

## STUDY IN SENEGAL: NEW EXPERIENCES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

by Magalita Rene, Penn

I always knew that studying abroad would be an important part of my college experience. I have been fortunate to receive financial assistance from the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, which made my six-month long visit in Senegal possible through Penn's exchange program. Senega was an ideal place to study. Not only was I able to improve my French language skills, but I got to live with an amazing host family, study at a local university, and begin learning one of the national languages, Wolof. My Wolof program began intensively at the Baobab Center in the capital of Dakar and continued at the Université de Gaston-Berger in St. Louis. I plan to continue my language studies during the Spring semester, because I plan to return to Senegal after graduation to either continue my research or work with a local nonprofit agency focusing on community development. Both options are contingent upon my receipt of grants or fellowships to which I am applying. Study abroad has not been just a part of my education—it has become a part of my future!



Magalita with friends in St. Louis, Senegal

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER NEWSLETTER FALL 2006

### VISITING SCHOLARS FROM AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

The University of Pennsylvania is very proud to be hosting several visiting scholars from Africa this semester, in a variety of disciplines. If you get the opportunity, please be sure to welcome them to Philadelphia!

**Clara Momanyi** is visiting the African Studies Center thanks to a six-month Fulbright Senior Scholar grant. She received her doctorate from Kenyatta University in Nairobi, where she is now a Senior Lecturer of Kiswahili and Literature. Her primary research focus is second language acquisition methodology, and she is especially interested in gender in Kiswahili literary studies and oral literatures from the coastal region.



Clara Momanyi, presenting at the Fall Lecture Series

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**Banda Fall**, visiting from Senegal for one semester of research, is Director of the French Department at the Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis. He is currently interested in exile, exclusion, and exoticism; African children's literatures; and the comparison of African and world literatures.



Dr. Aloysius Ngefac

**Aloysius Ngefac** received his doctorate in linguistics from the University of Yaoundé, in the Republic of Cameroon, and is here on a postdoctoral fellowship. His research focuses especially on Cameroon English, and he has examined phrasal verbs, homophones and heterophones, and extra-linguistic correlates. Dr. Ngefac is also very interested in the politics of English as a world language.

**Aboubakary Diakhaty** is a lecturer and researcher in Applied Mathematics at the Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, and is also here for one semester through the University of Pennsylvania-Gaston Berger exchange program. His primary research interests include statistics, especially non-parametric estimation and regression for point process, and stochastic analysis and applications. He is also very interested in the numerical methods of finance.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [HTTP://WWW.AFRICA.UPENN.EDU](http://www.africa.upenn.edu)

## PEARLS OF WISDOM: LEARNING WITH AND FROM LIBERIAN REFUGEE MOTHERS

By Jesse Blumberg, Haverford

Just as dusk begins to set in, my students eagerly flip through the children's novels strewn about a table; some make decisions on content, others on picture quality. The sixty minutes of tutoring time fly by, as the women alternate reading and listening in small groups. My job is simply to be a resource when a group encounters a difficult word or letter combination. "Sis' Jessie, what is the purpose of this *ph*



Jesse at work

sounding the same as *f*?" While I offer my untrained insight into the written English language, I am also learning invaluable lessons from these incredible ladies—my teachers as well as my students. The hour is precious.

The idea of "a love for learning" holds a deeper meaning for me after spending six weeks teaching adult literacy to Liberian women on a refugee camp in Ghana. In addition to the regular afternoon literacy class that I taught, we initiated a tutoring program in the evenings to supplement class time for those who wanted extra help. These sessions were non-

compulsory, and designed to be a daily time for the women to simply practice reading; a break from blackboard lectures on rules and exceptions. 5:00 - 6:00 pm soon grew to be my favorite hour of the day. Being under the ruthless Ghanaian sun since the rooster's crow at dawn, I was inevitably exhausted come tutoring time, but the warmth and spirit of the women made for an always-invigorating experience.

The women who come to tutoring approach literacy with the purest enthusiasm, which enables them to take an extra hour of their responsibility-laden day to feed an eagerness to learn. Life on camp is demanding for everyone, but this particular group of people especially. To be enrolled in the Mother's Skill Training Center of Population Caring Organization, one must be female, single, and the primary caretaker of children. The specificity of qualifications would seem to limit interest in the program, but in fact it attracts more women than the program can admit, and there is a waiting list. Literacy classes are free of charge through PCO, as the organization is trying to reach the neediest women in the refugee camp. The ladies are determined to become proficient readers and writers, in order to qualify for jobs and find better ways to support their families.

The women show up on time—an anomaly in West Africa. Eyes aglow, they quickly divide into groups around the room according to reading level. The classroom is green, small and unspectacular, but it takes on new beauty as it develops into a space for self-initiated learning. I huddle on termite-infested benches with three or four ladies around a children's book, and absorb their excitement when they successfully sound out words and feel themselves progressing. My initial worry that

## BROADENING HORIZONS, EXPLORING NEW COMMUNITIES: STUDY ABROAD IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Bernice Walker, Penn

Believe me when I say I never "intended" to study Zulu language during my academic career at Penn. Some way or another, however, I found myself taking both Elementary Zulu I & II during my junior year. I am extremely grateful that I made this decision, for if I hadn't studied Zulu I would not be writing this brief article from my home in a Coloured community called Wentworth in Durban, South Africa.

The theme of my classes during my semester with the School of International Training in South Africa is "Reconciliation and Development". Though we are based in Durban, we have traveled to all of South Africa's major cities and stayed with families in communities created through apartheid like Cato Manor (predominantly Zulu), Amacambini (a rural area close to Zululand), Chatsworth (Indian), and Wentworth (Coloured). The most exciting period of the program begins November 10th, when our formal coursework ends and our independent study projects begin. Along with 17 other American students. I have chosen to study the influence of self-determination on black educational achievement.

From the day I arrived, I have been mistaken for Zulu, particularly Durban where we are based. Every where I go, people assume I am a native speaker of Zulu, and had I come here with no prior knowledge of the language it would have been harder to explain to people where I am from, why I am in South Africa, and why my Zulu is so broken. I never would have realized how much Zulu I learned at Penn if I hadn't had this opportunity to use it where it counts, outside of the classroom and with people who speak it in their own communities.

It is my sincere hope that more Penn students leave the comforts and routines we create for ourselves and embark on a journey to learn about the challenges faced by others, a journey you can begin by studying a completely foreign language. As cliché and corny as it might sound, I cannot emphasize enough the importance and need for students to broaden their horizons and embrace communities different from themselves. Perhaps it is just one of things you will only understand when you yourself experience another way of life. I will forever be grateful to the African Studies Center's Language Program at Penn for opening the door of opportunity for me to study Zulu and spend my time here in South Africa.



Bernice in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

For more information on African Language Study at Penn—which includes courses in Twi, Wolof, Zulu, Amharic, Yoruba, Swahili, Shona, and Igbo—visit [<http://www.africa.upenn.edu/af/>], or call Program Director Audrey N. Mbeje at (215) 898-4299.

## THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT PENN: SERVING CONSORTIUM STUDENTS AND BEYOND

By Dr. Audrey N. Mbeje



Dr. Audrey Mbeje, African Language Director

The Center's African Language Program continues its efforts to advance knowledge and understanding of Africa and its people by offering a wide array of languages spoken in three major regions of Africa, namely, West, East and Southern Africa. The program aims at integrating its language curriculum into the Center's multidisciplinary courses and research by students and faculty whose interest and focus span the continent. Our pool consists of students interested in fulfilling a language requirement, conducting research in Africa, doing study abroad in Africa, as well as



2006 Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA Participants on Table Mountain (Umkhambathi), near Camperdown, South Africa

heritage learners. In addition to serving the consortium, the African Language Program also provides access to African language resources to institutions across the nation, as part of the Center's mission as a National Resource Center. Dr. Audrey Mbeje, the African Language Director received a grant in 2005 from the U.S. Department of Education to direct the Fulbright-Hays Zulu Group Project Abroad in South Africa for the summers of 2005 through 2007. The Zulu GPA provides an avenue for American students to achieve advanced competence in Zulu language and culture in KwaZulu-Natal with native speakers of the language. This past summer was the second year of the Fulbright-Hays Zulu GPA and 13 students participated from 9 U.S. institutions: Penn, University of Chicago, University of Illinois, University of Indiana, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Yale, University of Virginia, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In Summer 2005, 11 students from 5 universities across the United States participated in the program.

The 2007 Zulu GPA is scheduled for June 13 through August 05.



2005 Participants at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

my tutees would have an aversion to a traditional stories immediately become clichéd anthology of African folklore the group favorite. Each night, after closing the book, my Liberian mothers lower their voices to a more intimate level, and we mull over the life lessons we are all a zest for the storylines and morals. The learning together.▣



## PENN WELCOMES DR. EVE TROUTT POWELL, HISTORIAN OF SUDAN AND EGYPT

The African Studies Center is delighted to announce that Dr. Eve Troutt Powell has been hired as an Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies. A distinguished cultural historian of African and the Middle East, Dr. Powell was a 2003 MacArthur Fellow and has spent the last year as a Fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. She comes to Penn after ten years at the University of Georgia, in Athens.



Dr. Eve Troutt Powell

Dr. Powell's current research investigates the memory of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Nile Valley, examining how slaves, their kin, and slaveholders wrote, sang, or spoke about the experience and meaning of servitude. While comparing Circassian slavery in Egypt with analogous institutions in the Sudan, Dr. Powell says she also intends to explore "languages of liberation and the circumstances of telling." These interests have grown out of her past focus on the culture of nationalism in Egypt, and especially from her study of Saint Josephine Bakhita, a former Sudanese slave canonized by the Catholic Church in 2000.

Dr. Powell is currently teaching "History of the Middle East since 1800" and a Franklin seminar entitled "Religion, Revolution and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East." Next semester, she will be offering a course on "Filming the Middle East," which will explore historical issues through the works of Middle Eastern film-makers. In the past, she has also taught graduate and undergraduate courses on the history of Orientalism. She says, "I am very excited to be working at Penn, where all my research and area studies interests come together, and where I can work with both undergraduate and graduate students."

Welcome to Philadelphia, Dr. Powell!▣

## DR. CHEIKH BABOU VISITS WEST AFRICA

Dr. Cheikh Babou, Assistant Professor in the Department of History, enjoyed a three month visit to Senegal this past summer, conducting research and working on a variety of other



*Dr. Cheikh Babou*

interesting projects. He was particularly enthused about his participation in the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) Project, a United Nations Development Program that aims to connect successful diaspora intellectuals with educational institutions in their home countries. To this end, Dr. Babou spent much of his sabbatical in a consultancy for the University of Dakar, where he taught a graduate seminar in Islamic history, held a series of lectures on Muridiyya Sufism, and met with Senegalese graduate students to discuss the nuances of grant-writing and dissertation research. He also visited Nigeria with Dr. Bob Rutman, where they represented Penn at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the University of Ibadan and University of Pennsylvania Exchange Program. Though it has been inactive in re-

cent years, Dr. Babou found quite a bit of interest in Nigeria to revitalize the collaborative relationship.

Aside from devoting time to these more official activities, Dr. Babou was excited to report that he completed a research project involving the urbanization of mystical Islam in Senegal. As of late, he has been very interested in contemporary Senegalese Islamist movements, and he conducted a series of interviews with the leaders of these groups while collecting related Islamist political literature. Dr. Babou sees this project as part of a shift in his research agenda—from the rural to the urban, and from the pre-colonial and colonial to the postcolonial and contemporary.

Back in Philadelphia this semester, Dr. Babou is currently teaching two courses: a “Religion and Colonial Rule” undergraduate seminar, and a lecture course entitled “Islam and Society”. Next semester, Penn and consortium students can look forward to his “Survey of Africa before 1800” as well as a seminar called “Power, Civil Society, and the End of Colonial Rule in Africa.” See the catalog on the opposing page for more details on these and other African Studies classes. □



*Series speaker Dr. Jennifer Hasty, discussing “Corruption in the Fast Track: Media, Courts, and Neoliberal Desire in Ghana.”*

## AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER FALL LECTURE SERIES

**UPCOMING TALKS:** 

Our Fall Lecture Series has been very successful so far, and we are delighted to announce that two presentations remain. Both talks will occur in 314 Williams Hall, with refreshments served. Come join us!

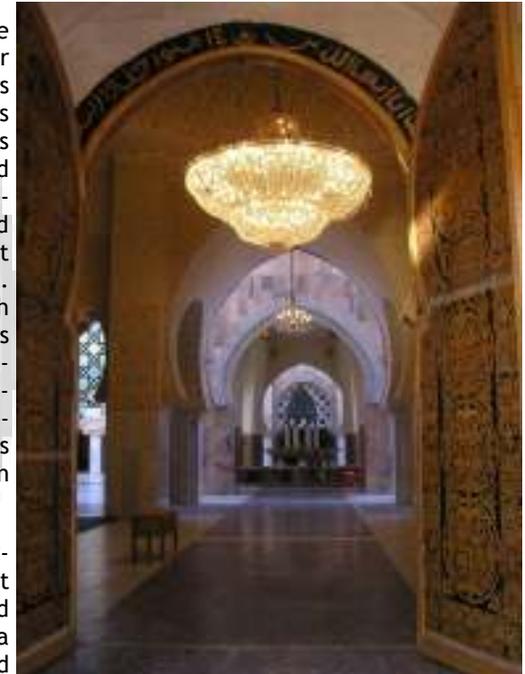
wore long sleeved, flowing tunics with loose pagnes. Many decorated their wrists, necks and earlobes with tasteful pieces of gold jewelry. Later I sat with a group of women and children from Kaolack, another city in Senegal, who were eager to hear the few words and phrases I knew in Wolof.

The next day, we walked through the city and listened to stories of Bamba. When the French were taking him to Gabon, he was told he could not pray on the boat. So he put his prayer mat on the water, and bowed down to pray. When he got back into the boat, he had sand on his forehead, as if he had been praying on the ground. We also learned about Lamp Fall, the devoted follower of Amadou Bamba who founded the Baye Fall.

The noises from the city center were in the background. Loudspeaker played a steady flow of prayer chants throughout Touba, and the air was cooler as the sun was setting. Across the street children were playing and laughing. Upon noticing us, they approached and eagerly introduced themselves. The parents came out and warmly invited us in the house. We sat and watched television with members of the family, while others prayed. It was clear that this welcoming was nothing out of the ordinary. Our Senegalese friend reminded us that this is what Senegal is known for—its hospitality, or in Wolof, ‘*teranga*’.

Downtown around midnight the activity had in no way diminished, but it was significantly cooler. We visited the tombs of Cheikh Amadou Bamba and Lamp Fall. The mosque looked completely different at night: the way that the windows and the minarets were lit gave it a majestic glow. We were able to visit Bamba’s library. Supposedly every document there was written by him, and the musty smell of history was present. Awestruck followers stood beside me, gaping at volumes upon volumes of his work. Colorful and elegant fabrics swishing as women walked by.

Virtually everything we experienced during this weekend was different from our lives in America, and cramming all of it into a few pages is surprisingly challenging. I went to Magal without much excitement. I didn’t know many people there, my comfort zone had been far surpassed and I had no connection to the religion being celebrated. Despite all of this, what had been a strenuous and overwhelming weekend became my most memorable and valuable experience from my stay in Senegal. □



*A mosque interior*

## VISITING LE GRAND MAGAL IN TOUBA, SENEGAL

By Anna Tomasulo, Bryn Mawr

Something had possessed me to wake up before sunrise on a Saturday and sit on a bus for six hours, and for the life of me, I could not figure out what it was. I sluggishly threw my covers off, put on the clothes I had laid out the night before, and headed to the bus for Touba, Senegal. I and some friends planned to join Mouride students on their annual pilgrimage, called *Le Grand Magal*.

*Le Grand Magal* celebrates the day that Cheikh Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Mouride Islamic Brotherhood, went into exile in Gabon under French colonial orders. Now revered as one of Senegal's greatest spiritual leaders, Bamba is recognized for his extensive studies of the Koran and his preaching against violence, and each year Muslims from all over Senegal travel to the holy city of Touba to pray at the mosque and honor his memory.

Touba, is one of Senegal's largest cities. The majority of the neighborhood roads and side streets were unpaved, and our camp was a walled-in area, separated by flimsy wood fences into men and women's sections, bathrooms, and medical care and cooking areas.

I had many apprehensions. I'm not Muslim and I really don't know anything about this Bamba figure! People are going to think it's bizarre that I came. I will be an outsider. As soon as we arrived, a lively student came over, smiled, and put down an enormous bowl of *ceebujën*, Senegal's national dish of rice and fish. My happy stomach and the friendly face lifted my spirits.



Touba at night

Downtown, close to the mosque, was incredible chaotic. There were people of all ages everywhere, and the hustle and bustle in the streets was overwhelming. Many people seemed to be confused and even amused by the presence of young American students. Others seemed genuinely pleased that we wanted to learn more about a culture and religion with which we were not familiar. We soon became lost, and our limited Wolof made it slightly difficult to get back to our encampment. Luckily we ran into helpful people who, through broken English, French and Wolof, were able to put us on a horse drawn cart with twelve or so others, and we returned to our camp in time for another delicious meal.

The camp seemed so calm after downtown. We began talking with some of the students, who were interested in our religious backgrounds and why we had chosen to join them on this pilgrimage. Some of the women showed us different ways to attach fabric around our heads so we could enter the mosque appropriately dressed. Some women wore tailored outfits with tops that hugged their figures, while others

## SPRING COURSE OFFERINGS

### PENN

AFST018	<i>Popular Culture in Africa</i> (Prof. Barnes)	AFST214	<i>Societies and Cultures in Africa</i> (Prof. Taylor)
AFST050	<i>World Music and Cultures</i> (Staff)	AFST225	<i>African Language and Culture</i> (Prof. Mbeje)
AFST062	<i>Land of the Pharaohs</i> (Prof. Wegner)	AFST354	<i>African Art and Culture</i> (Prof. Blakely)
AFST065	<i>British Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction</i> (Prof. Barnard)	AFST460	<i>Middle Egyptian</i> (Prof. Silverman)
AFST206	<i>Power, Civil Society, and the End of Colonial Rule in Africa</i> (Prof. Babou)	AFST489	<i>Africans Abroad: Emigrants, Refugees, and Citizens in Diaspora</i> (Prof. Cassanelli)
AFST075	<i>Africa Before 1800</i> (Prof. Babou)	FR593	<i>Studies in Francophone Literature</i> (Prof. Moudileno)
HIST210	<i>African Religions</i> (Prof. Ofofu-Donkoh)		

### BRYN MAWR

ANTH253	<i>Childhood in the African Experience</i> (Prof. Kilbride)	HIST237	<i>Themes in Modern African History</i> (Prof. Ngalamulume)
CITY266	<i>Urbanization in Africa</i> (Prof. Ngalamulume)	POLS243	<i>African/Caribbean Perspective on World Politics</i> (Prof. Allen)

### HVERFORD

BIOL124	<i>Perspectives in Biology: Tropical Infectious Disease</i> (Prof. Okeke)	ANTH205	<i>Social Anthropology: Artisans in Global Context</i> (Prof. Gillette)
ANTH115	<i>Themes in the Anthropology of Religion: Ritual</i> (Prof. Ngwane)	POLS235	<i>African Politics</i> (Prof. Wing)
		POLS264	<i>Pol. Econ. in Dev. Countries</i> (Prof. Wing)

### SWARTHMORE

DANC043	<i>African Dance</i> (Prof. Yartey)	ECON	<i>Economic Development</i> (Prof. O'Connell)
DANC	<i>African Performance</i> (Prof. Yartey)	HIS87	<i>Development and Modern Africa</i> (Prof. Burke)
FREN025	<i>Intro to the Francophone World</i> (Prof. Rice-Maximin)	RELG024	<i>From Vodun to Voodoo: African Religions</i> (Staff)

Series speaker Dr. Ahmad Sikainga, at his presentation on "Slavery, Ethnicity, Identity, and Popular Culture in Contemporary Sudan."

### November 21st:

Banda Fall, "Le Role et la Place de l'École dans le Dialogue Interculturel et Interreligieux," 1:00 to 2:30

### November 29th:

Aboubakary Diakhaty, "Birth and Development of a University in Senegal," 1:00 to 2:30.



## RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER SCHOLARS

Allen, Michael. *Globalization, Negotiation and the Failure of Transformation in South Africa: Revolution at a Bargain?* (New York and Houndmills: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2006).

Anyinefa, Koffi. "Les Enfants de la Guerre: Adolescence et Violence Postcoloniale chez Badjoko, Dongala, Kourouma et Monénembo," *Présence Francophone*, No. 66 (2006).

Barnard, Rita. *Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place* (Oxford University Press: 2006)

Barnes, Sandra T. "Metacultural Processes and Ritual Realities in the Pre-Colonial History of the Lagos Region," in *Rethinking Yoruba Religious Traditions*, edited by J. Olupona (University of Wisconsin Press, 2006).

Cassanelli, Lee. "Tradition to Text: Writing Local Somali History in the Travel Narrative of Charles Guillain (1846-1848)," *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (June, 2006).

Feierman, Steve. "On Socially Composed Knowledge," in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence in Tanzania*, edited by Gregory Maddox and James Gibling (Oxford: James Currey, 2005).

Higginson, Pim. "The Well Tempered Savage: Albert Schweitzer, Music, and Imperial Deafness," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Winter, 2005).

Mortimer, Robert. "State and Army in Algeria: The 'Bouteflika Effect,'" *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2006).

Moudileno, Lydie. "Magical Realism: 'Arme miraculeuse' for the African Novel?" *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring, 2006).

Mbeje, Audrey. *Zulu Learner's Reference Grammar* (Madison: National African Language Resource Center Press, 2005).

Ngefacs, Aloysius and Bonaventure M. Sala. "Cameroon Pidgin and Cameroon English at a Confluence: A Real Time Investigation," *English World-Wide*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2006).

Okeke, Iruka. "Diagnostic Insufficiency in Africa," *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 42 (2006).

Sharkey, Heather J. "Missionary Legacies: Muslim-Christian Encounters in Egypt and Sudan during the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, edited by Benjamin F. Soares (Brill: Leiden, 2006). □

## PENN IN BOTSWANA HIV/AIDS HOSPICE

The Penn Program in Botswana has begun a new fundraising effort to support its HIV/AIDS Hospice there. Funded through the support of Merck and the Bill Gates Foundation, the Penn Program in Botswana makes medicine and treatment more widely available to HIV positive populations by sending doctors to the region's public hospitals. In addition, Penn medical students have spent the summer in Botswana working at the Holy Cross Hospice in Gabarone.

The Hospice is a daytime care center for HIV positive visitors, and it also supports severely-impaired HIV patients in their homes by providing food and childcare facilities.

Project volunteer Cindy Friedman recently visited the Hospice to begin fundraising through the sale of handmade HIV awareness pins in Botswana and the United States. Hospice



Hospice Clients at work

patients are now making aprons, shawls, hope pins, and traditional crafts and fiber arts, with all profits supporting the facility's programs. In addition to the wages earned by HIV positive clients and their families, the handmade pins allow the hospice to continue feeding 1800 "Medical Students," "Penn students," and then children, hospice visitors, and homebound clients. Anyone is welcome to get involved by spreading awareness about the hospice, having pins for sale at your next event, or by purchasing pins online. For more information, visit the following site: [http://www.med.upenn.edu/globalhealth], and select "Medical Students," "Penn students," and then "Opportunities". □

### *African Studies Center Staff*

Dr. Lydie Moudileno, Director

Dr. Ali B. Ali-Dinar, Interim Associate Director

Dr. Audrey N. Mbeje, Language Program Coordinator

Faye Patterson, Program and Title VI Coordinator

James De Lorenzi, Research Assistant