

Africana Studies Department  
Wellesley College  
106 Central Street,  
Wellesley, MA 02481  
(781) 283-2567

## **EDUCATION**

### **Boston University – Boston, MA**

Ph.D., Religion and Culture in Modern Society.

(Dissertation Topic: Asante Catholicism: Religious and Cultural Reproduction among the Akan of Ghana.) Supervisor: Professor Robert Hefner. Area of specialization: Anthropology, Religion, and World Affairs, 1985-1991.

### **Princeton Theological Seminary – Princeton, NJ**

Th.M., Religious Communication and Theological Anthropology, 1984-1985.

### **Carleton University – Ottawa, Canada**

Postgraduate Studies, Journalism and Communication.

(Areas of concentration: film and society – the mutual shaping between the cinema and the social and intellectual developments of modern society; radio, TV, and print media), 1983-1984.

### **Cape Coast University – Cape Coast, Ghana**

Postgraduate Certificate, Educational Counseling and Planning, 1977-1980.

### **University of Ghana – Legon, Ghana**

B.A. (Honors), English Literature, 1975-1978.

### **Trinity College – Legon, Ghana**

Diploma, Theology and Comparative Religion, 1972-1975.

## **Post-doctoral Studies:**

### **Oxford University, St. Antony's College – England**

Focusing on Globalization and Identity: The Problematics of the Global/Local Identities of Africana People, (Trinity Term) 1997.

### **Harvard University – Cambridge, MA.**

Visiting Fellow, Department of Afro-American Studies.

(Specializing in Immigration and Negotiated Identities in a Pluralistic Society,) 1994-95.

### **Harvard University – Cambridge, MA**

Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of World Religions.

(Focusing on West African Cultures and Religions in the United States,) 1992-93.

## **AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

**Excellence in Teaching Award**, Afro-American Studies Department and Extension School, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 2004-05.

**Senior Fellow**, Center of the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1992-93.

**Visiting Fellow**, Afro-American Studies Department, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1994-95.

**Robert Kent Scholarship**, Boston University, Boston, MA 1988-87.

**Pine Scholarship**, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ 1984-85.

**Evangelisches missionswerk, South West Germany Award**, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada 1983-84.

**Ford Foundation**, Department of Educational Counseling and Planning, Cape Coast University, Cape Coast, Ghana 1980.

**Rudolf Mack Award for Old Testament Studies**, Trinity College, Legon, Ghana 1975.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Teaching:**

**Associate Professor, Africana Studies Department.** Africana Studies Department, Wellesley College.

Teaching: Images of Blacks and Women in American Popular Culture, New World Afro-Atlantic Religions, Images of Africana People through the Cinema, Religion in Africa, Neglected Aspects of African Diasporic Peoples, and The Black Church. 2007-Present.

**Adjunct Assistant Professor**, Africana Studies Department, Wellesley College.

Teaching: Images of Africana People through the Cinema, Images of Blacks and Women in American Popular Culture, Cultures and Religion in Africa, Neglected Aspects of African Diasporic Peoples and Afro-Atlantic Religions in the New World. 1994-2007.

**Visiting Assistant Professor**, Brown University.

Teaching: Afro-American Folk, Thought and Aesthetics of Change, 1998.

**Visiting Lecturer**, The Divinity School and the Extension School, Harvard University. Teaching: Religions and Cultures of Africa and Images of Africana People through the Cinema. 1994-present.

**Visiting Lecturer**, Tufts University. Teaching: West African Immigrants in United States. 1993-94.

**Tutor**, The Presbyterian School and Sixth Form Science College, Legon, Ghana. Teaching: English Literature and Religious Studies. 1979-82.

**Tutor**, Christian Science College, Kumasi, Ghana. Teaching: Greek 1978-79.

## **TEACHING COMPETENCE**

African Diaspora Studies  
Cultures and Religions of Africa  
African and African American Cinema  
Afro-American Folk Thought and Aesthetics  
Anthropology of Religion

## **RESEARCH INTERESTS**

My research areas range from ethnographic study of religion in Africa to African Diaspora studies with a specific focus on the intertwining relationship of cosmologies and life ways of Africana people.

Religious and cultural communication focuses on how individuals and groups use their cultural media such as film, print, radio, myth, symbols, and rituals – for articulating and elaborating on ideas about life and death, and to organize their social lives. I am interested in the relationship between people’s cultural history, communal experience, and their cultural media.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Books**

Asante Catholicism: Religious and Cultural Reproduction Among the Akan of Ghana. 1996. Leiden: E.J.Brill,

Shaping Membership, Defining Nation: The Cultural Politics of African Indians of South Asia. 2007. Lexington Books, Lanham, MD.

### **Articles**

“Religion, Social Power and Identity: Gowlis, Siddis, Lambanis, Goddars of South India.” John Hawley (ed.) *Theorizing Religion in a Postmodern Context*, South Asian Review (2009)

“Environmental Injustice: African Indian Response.” Filomina Steady (ed.), Environmental Justice, Race, Ethnicity, and Human Rights, New York: Palgrave/Macmillan Press (2009).

“Siddi Street Theatre in the Dancing Rhythms of North Karnataka, South India.” *Journal of African Theatre*, Oxford: James Currey (Accepted for publication in 2008).

“Karnataka Siddi Nash: Charting and Mediating Identity through Materiality of the Spiritual in South India.” Kiran Prasad (ed.), The African Diaspora in Asia, Jana Jagrati Prakashana (UNESCO): Bangalore (2008).

“Service to God, Service to Master/ Client: African Indian Military Contribution in Karnataka.” *Journal of African and Asian Studies* (2007).

“Religious Interactions in Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century West Africa.” Emmanuel Akyeampong (ed.), Themes in West African History. Oxford: James Currey (2006).

“African Indian (Siddi) All Souls/Saints Feast in Karnataka.” St Aloysius College magazine, Mangalore (2005).

“Religion and Empire: Belief and Identity among African Indians of Karnataka, South India.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. March 2003, Vol. 71 No. 1 pp 99-120.

“African Indian Culture Articulation: Mediation and Negotiation in Karnataka, South India.” Amy Catlin and Edward Alpers, (eds.), Siddi of Gujarat and Karnataka, Delhi, India: Rainbow Publishers, 2004.

“Gendered Nationalism: Forms of Masculinity in Modern Ghana.” Lisa Lindsay, (ed.), Men and Masculinity in Modern Africa, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann/Greenwood Publishing, 2003.

“African Communities of Karnataka, South India: The Life Stories of Six Siddis.” *Working Papers in African Studies No. 242*. Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University, 2002.

“Womanist Survival Strategies and Globalization.” Filomina Steady (ed.), *Black Women, Globalization, and Economic Justice*, Rochester, Vermont: Schenkman Books., 2002.

“African Spirituality: An African Appropriation of Roman Catholicism.” Jacob Olupona, et al. (eds.), World Spirituality: an Encyclopedic History of Religious Quest, New York: Crossroads Press, 2000.

“Yaa Asantewaa’s War of Independence: Honoring and Ratifying an Historic Pledge.” *Ghana Studies* 3, 2000.

“Afro-Indians of Karnataka.” *Renewal*, I.T.P. Press, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India. August 1998.

“Re-membering Through Oath: Installation of African Kings and Queens.” *Journal of Black Studies*. January 1998.

“Spirituality, Gender and Power in Asante History,” (with Emmanuel Akyeampong) *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 29 (1) 1996.

“Asante Women Dancers: Architects of Power Realignment.” Discussion Papers in the *African Humanities Program*, Boston University, AH Number 26 1995 (Monograph).

“Ethiopia: A Challenge,” in *Princeton Seminary Alumni/nae News* and in the Princeton Spire, 1985.

“Sacred Centers and Local Politics,” *Centretown News*, Ottawa, Canada, 1983.

“The Afterlife in African and Christian Traditions,” *Christian Messenger*, Ghana. 1980.

“Is Infant Baptism Biblical?” *Christian Messenger*, Ghana. 1980.

“Let Hair be Unveiled”, and “Christianity and Patriotism” *Christian Messenger*, 1979.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

Prasad, Kiran Kamal, “In Search of an Identity: An Ethnographic Study of the Siddis in Karnataka,” Bangalore, India: Jana Jagrati Prakashana 2005.

Daniel, Ebow. Mr. Registrar: The Making of an Amanuensis, in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. XXXIV, 2 (2001).

Sarpong, P., Girls’ Nubility Rites, The Scared Stools of the Akan, and Ghana in Retrospect: some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture, *Journal of Religion in Africa*. XXIV, 1(1994).

Ackah, Akan Ethics: A Study of the Moral Ideas and the Moral Behavior of the Akan of Ghana, *Journal of Religion in Africa* X, 3(1992).

## **RELATED EXPERIENCE**

Advisor, *Finding Love Abroad in Cuba and Ghana* by Kari Alsherif and Natalie Gill, Tanner Conference 2002, Wellesley College.

Editor, *Drums of Trinity*, (periodical of Trinity College, Legon, Ghana) 1974-75.

## LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

"Gold, Knowledge, and Identity in West Africa," Keynote Speaker, October 2, 2005 at the Museum of Fine Arts' West African Gold Exhibition in association with Boston University Africa Outreach, Boston, MA.

"African Culture and Physical Geography," October 21, 2006 at Boston University's African Studies Center Workshop, Boston, MA.

"Navigating South Asian Landscapes: African Indian Religious Materiality," October 20, 2006 at the Annual South Asian Conference, Madison, WI.

"Religion and Arts, African Indian Agency," Jan. 9 to Jan. 19, 2006 at the Siddis of India and the African Diaspora in Asia, Goa, International Conference Centre, India.

"The Insider/Outsider Identity in Siddiness (African Indian)," August 2, 2004 at Siddi Cultural Development Conference at Bangalore, India.

"HIV/AIDS and Religion in Africa," Presiding, November 20, 2004 at American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature Conference, San Antonio, TX.

"Weeping in the Religious Imagination," Presiding, November 24, 2002 at American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature Conference, Toronto, Canada.

"Postcolonial Conversations: Africa and the Caribbean 2002," Respondent and Panel Chair, October 26, 2002 at Wellesley College.

"I am Hindu, I am Christian, I am Muslim, and I am None of the Above but Siddi," April 22, 2002 at the Walter Rodney Lecture Series, Boston University.

"The Word becomes Flesh: An African Response to God's Revelation." March 7, 2002 at the Revealed Religion in Africa: Christianity and Islam Colloquium, Brigham Young University, Utah.

"Confronting Hatred: The Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.," January 21, 2002 at Mass Bay Community College, Wellesley, MA.

"The Politics of African Street Theater," January 10, 2002 at Emerson College, Boston, MA.

"Violence against Women around the World panel," October 23, 2001 at Wellesley College.

"The Siddis of North Kanara: De-marking, Inclusion, and Renaming," August 19, 1998 at the Kanyakumari, TN. Academy of Arts and Sciences.

"Healing as Religion and Religion as Healing among the Akan of Ghana," April 17, 1998 at the regional meeting of New England/Maritime American Academy of Religion conference.

"Indigenous Traditions and Ecology Conference," Respondent, November 13-16, 1997 at Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions.

"Globalization and Identity: The Ghanaian Pentecostal Movement in the United States," June 19, 1997 at St. Antony's College, Oxford University, England.

"Installation of African Queens and Kings in New England," Nov. 25, 1996 at American Academy of Religion/SBL conference in New Orleans.

"Women and Development in Africa: The Ghanaian Experience," Nov. 7, 1996 at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

"Gender and Power in Asante History," paper, Walter Rodney Lecture Series, Boston University, February 1995.

"Asante Corpus Christi: Restructuring of Gender Identity within Cultural Reproduction," paper at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature in Chicago, IL., 1994.

"Installation of Kings and Queens: West African Redefinition of Self and Community in the United States," paper 1993: One Hundred Years After the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, Harvard University, 1993.

"West African Delicate Dances in the Theater of New England Cultural Reproduction," paper, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, 1992.

"Islam and Christianity as Agents of Change and the Role of Women in West Africa," Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Tufts University, 1991.

"African Story Narrativity," Guest Lecturer, Elie Wiesel's Literature of Memory: The Power of the Story, Boston University, 1990.

"Psycho-cultural Perspective on the Concept of Deity," Philosophy of Religion Department, Boston University, 1989.

"Social Change and Role Redefinition: A Reformulation of Politics in Contemporary Ghana," paper, Annual Meeting of the National Association of Black Political Scientists, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1988.

"Television and Transcendence in Contemporary Communication," paper, College of Communication, Boston University, 1986.

"Ethnomethodological Approach to Myth," paper, Classical Studies Department, Boston University, 1986.

"Literacy and Religion in Contemporary Communication," paper, Boston University, 1986.

"The Art of the Self-Conscious Outsider," Honors thesis, English Department, University of Ghana, Legon, 1978.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Leader, "Communicating the Gospel Through Interreligious Dialogue" at CONSULTATION XXI on Parish Ministry, Orlando, Florida, Jan. 8-12, 1996.

Group Leader, "Empowering the Laity for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference of UCC at Mount Holyoke College, June 1995.

Director, "Global Village" at Camp Wilmot, New Hampshire August, 1990  
Counselor at Youth Camp, Rochester, NY, Summer of 1985.

Facilitator: Canadian Crossroads International camp, Bolton, Toronto, 4-H camp, Ottawa, Canada 1983.

## **CONSULTING**

Panel for reviewing applications, Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA 1992-1995

Associate, Wellesley A Better Chance, 1989-present

Advisory Committee, The World of Wellesley (Focuses on Celebration of Diversity) 2003-2005

Executive Board, New England-Maritime Region of American Academy of Religion, 1999-2003

Protestant Advisory Board Committee, Wellesley College, 1995-present

Cinema and Media Studies, Wellesley College, 2006-2008

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**



“African Indian (Siddi/Habshis) Military Contributions: Defining and Deploying Identity in Transnational Spaces in South Asia” (Paper).

“Twinship and Twin Births: Ambivalent Attitudes in Africa” (Under Review).

Africana Transregional Cosmologies and Gods in the United States (Book).

Elderly Women: Space, Status, and Power in Mexico, Honduras and India (Book).

"Indigenous African Religion in Africana Cinema: An Oppositional Gaze." (Paper).

#### **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION**

The African Diaspora in Asia (TADIA)	2006-present
African Studies Association	1994-present
The Semiotic Society of America	1990-present
American Academy of Religion—Anthropology of Religion	1988-present
Canadian Crossroads International	1981-present
Third World Conference Foundation	1989-1990
African Heritage Studies Association	1989-1990