: 132 West 138th Street  
(Bet. Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. and  
Malcolm X Blvd. in Harlem, N.Y.

Cards and donations should be sent  
to: Ms. Ruth Johannes (daughter of  
“Dr. Ben”) - 955 Walton Avenue -  
Suite 2G - Bronx, N.Y. 10452

March 2015

century when the national demographics are shifting. Is the  
previous majority anxious about losing power? Do they want to  
thin the competition? What is the younger generation at risk  
thinking and feeling? This is not just a question for the educated.  
Some new thinking has to be done, and done quickly. So I reached  
out to a concerned, informed campus community, asking what we  
might do together.

Some suggested holding a teach-in. With students, we met and  
talked and planned. As I listened to the planning, I realized more  
than ever that my agenda is learning from but not repeating the  
past. This is a new century and time with new challenges, which  
require new methods and strategies. For a while now, I have felt  
privileged to be at a public institution where the student body  
speaks over ninety languages in a deeply monolingual and mono-  
cultural society, and in a city known for providing the best in world-  
class education. These students know the world, and they have  
lived things not yet in our textbooks.

This is a moment for us to learn from our students and for our  
students to learn from us, not in the usual ways of expert to  
neophyte, but in partnership, in sharing our respective resources  
and fonts of knowledge and understanding, bringing them all  
together into a new whole, creating new knowledge together. And  
so I call this congress of our minds a learn-in, not a teach-in.

We have charted out three learn-ins this semester. The first,  
scheduled for Black History Month 2015, is focused on what our  
students know. The second, in March 2015, will look at what  
activists in the city and country understand and have learned in the  
recent protests taking place in Ferguson, in New York, in Boston,  
and elsewhere in support of the Brown family, the Garner family,  
the Rice family, the Martin family, and so many other families whose  
members have been prematurely taken by urban bullets. The third,  
in April 2015, followed by a talk from activist and scholar Noam  
Chomsky, is focused on high impact areas and will zero in on  
public policies and new legislation intended to yield a new, safer  
day for youth and citizens of color.

Barbara Lewis, Director, Trotter Institute for the Study of  
Black History and Culture
From Umass to Selma, Alabama

On March 5, Professor Anthony Van Der Meer, senior lecturer in Africana studies, took a group of students to Selma, Alabama. The trip was organized in coordination with Kevin Peterson of the New Democracy Coalition, Reverend Ron Bell, and Leonard Lee, a community advocate.

Course Offering Fall 2015:

Intro to African-American Literature, AFRSTY 100

This survey course examines the writings of African-Americans who have made unique contributions to the African-American literary tradition.

Intro to Africana Studies, AFRSTY 101

This course presents an overview of the major theories in the field of Africana studies and conveys an understanding of the cultural, historical, and political roots of this experience.
Jamaica Today Program 2015

Panorama: an unbroken view of the whole region surrounding an observer.
(Definition found on google.com)

The Jamaica Today program provided my classmates and myself with exactly that, a panorama of Jamaican life—both in the terms of the present day and the past.

We began our journey in Kingston; from the moment that we exited the airport I was enamored with the vast natural beauty surrounding us from every direction. Mountain ranges scattered with palm trees extended far along the road ahead. On the left, crashing waves met a wall of massive white marble boulders carefully placed for the prevention of roadway flooding. Both plant, and animal wildlife crowded the roadways in abundance. Beyond the exquisite landscape was the cultural rhythm of Jamaican life, a natural rarity all its own.

Vendors lined the sides of the streets beckoning as we passed; the entrepreneurial spirit of the nation's people floated through the van's open windows. The hospitable island life style pulled us in and enveloped us immediately.

Our first weeks spent on the University of West Indies campus allowed us to see the life of a student as well as a local. We participated in local celebrations, haggled with local businesses, and studied in the campus library. We attended classes daily; many led by guest speakers who gave insight into the nation's intricate past, and the lasting impression such a history has left behind on the country's citizens.

During our class time we focused on the growth and development of Jamaican society throughout the entirety of its existence. Starting from the age of European colonialism, moving into present day political and economic issues. As we read and discussed, we were able to relate class topics directly to the site

Course Offering Fall 2015:

African-American Social Movements, AFRSTY 108

Concepts of social movements as well as the appearance of social movements among African-Americans in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century are examined in this course.

African American History I & II, AFRSTY 110 & 111

An intensive study of the social, economic, and political history of African-Americans from the slavery period to the present.

Black Consciousness, AFRSTY115G

This course examines the social, economic, cultural and political implications of the development of Black consciousness in twentieth-century United States.

Afro-Caribbean Literature, AFRSTY292G

Examines the development and significance of AfroCaribbean literature in the 20th century. Emphasis is given to the development of post-colonial themes and techniques in Caribbean sociocultural contexts.

Modern African Historical Perspectives, AFRSTY117

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visits that were to follow. As a group we spent a great majority of our time exploring the impact of national history on Jamaica’s current position within the global market. As well as the impact of inspiring leaders and motivational heroes that have influenced Jamaican nationalism.

After two weeks in Kingston, we moved into the smaller rural community of Treasure Beach. Our Jamaican experience was further enhanced here, through the interactions we were able to have on a personal level with individuals from all walks of life on a daily basis. We met small business owners, property managers; school aged children, and Rastafarian movement members. During class excursions we were exposed to the wide variety of historical, rural, and urban sights that Jamaica has to offer.

As was true of the entirety of the month-long trip, our culinary experience was diverse, explorative, and rewarding. Dining was one of the aspects of this trip which I enjoyed the most. We were served traditional Jamaican food, mostly grown, caught and farmed locally. We ate in a buffet style, which allowed for a wide range of variety for everyone to experience local cuisine.

We ended the trip with an overnight stay in Montego Bay, where we were able to see the abundant tourist market in Jamaica. While the economical benefits of this industry are undeniable, I can sincerely say I would have never developed such a respect and admiration for this nation had this been our only mode of interaction.

This final view of Jamaica reminds me of all the nation’s amazing attributes that I would have missed out on, had I traveled here without the UMass Boston program. I was able to experience pieces of Jamaican life that the tourist industry does not cater to, and those are the memories that I will cherish the most. Overall I can say that this study abroad experience has influenced me to continue to travel; and to do so in a manner in which I can fully educate myself, in order to understand and appreciate the distinct cultures of our world.

Elaini Daigle, UMB Student, Jamaica Today Program 2015