

# African Spirituality and Education

## Course Syllabus

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## Course Information

### Course Description

The aim of this course is to study one of the world's invaluable sources of **spirituality and education: the African Indigenous cultural tradition**. We shall explore the meanings that Indigenous people give to **knowledge (education for a living)** and **wisdom (education for life)**. We shall have the opportunity to see the world through their lens: **a holistic worldview that sees all of life and ALL that is as Inter-connected and Inter-dependent**.

Through a documented case study of one of the ethnic groups of Tanzania, East Africa, the course will gradually **walk** you through several fundamental cultural vessels seen by these people as transmitters of knowledge and wisdom, namely: **story telling, proverbs, riddles, music, dance, rituals, role playing and art**. **The awesome reflections of Sobonfu Some will season the case study in a way that gives you a taste of Indigenous Spirituality and Education from two corners of Africa: West Africa and East Africa**. You are invited to see this as a journey through Africa in which you are called forth to fully engage yourselves with the people and with the cultures that you meet.

As you take this online course you will deepen your experience of life as **holistic and inter-connected**. In fact, all indigenous cultures have always understood life and all that is as such, so this will be a unique opportunity for each of you in the online class to remember and reclaim this life enhancing and cosmic sustaining dimension of life.

Throughout the course the instructor and students will dig into this indigenous well of knowledge and wisdom so that, armed with new findings and insights, we may deepen our experience of life as **harmonious and holistic**. In the final analysis, the course will sharpen your abilities to: analyze new findings and insights from a global perspective; appreciate the power of stories, proverbs, riddles, music, dance, art and rituals in the **transmission of culture and values**; and assist you to translate these timely and timeless emerging values into your own spiritual development and that of others.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and appreciate the African Indigenous Worldview and try to learn from it.

- Demonstrate how knowledge and wisdom are inseparable and inter-connected.
- Appreciate the power of stories, proverbs, music, etc in the transmission of values.
- Explain how virtue and wisdom are nurtured in the young of Indigenous Africa.
- Use all emerging findings and insights for your own spiritual development.
- Apply these findings to the spiritual development of others, like: family, your local community, mentoring the young on your block, modeling in virtue for an 8th grade class, a college freshman class with students of various cultures and religions, etc.

## Course Competencies

In this course, you will develop the following competencies:

Competence	Competence Statement and Criteria
H5	Can analyze issues from a global perspective
A1H	Can explain folk arts in the transmission of culture and values
A3B	Can explore a model of spiritual development and apply it to self or others.
FX	Can study and apply insights and findings from African Spirituality to a given business or work situation in accordance with one's Focus area.

## How the Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

**All of you** will explore the African Indigenous paradigm of community and inter-connectedness and on this basis go on to study and analyze the issue of the world as one community. You will also have the opportunity to study in some detail how culture and values are transmitted in Indigenous Africa, and then be invited to use the emerging findings and insights in imagining more effective ways of transmitting culture and values in our times. In your short papers, discussions, debate, and role playing, you will be able to apply the findings and insights of this course to formation situations that are familiar to you, such as: family, your local community, your local school, or college classroom.

In this course, the demonstration of Competence will be done in assignments 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5. In these assignments, the student will be asked to select one main theme from the Module under consideration (or two themes if they have two competences). Then for each demonstration of competence, the students first state the appropriate Competence Statement, then moves on to relate the selected theme to the competence. For instance, a student with an H5 competence may select “community” as a theme in assignment 1.5 of Module One, and then move on to show how the theme of community is a universal human experience, using the textbooks and personal experience.

In addition:

**H5: Can analyze issues and problems from a global perspective.**

***Facets of this competence:***

1. Analyzes one or more global issues, problems, or opportunities facing the human race.
2. Explains how these issues affect individuals or societies in both positive and negative ways.

**A1H: Can explain the function of folk arts in the transmission of culture and values.**  
**Facets of this competence:**

1. Explains the characteristics of folk arts.
2. Describes dynamics or mechanisms of how culture and values are transmitted.
3. Describes the role folk art may play in the transmission of culture and values.
4. Applies (3) to one or more specific examples.

**A3B: Can explore a model of spiritual development and apply it to oneself or others.**

**Facets of this competence:**

1. Discusses the assumptions and implications of a model(s) of spiritual development.
2. Discusses the model in relation to one's or others' experience.

**FX: Can study and apply insights and findings from African Spirituality to a given business or work situation in accordance with one's Focus area.**

Over and above the two texts already studied in this course, the student who selects this FX competence will be required to study an extra text that helps her or him to apply learned insights and findings to the workplace. The student and the instructor can select a book such as: "Spirituality at Work", "Converting 9 to 5", "Spirituality and Justice", "Spirituality of Liberation", and so on.

This FX competence will require the reading of an extra textbook, and four short papers tailored to this competence.

A student who takes this FX competence will be assessed according to his or her ability to apply learned insights and findings to her or his given workplace or community as this relates to her or his focus area.

## Course Resources

To buy your books, go to <http://www.mbsdirect.net>.  
Hint: type DePaul for name of the school.

[Click here for help buying your books](#)

## Required Reading:

### Textbooks:

1. Mosh, R. Sambuli. (2000). *The Heartbeat of Indigenous Africa. A Study of the Chagga Educational System*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.

Your instructor is the author of this book, a case study of how Indigenous children were raised among his own people, the Chagga of Northern Tanzania. The main question which the book tries to answer is not **what children were taught**, but rather, **how children were helped to acquire the knowledge and wisdom** cherished by their

families and communities. The author raises the issues discussed in the book to the level of the global stage by making references to other disciplines such as philosophy, theology, anthropology, psychology, spirituality, ethics, and other related areas of knowledge and wisdom, thus making the work **inter-disciplinary and inter-connected** with other formation traditions.

2. Some, Sobonfu. (2002). *The Spirit of Intimacy. Ancient Teachings in the Ways of Relationships*. New York: HarperCollins Books.

Sobonfu Some, a native of Burkina Faso in West Africa, gives rich reflections mined from the Wisdom and lives of her West African Dagara village elders, brothers and sisters. She speaks about the importance of a living, breathing, continual connection with **Spirit** and **Community**, about the ways of experiencing a genuine intimacy with life itself. You will find her reflections peace-inducing, inspiring and life enhancing.

### Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

Please note: Grades lower than a C- do not earn credit or competence in the School for New Learning.

### Course Structure

This course consists of 5 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is 2 weeks.

**Module One** addresses the African Indigenous Worldview and its four aspects. It also studies the ipvunda concept, the role of family, elders, the community, and peers in raising children, and looks at Sobonfu Some's reflections on community and spirit.

**Module Two** deals with the transmitters of culture and values, namely, story telling, proverbs, riddles, song/music, dance, art, ritual and role playing.

**Module Three** addresses six specific virtues of the Chagga people and shows how these are nurtured in the young.

**Module Four** summarizes the main findings and insights and tries to apply these to your own personal spiritual development and that of others, specifically in your family, local community, or school.

**Module Five** allows you to integrate your learning in your final integrative paper.

To see course due dates, click on the Checklist link on the top navigation bar. This page contains module-specific checklists and due dates for the work due in the course.

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## Assessment of Learning

This course has six discussions, 16 assignments and one final integration paper. Assignments 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 are designed to give the student an opportunity to demonstrate competence. In these four assignments the student should select one main theme (examples: community; it takes a village to raise a child; parenting; storytelling; proverbs; ritual; respect; silence; courage; hard work, etc) from a given Module and then relate that theme to a particular competence, making sure that the textbooks are referenced, also the experience and reflection of the student. Select two distinct themes in a given Module if you are registered for two competences, and treat each one separately. Always begin your demonstration of competence by first stating the competence statement concerned.

Make use of all materials emerging from the course, your own experience and reflection on all of them. Properly acknowledge all sources and clearly identify your own experience, reflection, findings and insights.

The final integration paper will have a minimum of 1200 words or four full pages written in 12 font size. This paper will summarize your learning experience and growth in the course.

### Percentage distribution of Assessments

Six discussions	25%
Fifteen (15) assignments	60%
Final Paper	15%
	<b>100%</b>

### Grading Policies and Practices

To complete the course, you must complete each of the assignments as described in the course and submit them to your instructor by the assigned deadline. In addition, you must participate in the course discussion forum by responding to all instructor requests and by interacting with fellow classmates as necessary.

Points are deducted for late work.

#### HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

1. Participate in class discussions. The class discussions and homework exercises are worth a large percentage of your grade. All Modules ask you post an opinion and include a follow-up. Don't miss the follow-up posting.
2. Do not fall behind. In general once a discussion is graded its over. Don't think you can post discussion items several weeks after they are graded and expect credit. The class has moved on and it is difficult for course administrators to find your postings after they have been graded.
3. Read the assignments carefully and follow directions for each assignment.
4. Give a large chunk of time to this course, about 10 or more hours per week.
5. Post all assignments by the specified due date. This will give 7% points.

### Assessment Criteria for Papers by Competence

Each short paper for the competence chosen will be assessed as excellent if you adhere to the required topic and content, which should be in accordance material

covered in a particular Module. To write an excellent paper, keep in mind the material of that particular Module, refer to your experience as well, and make use of ideas and insights from other students and the instructor. Acknowledge all sources, write well and systematically, and put your entire mind and soul in the work and reflections.

## **General Assessment Criteria for All Writing Assignments**

In general, grading of all writing assignments will be based on the following:

**Content:** refers to the treatment of your topic, logically and analytically. This is the substance, the *what* of the paper; what you had to say about the topic, what you presented in defense of your position, and what your analysis revealed about your thought processes and grasp of the material you grappled with.

**Organization:** is the way your paper is laid out and presented, including both the overall organization and the arrangement of individual sections. These include: a relevant title, and subheadings; introductory material, where needed; summaries, where appropriate; connections and transitions; and what used to be called "rhetoric": the skillful arrangement of the pieces for the maximum persuasive impact on the reader.

**Mechanics:** refers to the use of your Spelling and Grammar checker, the use of Standard English, proper sentence structure and punctuation, and effective and sensitive word choice. Mastery of basic communication and writing skills is a must for undergraduate and graduate students. The paper you prepare should also use proper **APA citation** form for the in-text references as well as the bibliography.

### **It is important that your essays and papers:**

- Specifically address the competence that you are fulfilling in this course.
- Organize your supportive evidence into relevant paragraphs that address your subject.
- Take into account a variety of points of view.
- Demonstrate your appreciation of other points of view, demonstrates empathy and the ability to account for the vantage points of others.
- Demonstrate that you are able to integrate the evidence derived from your chosen sources into your argument according to standard English using proper grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure.
- Use proper quotation form, including introduction of your quotation as well as your commentary following the quotation.
- Have an introduction, the body of main content, and a concluding paragraph.
- Contain proper APA citation form for in-text references as well as for the bibliography.

All writing assignments are expected to conform to basic college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are free.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts,

and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email.

Obviously, the tutors won't necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. To schedule a Face-to-Face, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing).

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## Discussion Forums

Discussion Forums are an important component of your online experience. This course contains discussion forums related to the topics you are studying each week. For requirements on your participation in the Discussion Forums, please see "Course Expectations" in the syllabus.

A Course Q & A discussion forum has also been established to manage necessary, ongoing social and administrative activities. This is where the management and administrative tasks of the course are conducted, and where you can ask 'process' questions and receive answers throughout the course. Please feel free to answer any question if you feel you know the answer; this sharing of information is valuable to other students.

## Assessment Criteria for Online Discussion Participation

Here are some common expectations for discussion:

- Quality, quantity, depth, breadth.
- Frequency of discussion participation and interaction;
- Relative emphasis to be placed on facts, concepts, critical thinking, and analysis, writing, format, and quantitative reasoning;
- Deadlines for participation: first comment by mid-week so there is time for discussion;
- Appropriate discussion etiquette;
- Frequency of check-ins, at least four times a week.

## Online Participation Guidelines

A significant part of your online learning experience involves learning **with and from your classmates** and the **instructor** in the online discussions and group assignments.

Active participation means sharing information and resources and posting your ideas and critiquing and expanding on the ideas of others in a collegial fashion. This discussion is informal in the sense that it is meant to encourage interested discussion. As participation in discussion is a **graded portion** of the course, you are expected to follow accepted standards of English spelling, grammar and usage in your contributions. You are also required to be **respectful** of your instructor and other students.

These discussions are for you to exchange your reflections with your classmates and instructor about what you are learning. The discussion will be organized around the particular topic you studying each week.

You may be asked by the instructor to **take leadership in a certain group** for a certain time of the course. You will receive further instructions from your instructor if this occurs.

You are asked to contribute your responses to the particular assignment for that particular discussion heading which will be posted. For each general **Discussion Topic**, you are required to make **at least three original, substantive contributions (posts) to each topic each week**.

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## **Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas.

Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit

<http://sr.depaul.edu/catalog/catalogfiles/Current/Undergraduate%20Student%20Handbook/index.html> for further details.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- Resubmitting one's own previous work from a different course or college, without permission from the current instructor.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

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### **For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussion will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact your instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week or two of the course). Please be sure to contact the following office for support and additional services:

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD)  
#370, Student Center, LPC, 773.325.1677

### **Description of Pass/Fail Grading Options**

Students have the option of taking all SNL undergraduate courses as Pass/Fail even if a class is initially structured for a letter grade assessment. In these cases a Pass is awarded when competence is demonstrated at a level that would otherwise earn a grade of C- or higher.

In deciding to select Pass/Fail grading students should be aware that competencies assessed in a course as Pass will earn credit hours toward degree completion but *will not* be included in computing grade point averages. Attempted competence demonstration assessed within a class as Fail will not only be recorded as credit hours attempted but *will* also be included in computing a student's grade point average.

For SNL students, competencies awarded for Independent Learning Pursuits and in the Lifelong Learning Domain do not count toward the university's specification that only twenty credit hours may be earned through the Pass/Fail assessment option.

**Please note:** *There are four SNL courses within the BA curriculum that are always assessed on a Pass/Fail basis: Learning Assessment Seminar (course number LL 102; competence L-1), Foundations of Adult Learning (course number LL 250; competences L-2 and L-3), Advanced Project (course number FA 303; competences F-11 and F-12) and Summit Seminar (course number LL 390; competence L-12). These classes may not be taken for a letter grade assessment. Therefore, work that might otherwise be assessed at grades A through C- will earn a Pass in these classes.*

*There are an additional four SNL courses within the Lifelong Learning Area of the BA curriculum for which instructors regularly use a Pass/Fail grading system which may, instead, be taken for a letter grade assessment if this is a student's preference. These classes are: Academic Writing for Adults (course number LL 150; competence L-4), Critical Thinking (course number LL 155; competence L-5), Research Seminar (course number LL 300; competences L-8 and L-9) and Externship (course number LL 302; competences L-10 and L-11). In addition, SNL's undergraduate Writing Workshop (course number LL 140; competence H-3-J) regularly uses Pass/Fail although students may request a letter grade assessment. In these instances SNL offers undergraduate students the opportunity to request a letter grade assessment from their instructor. Students who need a letter grade for tuition reimbursement may wish to consider this option, as well as those who wish to raise their GPA. Students planning to attend graduate school may also prefer letter grades to Pass/Fail assessments.*

If a student wishes to switch the method of assessment, either to or from the Pass/Fail option, this must be requested from the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the quarter. The assessment style may not be changed after this period, with no exceptions.

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## Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

Demonstrating the acquisition of competencies in this course can involve "interactions"—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

- The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
- You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
- The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
- If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>

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## Course Expectations

### Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor.

It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### **Your Role as a Student**

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

### **Credits**

This course was designed and produced by Raymond Mosha and staff at SNL Online of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.

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