



# Institute of African Studies

## CARLETON UNIVERSITY

## Message from Blair Rutherford, Director



Entering into our fourth year of existence, the Institute of African Studies at Carleton University continues to grow. This past August we received approval for a collaborative master's in African Studies to start in January 2013. This is the first post-graduate degree in African Studies in Canada.

It permits students accepted in one of 13 MA programs and the MBA program to apply to the Institute to gain a specialization in African Studies. Despite the late approval of the program, I am pleased to say that we have 15 students from 6 different MA programs starting in January. We profile some of the graduate students working on African issues before this collaborative program began.

I am also extremely pleased to announce that Dr. Nduka Otiono has received a prestigious Banting postdoctoral fellowship to be with the Institute for the next two years. The Canadian government started these highly competitive fellowships two years ago to build "world-class research capacity by recruiting top-tier Canadian and international" scholars. Nduka carries out cutting-edge research on street stories in Nigeria and beyond and he will greatly enhance the expertise we have at Carleton in African cultural studies; please read the profile of him in this issue.

We also profile two other scholars who have contributed greatly to the promotion of African Studies in the classrooms of Carleton and in the wider Ottawa-Gatineau community. Kathy Armstrong teaches West African, particularly Ghanaian, drumming, dancing and singing to Carleton students and in the wider community. She also will be leading our third African Studies Abroad course in May 2013 focusing on African Music in Culture in Ghana.

In addition to teaching an African language of music, Carleton has a sharp teacher of an extremely important African language. The School of Linguistics and Language Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences kindly supported our request three years ago to offer Kiswahili courses and since then Regina Fupi has been teaching dozens of students the only African language used by the African Union.

Another wonderful example of how other programs at Carleton have supported African Studies and learning opportunities for students and the wider public comes from the History Department's practicum course, which allows senior undergraduate students to carry out historical research outside of the classroom. Last winter, four History students started to archive the massive collection of primary and secondary documents concerning Africa donated to the Institute by Professor Emeritus Doug Anglin who was the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zambia and was a professor of Political Science at Carleton for thirty years. One of the students discusses this experience. More information about the collection can be found at [www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/current-students/resources/douglas-anglin-archives-carleton](http://www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/current-students/resources/douglas-anglin-archives-carleton)

From May 1-3, 2013, we are hosting the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS), with the theme of "Africa Communicating: Digital Technologies, Representation, Power." We hope to see some of you there. More information at [www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/events/caas-2013](http://www2.carleton.ca/africanstudies/events/caas-2013).

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# Banting Fellow makes sense of ‘street stories’

By Samantha Wright Allen



It's no accident that Nduka Otiono, winner of the prestigious Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship, is at Carleton.

"The institute of African Studies at Carleton is very unique. Carleton's is the first and perhaps the only stand-alone institute of African studies in Canada," said Otiono, who arrived in Canada's capital in July.

But, that's not all the winner of the two-year fellowship said has drawn him to the campus. Ottawa, Otiono said, is a Canadian hub that provides him access to African diplomats, decision-makers and intellectuals across university departments and disciplines, a proximity that he finds integral to his research, which draws from his extensive experience as a writer, journalist, poet and cultural activist.

The Banting Fellowship was created to draw the best postdoctoral research talent to Canadian universities using internationally competitive funding. It adds to his long list of awards, including a Killam Memorial Scholarship, a nomination for the Governor General's Gold Medal for academic distinction, and a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University.

For the past five years, Otiono has been researching a trail of popular urban narratives in Nigeria, an exciting interdisciplinary investigation that draws from oral traditions, folktales, literary work, social media, and traditional print news. And he's finding connections in similar narratives in other African countries, as he casts his research net ever wider. He plans to visit Ghana and Kenya in the New Year to gather first-hand knowledge from the streets.

"What I have done, what I am doing, is proposing a new term within the context of postcolonial politics and culture for defining these narratives. They are sometimes called rumours, they are sometimes called grapevine; they are called all sorts of things," said Otiono. His wide, friendly smile easily conveys his passion for the subject.

He calls them "street stories" and his expansive research of primary sources – many drawn from his experience as a Nigerian journalist – suggests these popular urban narratives deserve their own nomenclature; they are uniquely situated to travel

across numerous platforms such as news media, word-of-mouth, billboards, film, music, and social media.

He sees these narratives – often disproven – cropping up as fact. They are supported and perpetuated by both official and unofficial grassroots methods of communication and often the threads are so long that their origins can't be tracked.

He said it's a classic chicken or the egg situation.

"I'm identifying them in relation not just to everyday life, which is where they are actually located, but also within the framework of political resistance," said Otiono, who is quite familiar with the subtle culture of resistance, having reported for years during Nigeria's military dictatorship.

Otiono lets me feel the scar on his right arm, just where the meat of the shoulder dips into the muscle of the upper arm – this is his skin's hard fleshy memory of an old gunshot wound.

"I bring my experience from the field into my research. And so I doubt I would have been able to do this research if I didn't have the field experience as a journalist," adding that his research has a certain archival importance for Nigeria as he analyzes the words of yellowed and fraying newspaper that the intellectual has saved from decades before.

Otiono left Nigeria in 2006. He was born in the 1960s, during Nigeria's post-colonial formative years. He lived through a three-year Civil War and reported during the oppressive military regime, thankfully avoiding incarceration that many of his journalist friends experienced.

Today, Otiono's energy and humour leave little space in the room for his hard past. Leaning across the desk, his fingers flex the surface, and he explains why his research may be "seminal" and the "first of its kind." One gets the feeling that something special is happening here.

When he talks about the research he's conducting at Carleton, the gleam of discovery bleeds through his eyes and his gestures.

"It's not accidental, for example, that the Canadian Association of African Studies uses this institute as a hub," Otiono said.

"I see the institute growing in significance over time and I feel very opportune through the Banting Fellowship to be here at this time."

# African Music in Culture

By Clare Clancy



For Kathy Armstrong, there's no better place to study drumming than in West Africa.

"Ghana is very well known to drummers," she said, adding that she has been studying drumming for 25 years.

"We'll be able to study both the

traditional music and urban music."

In May, Armstrong will be bringing about a dozen students to Ghana for a one-month field course called *AFRI 3100: African Music in Culture*, this coming year's African Studies Abroad course.

"The success of a trip like this has to do with all the different experiences people bring," she explains, "It's a really nice opportunity to look at a culture through the arts."

Students participating come from a range of disciplines including Music, African Studies and Journalism.

The three-week course will include language training in Ewe (one of Ghana's key languages), and a mix of the urban and rural drumming scene, in both the capital city of Accra and the small village of Dagbame.

"We'll explore some nightclub spots for African jazz and urban music, and in the village they'll be able to really immerse themselves in the music, participating in ceremonies and eating local food."

The trip will also allow students the chance to travel around Ghana, exploring protected rainforests and historical sites. This kind of trip isn't new to Armstrong, who mentions that travelling to Ghana is like returning to her second family.

In 2001, members of the Baobab Tree Drum Dance Community travelled to Ghana with Armstrong and were exposed to authentic West African drumming.

"Travelling to Ghana is pretty eye-opening," she said. "It really shakes up people's preconceived notions of Africa.

It makes you rethink poverty, and rethink abundance." Armstrong, who has taught music at Carleton for 16 years, founded the Baobab Tree Drum Dance Community in 1995, here in Ottawa. It caters to youth between ages 12 to 24 years old.

"I picked the baobab tree because I wanted something that reflected strength and character. It's an amazing tree," she said. "It's got very spongy roots and can retain its water during times of drought." Armstrong noted that many students in the dance community stay involved for years, always eager to improve their drumming skills.

"There are kids who've been with me for seven or eight years."

Armstrong was trained as a percussionist at University of Toronto and found herself drawn to the growing popularity of World music in the 1980s, she said. She added that African drumming is unique in so many ways.

"The way the rhythms are layered and linked together really changes patterns in people's hemispheres," she said, adding that the drumming integrates dance movements and singing.

For university students especially, Armstrong said, African drumming can be a great stress reliever. Armstrong teaches a rhythm ensemble at Carleton to expose students to this kind of music and dance.

"We develop a lot of non-verbal communications," she said.

In essence, African drumming offers people confidence, self-esteem and a physical workout within a strong community.

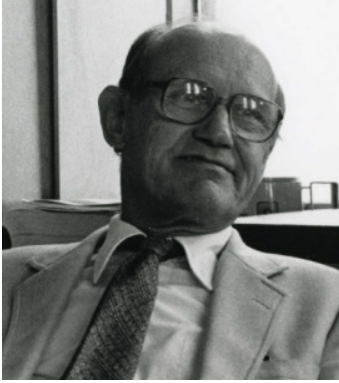
"It just really helps with mental, spiritual and physical health," Armstrong said.





# The Douglas Anglin Archival Project

By Jonathan Iraegui



My experience with the Douglas Anglin Archival Project began in the fall of 2011, with my enrolment in the Carleton Department of History's practicum program. I was interested in applying the historical knowledge and theory I had accumulated throughout my education towards a more practical,

tangible product. Almost immediately, the Anglin files were recommended to me based upon my prior experience in the study of African politics and history. A large collection of documents and research donated by Professor Anglin to the Institute of African Studies required sorting and organising, in order to be made available to the public for research purposes.

Born in Toronto in 1923, Douglas Anglin earned his B.A. in Political Science and Economics at the University of Toronto before completing graduate studies at Oxford. Anglin filled various teaching positions at the University of Manitoba before beginning a thirty-year tenure at Carleton in 1958, a period interspersed with frequent travels to western and southern Africa. In 1965, Professor Anglin was asked to serve as vice-chancellor for the University of Zambia, the first postsecondary education institution in the country, a post he would hold for three years. Throughout the 1990s, Anglin participated in election monitoring in a number of African countries, including Namibia, South Africa and Nigeria. After a long and fruitful career, Douglas Anglin was recognised as a professor emeritus at Carleton, in addition to receiving an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Zambia in 2011.

The first day of archival work felt overwhelming, as we encountered the collection for the first time. We were to be set up, every Friday, in a seminar room on the top floor of the library, a simple work space with a large table, chairs, and a shelving system that would ultimately hold the final products of our labour (for the time being). Sitting upon a series of carts were boxes full of files and folders, primarily regarding Anglin's time spent studying and living in Africa. The first thoughts to enter my mind were, "How do we get started with all of this? What were we looking for, and how were we going to organise it all?" The project would require transforming us from our traditional role as students into the roles of true archivist historians. Our first duty was to process the documents, which

involved sorting through files and folders, eliminating duplicates, removing paperclips and other unnecessary materials while simultaneously recording dates and deciphering the many abbreviations that Professor Anglin had used to categorize his work. The type of material we encountered was wide-ranging, including newspaper clippings dating back to the 1950s, as well as an assortment of publications, reports, election manuals, and handwritten notes. Amongst these were reports from the UN, Commonwealth, Southern African Development Community, various regional trade organisations, and much more. Minutes and summaries from international conferences provided an in-depth perspective into key African political and diplomatic proceedings occurring throughout Anglin's career, while publications on election monitoring and personal correspondence between Professor Anglin and others were a great source of fascination for a student such as myself, involved in the behind-the-scenes aspect of archival work.

Having completed processing, we turned our attention to the colossal task of archival arrangement and descriptions. This required us to be even more meticulous than we had been during processing, as it involved precise organisation of data that would eventually form the basis for our finding aid, a document providing the primary means for access to the contents of the collection. Becoming acquainted with guidelines for archival work truly illustrated the attention to detail required, and the necessity of a standard for this type of organisation, which is indispensable for any researcher trying to make sense of a large collection of material such as this.

Ultimately, the greatest issue throughout the project was one that Professor Anglin himself raised in an early meeting to discuss the collection. He asked us what use we thought the documents would serve, and if additions would be made to it in the future. My response, and what I continue to believe, is that the donated materials provide an invaluable resource that presents a unique perspective into the realm of African history, politics, and society from the perspective of someone who lived and worked in the region over the course of his career. Standing alone, the Douglas Anglin Collection serves as an important source of information for academic and research purposes, as well as personal interest. I believe that it is a rich addition to the resources of Carleton's Institute of African Studies and I look forward to following its future progress in the hands of this year's incoming practicum students.

# Kiswahili flourishes at Carleton

By Emma Bider



"If you know somebody's language ... you know the culture," says Regina Fupi. "I see language as a window through which we see others."

It is clear from speaking with her that Fupi has a passion for language and is currently following that passion by teaching Kiswahili as an instructor at Carleton University.

"I love everything about teaching Kiswahili, everything."

Kiswahili is a commonly spoken language in East and Central Africa and the official working language of the African Union, making it an important asset to anyone planning to live and work in the area.

While Kiswahili is spoken by millions worldwide, there is only a tiny fraction of the population who speak it in Canada.

However, the numbers are growing; currently seven per cent of Kiswahili speakers in Canada live in Ottawa.

The enthusiasm for Kiswahili language learning is growing steadily as more people are getting to know that the language is offered at Carleton University. It is also offered during summer, thereby allowing more people, especially those working who are enthusiasts of the language, the opportunity to acquire it.

There has been enough interest in her first year class for a fairly high enrollment.

"The students are very interested because ... in my first year class we have 26 students and the maximum is 27, so in first year we have large classrooms. The second year class has already started, but it has had to be put on hold (prior to) greater enrollments," says Fupi.

Fupi's interest in language goes beyond just teaching. The study of Kiswahili has been an interest throughout her life. Even during her Bachelor's Degree she studied Kiswahili as one of her majors.

"I love languages; I love learning about languages and everything about linguistics."

Fupi has earned two Masters Degrees, one at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania (her homeland), and one from Carleton. In between her degrees she received the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship, and taught Kiswahili at Stanford University for one year.

"In my first M.A. in linguistics I did a critique on electronic media translations ... and in my second Masters at Carleton, I looked at the use of metaphors in applied linguistics and how we can acclimatize international students to that tradition."

Fupi says that in academic English, metaphors are widely used and it is hard for students to fully acquire the language without knowledge of this more complex tool.

She also emphasizes that learning a language goes hand in hand with learning about the culture of a place or a people.

"For example, while my students are learning Kiswahili, they are also learning Swahili culture, and then through that they are able to see how other people live and they are taught to be tolerant."

Fupi says that she plans to work towards a Ph.D. at some point in the future, but right now she is content to teach, engaging her students through her love of languages and hopefully encouraging even more students to widen their horizons through language learning.



# IAS Carleton Graduate Profiles



## Wairimu Gitau

### *MJ candidate, Journalism and Communication*

After more than a decade working in the local and international media industry based in Kenya, Wairimu Gitau is now in her second year of a Master's of Journalism program at Carleton. For her final project, she returned to Kenya over the summer of 2012 with funding from Centre for Media Transitional Studies (CMTS). She is putting together a 20 minutes radio documentary on the use of social media in the upcoming elections in Kenya, to be held in March 2013. According to a Pew Research Centre survey, 75 percent of Kenyans own a mobile phone from which they can send short messages and access the internet. Having witnessed the highly disputed and chaotic elections of 2007, largely the result of ethnic divisions, the Kenyan government and international community now face similar concerns regarding the upcoming general election.

Increasingly, more people are active in social networking platforms now, than ever before in Kenya's history. The main focus of Wairimu's work is upon the youth in Mathare, one of Africa's largest and poorest slums, located in Nairobi, Wairimu's birthplace. Wairimu's emphasis is upon how Mathare's youth will engage social media ahead of the elections.

Wairimu is also seeking to facilitate change through media by establishing and participating in independent community media in the Mathare slum, and around Kenya. For instance, she is actively involved in the publishing of a quarterly magazine called Liberation in Mathare, through Liberation Cooperative Organization (LCO), an international independent media training and production group with chapters in Nairobi, and also in Toronto, Canada. She is also working on setting up both a physical and an online radio station in Mathare - called Mathare Radio - to give voice to a community that has long gone unserved by the mainstream media. Mathare Radio seeks to create greater awareness for social-economic and political issues by providing information and activities that will bring desired change within the community. By shining light upon issues of poverty,



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## Transcultural Bodies: a Comparative Approach to Postcolonial Female Writing

*Joana Pimentel, PhD student in Cultural Mediations – Literary Studies, Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture*



Joana Pimentel is conducting a comparative study on literature produced by African female writers coming from the former colonies of Portugal, Spain, and Italy. The non-canonical positioning of these authors allows them to question traditional stances on postcolonial theory. She argues that their representations of both Africa and the former European metropolises challenge dominant Western discourses by critically approaching issues of gender, race, and culture. Joana is also interested in comparing the different ideologies that support Hispanic, Lusophone, and Italoophone discourses on colonialism within the mainstream Anglophone model. She claims that the field of postcolonial studies needs to be adjusted to account for specific issues at stake within these parallel contexts. In brief, with her doctoral project, Joana

expects to demonstrate the potential of peripheral female writing to subvert canons of knowledge and to contribute new insights to postcolonial representations and discourses.

# IAS Carleton Graduate Profiles



## Holly Dunn

### *MA, Political Science*

For her Master's thesis, Holly conducted fieldwork in South Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She explored if and how baraza, a customary justice mechanism, contributes to building the rule of law. Due to a variety of problems associated with popular understandings of the rule of law, Holly theorized an alternative concept called 'peace-based rule of law' and used the case study of baraza to interrogate this concept. Her findings suggest a complex relationship between customary justice and the rule of law, thus warranting further examination.

Holly's proposed doctoral research is a gendered analysis of transitional justice in the DRC. She observes that the international media and international NGOs have sensationalized 'rape as a weapon of war' in the DRC, leading to a limited understanding of the gendered impact of war that fails to recognize the multidimensionality of women's experiences of war. The consequence of this has been transitional justice practices that do not recognize or change the underlying structures that maintain inequality and instability. Through this research, Holly hopes to contribute to understanding women's experiences of war, thus opening the door for more thorough and contextually relevant justice responses.



## Chris Huggins

### *PhD candidate, Geography & Environmental Studies*

Chris Huggins's dissertation examines ongoing agricultural reform in Rwanda, which has drastically improved aggregate agricultural yields and has been widely praised by the media, the UN, and other organizations.

For the research, more than 200 interviews have been conducted with farmers and administrators in two districts of Rwanda, and key informants, such as the staff of donor agencies, have been interviewed in Kigali and throughout North America. Key elements of the reform include regional crop specialization, land consolidation, and integration of smallholder production systems into national and global commodity chains. My research problematizes the reform from a number of perspectives, including the risk that smallholders are coerced into changing their behaviours, which undermines the 'market-orientated' conceptual foundations of the reform.

Secondly, evidence from agro-ecologically 'marginal' areas suggests that crops selected for regional specialization are not always economically viable. Thirdly, the processes of restructuring of production methods and commodity chains are infused with unequal power relations and consequently result in diverse outcomes, including new forms of 'accumulation by dispossession'. He also identifies processes of subjectification, which are bound up with so-called 'technical' aspects of the reform.

As has been the case in other countries, official discourses contend that reforming the agricultural sector requires not only technical interventions, but a change in farmer 'mindsets'. The government attempts to create a new rural Rwandan subject, a "modern farmer", who produces entirely for the market and uses credit to accumulate land and access new technologies. This attempt to produce a new kind of rural subject is linked in my dissertation to broader analysis of a post-genocide reinvention of the Rwandan state and Rwandan citizens.



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*All this information and more can be found on our website ([Carleton.ca/africanstudies](http://Carleton.ca/africanstudies)) and is sent out along with information about other public events having to do with Africa in the Ottawa-Gatineau region.*

*Please send us an email at [African\\_studies@carleton.ca](mailto:African_studies@carleton.ca) to be put on the mailing list.*

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**THANK YOU:** Let me once again pass on my deep appreciation for all the hard and professional work of the students who put this newsletter together: Emma Bider, Jonathan Iraegui, Clare Clancy, Michael Wark and especially Samantha Allen who not only wrote one of the articles but also did the layout for this newsletter.

-- Blair Rutherford



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