



# TALKING DRUM










February 2022

## The African Scholars Forum's Spring 2022 Semester Newsletter

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### BLACK HISTORY IN AFRICA SPEAKER SERIES

The African Scholars Forum (ASF) at The John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies, UMass Boston



February-18-2022

Location: ON ZOOM

Registration Link:

<https://AIBHSSeries>

visit [www.ada.umb.edu](http://www.ada.umb.edu) for disability-related accommodations



### Kamari Maxine Clarke

*Distinguished Professor, University of Toronto and Adjunct Professor, University of California Los Angeles*

***"Affective Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Pan-Africanist Pushback"***

### Upcoming Spring 2022 Semester Events

Black History in Africa Speaker Series Feb 18, 2022

Africa Day April 1, 2022

ISA Conference March 28-April 2, 2022

## Opening Remarks

Happy New Year!



The current edition of our newsletter, *Talking Drum*, reviews some of the events that we held at the tail end of the Fall while also previewing some of our events and activities this spring 2022, including this Friday's *Africa in Black History* event featuring distinguished professor, Kamari Clarke who will be discussing, "The ICC and the Pan African Pushback". If you haven't done so already, please register [here](#).

Not in this edition, but coming up in April, we are also excited about our Africa Day keynote speakers African Union ambassador to the US, H.E Hilda Suka-Mafudze and Africa Center for Disease Control (CDC) Head of Policy Division, Dr. Benjamin Djoudalbaye. More information will be coming soon.

This edition of *Talking Drum* reviews for you our Winnie Mandela Speaker and Kwanzaa event that we held last December and presents a befitting memorial and legacy article on the now, late Bishop Desmond Tutu's life and work highlighting African-centered, transnational justice. Also in this edition, we are excited about profiling our UMass Boston and McCormack students who attended last November's African Studies Association annual conference, and you will be pleased to read about our colleague, Dr. Christopher Graham, prestigious receipt of BU's African Studies Center Title IV course development grant to develop a course on *Climate Change in Africa and the Global South*.

Happy reading, all, and I hope to see you around at McCormack's Africa events this spring!

### **Rita Kiki Edozie (PhD)**

Dean (interim), John W. McCormack School for Policy and Global Studies

Professor of International Relations

Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security and Global Governance

Chair, The African Scholars Forum@ McCormack, UMass Boston

## Winnie Mandela Speaker Series: A Gallant Advocate of Humanity at UMass' Africa Scholars Forum



The Africa Scholars Forum (ASF) at UMass Boston recently changed its speaker series title from Amilcar Cabral to Winnie Mandela, highlighting the gendered perspective in Africa's liberation,

specifically South Africa's anti-apartheid struggles. Invoking the name of Winnie Madikizela Mandela is part of recognizing the centrality of women in the liberation of Africa who still remain not only a symbol of hope on the continent's transformation, but also that of unity. But who is Winnie Mandela?

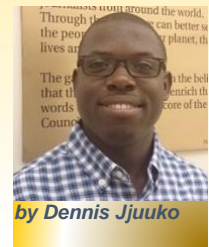
The late Winnie was a South African anti-apartheid activist, politician, and Member of Parliament from 1994 to 2003, and from 2009 until her death on April 2, 2018. She also served as Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture from 1994 to 1996, and a member of the African National Congress (ANC) political party who served on their National Executive Committee and headed its Women's League. She was also the wife of the late Nelson Mandela (first Black President of the Republic of South Africa). Ms. Mandela was known by her supporters as the "Mother of the Nation".

Like other anti-apartheid icons such as Mariam Makeba, Chris Hani, Steve Biko, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and Albertina Sisulu, among others, Winnie was a target of the apartheid government's security forces. She was detained on various occasions, tortured, subjected to banning orders, and banished to a rural town, and spent several months in solitary confinement. She emerged as a leading opponent of apartheid during Nelson Mandela's imprisonment; her own experience in prison, by her account, "hardened" her. From 1977 to 1985, she organized a non-governmental organization, Operation Hunger, and a clinic in Brandfort with Dr. Abu Baker Asvat, her personal physician. She campaigned actively for equal rights and was promoted by the ANC as a symbol of the struggle against the apartheid state.

**In the life of South Africa's Mother of the Nation, we learn the values of consistence and perseverance in the pursuit of Africa's transformation**

Winnie Mandela's contribution to the anti-apartheid struggles were significant, as she was extremely popular amongst ANC supporters. In December 1993 and April 1997, she was elected President of the ANC Women's League, although she withdrew her candidacy for ANC Deputy President at the movement's Mafikeng conference in December 1997. Earlier in 1997, she appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, where Archbishop Desmond Tutu as chairman recognized her importance in the anti-apartheid struggle but exhorted her to apologize for certain transgressions and violations from the Mandela United Football Club, her personal security detail.

In the life of South Africa's Mother of the Nation, we learn the values of consistency and perseverance in the pursuit of Africa's transformation. Winnie remained true to the revolution that produced a "Rainbow Nation," a term coined by Archbishop Tutu to describe post-apartheid South Africa and elaborated by Nelson Mandela to mean the unity of multi-culturalism and the coming together of people of many different nations. This is Africa's vision of unity in diversity that UMass Boston's Africa Scholar's Forum is tapping into by bringing together a community of diverse scholars on Africa to contribute to the continent's journey of transformation. Consequently, changing the Amilcar Cabral series to the Winnie Mandela series is part of that journey.



## Ecstatic Communities



Adanna Kalejaye, a PhD student in the Public Policy doctoral program introduced the keynote, Dr. Dana Francisco Miranda, who is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Faculty Fellow for the Applied Ethics Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston, as well as a Research Associate for the Philosophy Department at the University of Connecticut. His research is in political philosophy, Africana philosophy, phenomenology, and

psychosocial studies. His current book manuscript, *The Coloniality of Happiness*, investigates the philosophical significance of suicide, depression, and wellbeing for members of the African Diaspora.

**...the desire for happiness can then be synonymous with a call to be “adjusted” to oppression, dehumanization, antiblack racism and coloniality**

Dr. Miranda talk was on *Ecstatic Communities*. He gave us a definition of “ecstatic” which is a word that comes from the Greek *ekstasis* and means, “entrancement, astonishment, insanity; any displacement or removal from the proper place.” It can also signify states of elation or overwhelming happiness rather than its original meaning of “standing outside oneself.” He noted how Africana “counter-orders” have retained the concept of ecstasy (standing out) in responding to conditions of anti-Black racism and coloniality. As he explained, the coloniality of happiness is defined as the

desire or act of resituating oneself to “normal” conditions which are suboptimal. Thus, the desire for happiness can then be synonymous with a call to be “adjusted” to oppression, dehumanization, anti-Black racism and coloniality. He explored “Ecstatic Communities” by looking at how Afro-Diasporic people navigated a world that foreclosed the possibility of their existence and struggled to build spaces and relationships in which their values and lives could withstand assault. As he explained, carnivals and marronage (whereby fugitivity is an element of ecstatic communities) are spaces of resistance in which Black people and their articulation of joy, happiness, and wellbeing frequently had to be displaced or practiced somewhere else; or have been characterized as insanity itself. Dr. Miranda question thus was, “how do we keep Africana notions of wellbeing ongoing?”

While Afrodiasporic people have been able to partially transform experiences of disorder, contingency, and non-belonging into ecstatic counter orders, he concluded that to achieve fuller expressions of the ecstatic, such communities must also expand upon the “here” and “now”; hence the ecstatic must transcend home (in the swamps) or being only alive during carnivals to be a necessary state for achieving wellbeing and optimality for all Africana people.



## Kwanzaa Celebration 2021



Professor Jemadari Kamara, Chair & Associate Professor of Africana Studies and Director for the Center for African, Caribbean & Community Development at University of Massachusetts Boston, was the keynote speaker for the 2021 Kwanzaa Celebration. Professor Kamara's research interest lies in African-American

urban politics, intellectual thought, community development, and public policy.

This year marks the 55th annual Kwanzaa concert that was originally started by Dr. Maulana Karenga. According to Professor. Kamara, Kwanzaa is a celebration of the African community, and is a foundation of resistance based upon on values, ideals, and new order; and there are critical points of initiation, transition, and transformation, just as there are in our lives. Professor Kamara went further to highlight that the name “Kwanzaa” is originated from the African traditions and culture which means “first fruits” in Swahili. During Kwanzaa celebrations, each family celebrates Kwanzaa in their own way, and on each of the seven nights the family gathers. Then a child lights one of the candles on a candleholder that represents one of the seven principles that represents the values of African culture is discussed.

For Professor Kamara, the first principle of Kwanzaa is unity, which is fundamental in maintaining unity in our communities. The second principle is focused on self-determination. The third principle is collective work and responsibility. He believes that “collective work and responsibility that we all have and share in our community, will play a crucial role in building our communities collectively, in a unified way, so we can determine for ourselves, and our future.” The fourth principle is cooperative economics, “Ujamaa,” which promotes collective economic development. Professor Kamara posits that cooperative economics is part of the philosophy of Julius Nyerere, the first President of Tanzania, who built the economic infrastructure of Tanzania based upon this concept of “Ujamaa.” The rest of the seven principles of Kwanzaa includes purpose, creativity, and faith. He concludes that the seven basic principles represent the values and concepts reflective of African culture.



## Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu: South Africa's Gift to the World



Source: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/11-pieces-of-wisdom-from-desmond-tutu-to-inspire-change\\_b\\_5866d809e4b014e7c72ee13c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/11-pieces-of-wisdom-from-desmond-tutu-to-inspire-change_b_5866d809e4b014e7c72ee13c)

Desmond Tutu was a South African Anglican Archbishop and theologian, known for his work as an anti-apartheid and human rights activist. As a man of stature who remained true to the struggle to liberate Black South Africans, he extended the struggle to other countries that were undergoing challenges of dictatorship, tyranny, and other forms of human rights abuses. Tutu, as a man of unity, worked beyond the Anglican church of Southern Africa as the Secretary General of South African Council of Churches (1978 to 1985), thereby being seen and taken as a leader beyond the Anglican church.

In many of the positions he held in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Desmond is referred to as "The First." Bishop Tutu was the first Black Dean of St. Marys' Cathedral in the Diocese of Johannesburg. He became the first Black Bishop of the Dioceses of Lesotho (1976 to 1978), Johannesburg (1985), and then the first Black Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Cape Town (from 1986), the most senior position in Southern Africa's Anglican hierarchy. He became a symbol of hope and resilience for the marginalized Black community in South Africa that did not believe it was possible for Black people to rise in ranks of leadership and responsibility. In the position of Archbishop of Cape Town, he emphasized a consensus-building model of leadership and oversaw the introduction of women priests.

Throughout his life and religious career, Tutu led the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. While a teacher in the 1960s, the apartheid regime introduced a law of diluting the education of Black communities in South Africa to keep them at the periphery of the country's affairs. He protested the law by quitting South Africa's education system and devoting his knowledge and experience to challenging apartheid. By the end of the 1970s he was the leading anti-apartheid icon still in South Africa, along with Winnie Mandela, while others were either

incarcerated at Robben Island prison or had fled to exile. He was therefore a key leader of the struggle through the 1980s to early 1990s. While he received intelligence reports on plans to assassinate him, he remained steadfast and consistent with the struggle as he stressed non-violent protest and foreign economic pressure to bring about universal suffrage. It could be true that this was among the reasons why he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 because he intensified the struggle within South Africa, despite tough and challenging times. The Nobel Peace Prize made him not only a figure of struggle against impunity within South Africa, but the entire world. Tutu played the leadership role till the release of Nelson Mandela, received him from prison, and introduced him to South Africans on the balcony of a building in Cape Town. Tutu informed the people that he brought back their freedom fighter and leader, handed over political leadership to Mandela, and returned to the Church. To further emphasize the leadership role played by

**In the 1960s, the apartheid regime introduced a law of diluting the education of Black communities in South Africa to keep them at the periphery of the country's affairs**

Bishop Tutu in the anti-apartheid struggle, Nelson Mandela referred to him as “Public Enemy Number One” of the apartheid administration. Tutu encouraged church leaders to talk about the politics of the country but discouraged them from taking political sides since they were meant to be servers of all people, including the white minority that had presided over apartheid for years.

In Tutu, the world saw a man that speaks truth to power, whether sweet or bitter. Tutu did not get entangled in the dilemma of choosing between political correctness and political wrongness.

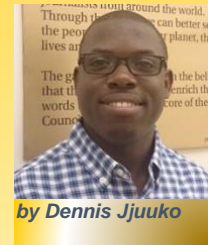
A classic example was when, as chairperson of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he fell out with the late Winnie Mandela for asking her to apologize for the abuses committed by her team during the anti-apartheid struggle. This is added to his promise of fighting South Africa's Black-majority party, the African National Congress (ANC), if they did not remain true to the struggle, a promise he kept till his death by exposing the corruption of the ANC government. The classical examples are his criticism of South African President Thabo Mbeki's relaxed and ineffective approach in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the corruption in President Jacob Zuma's government.

In Tutu, we saw a symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation, as he was against “an eye for an eye” version of justice. Many apartheid regime members, including Pieter Willem Botha, declined to appear before the TRC in fear of facing revenge. However, Bishop Tutu's approach discouraged shame and the degrading treatment of the implementers of apartheid, and instead encouraged mutual respect. He did not promote a victors' justice approach; he instead encouraged a restorative approach to righting wrongs in South Africa and gave a vision for the



future of a country with diverse groups when he coined the word “The Rainbow Nation.” He is therefore the author of collective responsibility for the future of South Africa by emphasizing a win-win outcome.

To the world, Tutu campaigned against human rights abuses and spoke out on a wide range of subjects, among them criticizing Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, which he described as apartheid (alongside his simultaneous belief in Israel’s right to exist), and his opposition to the 2003-2011 Iraq War. Archbishop Tutu was therefore a true son of South Africa who stretched his hand to the tribulations in the other parts of the globe, making him South Africa’s gift to the world. His philosophy and actions will remain a touch of the world for ever more.



### **McCormack’s Africa Scholars Forum Sponsors Four UMass Boston Students’ Attendance at the African Studies Association Conference of 2021**

Africanists positioning themselves in the study of Africa is an important step on the journey of transforming the continent. The African Studies Association (ASA) annual meeting is one of the many that facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experiences on the study of Africa. The ASA’s annual meeting is the largest gathering of Africanist scholars in the world and is the flagship event of the association. With an attendance of over 2,000 scholars and professionals, the conference offers: more than 300 panels and roundtables; plenary events featuring keynote speakers; an awards ceremony and dance party; institutional and organizational receptions and meetings; an international exhibit hall; and screenings of award-winning movies from Africa and/or by African producers. It is because of these benefits that the Africa Scholars Forum (ASF) at UMass Boston sponsored four students to attend the 2021 ASA conference under the theme: *Re-centering Africa: Resistance and Renewal in a World Beyond Covid-19*. This sponsorship enabled the four students to attend and participate in a wide array of panels on the study of Africa. The four students include: Makda Teklemichael a graduate student in the Gender, Leadership, and Public Policy; Fridah Dermillah Obare, a PhD student in the Global Governance and Human Security program; Mahesh Admankar, a PhD student of Public Policy; and Chidima Ozor Commer, a PhD student from the School of Global Inclusion and Development.

## Students' Reflections on the 62<sup>nd</sup> African Studies Association's Annual Conference

### Chidimma Ozor Commer



**Chidimma Ozor Commer,**  
LLMSW, MSW, MA  
School of Global Inclusion and  
Social Development

I am incredibly grateful that the African Scholars Forum at the University of Massachusetts, Boston provided a scholarship for me to attend the African Studies Association's Annual Conference several weeks ago. It was time well spent in community with other Africanists. I was inspired to do more to further African Studies both through my research contributions and beyond as I navigate my work and collaborations intentionally, strategically, and thoughtfully. While I attended most of the sessions I anticipated, I couldn't attend "Ordinary Women, Ordinary Lives or #EndSARS." I've also included screenshots from "Entrepreneurship & Urbanism" and "Research as More Than Extraction"

The "Publish That Book" session was helpful as it provided context on the various university presses and the types of books for which they would be interested. It was also incredibly fun to see "University of Michigan Press" in Ann Arbor, MI on the first slide when I logged into the Zoom session, as Ann Arbor is my hometown and the University of Michigan is my alma mater (three times over!). As a source of encouragement there were several presses that specifically wanted to publish works from authors on the continent. Emerging Scholars Network (ESN) Business Meeting was my favorite session to attend as it was for graduate students, postdocs, as well as faculty early in their careers so graduate students and those within five years of earning their PhD. The purpose of the ESN is to cultivate community of Africanists early in their careers. I also attended the "Emerging Scholar Careers and COVID-19" roundtable for emerging scholars to discuss their work in the context of their research, scholarship, and careers with a backdrop of COVID-19. While the global pandemic has affected all people, all impact is not created equal and it was evident from panelists sharing their experiences with research being derailed, trips not being able to be taken, delays, uncertainty, and disappointment.

One panelist poignantly intimated that there has been a prevailing narrative that we all should have been more productive than we have been, while another panelist remarked that the pandemic allowed them the space to be intentional about their work. This intentionality flies in the face of the constant push within academia to "publish or perish," for example. The "Entrepreneurship & Urbanism" session about entrepreneurship on the continent was reassuring to hear, as it presented Africa in a positive and innovative light. Many of us know that innovators

live on the continent and yet many in the global north are unaware, whether intentionally or unintentionally, that Africans have been able to and continue to innovate. The next day, I attended the “African Feminist History” panel, which presented frameworks on the intersections of Africanism or Africanist thought and African feminism and history. As a US-born Nigerian who uses Black feminist thought as a framework, while leaning heavily on Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala’s approach to reform, this was a helpful session to attend as an emerging scholar. Finally, on the final day, I attended the “Research as More Than Extraction” panels, which laid the foundation—through research design including methodology and methods—to push back on the harmful and prevailing narrative that Africa needs to be ‘saved’ or ‘rescued’ and that our story is not our own.

They explored how to conduct research in an ethical way, leaning into local and indigenous knowledge and wisdom, as well as giving back. A point that was made that must be underscored is that scholars and researchers often earn their degrees on the backs of or because of the willingness of communities to contribute to the body of knowledge. My hope is that in my work, I do not simply take but rather re-invest in those who assisted me by trusting me with their stories. The only concern I had during the second session was when a panelist who self-identified as a Canadian white woman indicated that she was often called “mother” by the children she was researching in Uganda and indicated that the children preferred her over their own mothers. This made me consider the ethics when researchers are amongst their “subjects” and the power differential that exists as well as the potential presence of white saviorism within research.

### **Makda Teklemichael**



**Makda Teklemichael**  
Global, Leadership and Public Policy  
Graduate Program

The last time I attended the African Studies Association’s Annual Conference was almost a decade ago. I am grateful for the support of African Scholars Forum (ASF) at UMass Boston which enabled me to attend the 64th Annual Conference virtually. What better opportunity to share a space with Africanist scholars and friends of Africa than the ASA annual meeting? Although I miss the in-person interaction, thanks to technology it was easier to attend as many panels and roundtables as possible. I felt like I had so much to catch up on with all the research and scholarly articles on Africa, so I tried to make the best of this opportunity. I was particularly interested in the “Gender and Development” panels. I attended sessions on African feminist history projects, which examine the ways in which African women’s history has been conceptualized, to panels on extraordinary lives of ordinary women in West Africa’s social and political development. It felt like traveling in time, from attending the transdisciplinary panels

on active participation of African women in slave labor and commerce to Africans as Humanitarians in the Twentieth Century. I am looking forward to the proceedings to be able read the amazing scholarly articles that I missed while attending these panels. Thank you, African Studies Forum, for this great opportunity.

### **Mahesh Admankar**



**Mahesh Admankar**

Global, Leadership and Public Policy  
Graduate Program

The African Studies Association's Conference helped me understand the diverse history of African peoples and those who are working on global issues around social exclusion. As someone who is new to international life in the US, having arrived recently, it was very difficult to find my own place in this complex society. Understanding the saga of social exclusion and systemic discrimination experienced by people of color in general and Africans, African-Americans, and Asians in particular, was difficult for me in the US. I have been searching for a scientific

platform where discussions around issues of people of color are undertaken by a group of academics, researchers, activists, and practitioners. My own suffering and exclusion in the US led me to search for people and platforms to engage with in a supportive system. That's when I met Dean Professor Rita Kiki Edozie in one of the events of the McCormack Graduate School. She understood my struggle and what it means to be an immigrant here from a marginalized background in India. She kindly connected me with the ASF and encouraged me to attend the African Studies Association's Conference with a scholarship.

Attending the ASA conference gave me an understanding of the socio-economic and political exclusion witnessed by Africans from a historical point of view. It also enabled me to relate my sense of exclusion with the African community. It was truly an enlightening session in my journey to understand the struggles of people of color. After attending the ASA conference, I understood my social position here and built a network of solidarity. Without the generous scholarship from ASF, this historical moment and understanding would have not been possible. Under this crucial context, I take this opportunity to thank Dean Professor Rita Kiki Edozie and the entire ASA and ASF teams for their kind understanding, amazing scholarship, and giving me a historical opportunity to be part of the community of ASA. I am eagerly and confidently looking forward to my continuous engagement with the ASA community.

## Emerging Scholar Receives Grant to Develop Course on Climate Change in Africa and the Global South



Dr. Christopher Graham, ASF member and McCormack Graduate School alum, has been awarded a Course Enhancement Grant from the African Studies Center at Boston University to develop a course on Climate Change and the Global South. At least half of this course will be devoted to the study of Africa. According to Dr. Graham, through carefully curated, pertinent, and game-changing case studies on African countries and experiences, this course will prioritize understanding the challenges and policy responses to climate change in the Global South. Dr. Graham says that the overarching rationale for a course like this is that despite extensive coverage in the media, scientific reports, and scholarly work, climate action has not been as forthcoming, impactful or effective.

Driving population displacement, food and water insecurity, and violent conflict, the direct and indirect consequences of climate change increasingly threaten the wellbeing of people, economic systems, and the environment. The Global South continues to experience the brunt of these climate realities. Research increasingly shows that the world's climate hotspots are concentrated in the Global South: Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and South America. Yet, global climate governance or international environmental relations often overlooks the nuances, challenges, and contributions of the Global South to understanding and responding effectively to the global climate crisis. Africa more specifically represents a region mainly comprised of developing countries experiencing a variety of climate-induced challenges, while also being an incubator for climate innovations and adaptation strategies. Indeed, the African experience with climate change is at the epicenter of the complexities and possibilities that exists for the international community as we grapple with the global climate crisis.

Dr. Graham further recounts that, "it's such an honor to receive this grant and I'm so thankful to the BU African Studies Center, UMB's IR and PoliSci program directors, The McCormack School, and all who made this possible. I'm also looking forward to the valuable impact and contribution the course's development and offering would have on students and the international relations and political science fields." If you have any case study suggestions or audio-visual material to recommend, please don't hesitate to reach out to Dr. Graham via email at [Christopher.Graham@umb.edu](mailto:Christopher.Graham@umb.edu) or on twitter @CGrahamNow.

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