



February 5

7:30 p.m. Booth Library West Reading Room

Kente in Context

Robert S. Petersen, presenter, associate professor, Art

Kente cloth has an important symbolic meaning in Ghana especially with regard to royal ranks and public honors. It has in recent times also become powerfully evocative as a broader symbol of African Culture abroad. This talk will examine the development of kente traditions and some of its traditional uses within Ghana as well as some of the more recent works that kente cloth has inspired.

Robert S. Petersen is an Associate Professor of Art at Eastern where he teaches courses covering Africa, India, Southeast Asia, China and Japan. Dr. Petersen graduated with a BA from University of Santa Cruz in Art, an MA in Performance Studies from Brown University, and a PhD from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Asian Theatre. In 1988, Dr. Petersen received a Fulbright scholarship to study the traditional arts of Indonesia and has since published numerous articles and essays on popular and traditional culture in India, Southeast Asia, and Japan.



February 17

4:00 p.m. Library Conference Room 4440

A Self-Efficacious People: Yearning to Learn

Mildred Pearson, presenter, assistant professor,
Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education

As a recent invited guest at the African Methodist Episcopal University in Liberia, Dr. Pearson will share her experiences with the African people. In particular, she will share how African people have been self-efficacious in their pursuit for freedom, dignity, and honor, particularly in education. In her sojourn, she served as acting president with 71 full-time instructional personnel, and approximately 4,000 students.

Dr. Mildred M. Pearson serves as Director of Faculty Development at Eastern and teaches in the College of Education and Professional Studies. Her research interests include self-efficacy, self-regulation, resilience and gender differences. She earned her BA in English education from Langston University, MEd from University of Central Oklahoma, and EdD in Curriculum and Educational Leadership from Oklahoma State University. She is the author of *A Time for Deeper Dialogue: Mentoring, Modeling and Growing Your Own*.





February 19

7:00 p.m. Library Conference Room 4440

Kente Iconicity and “Black Atlantic” Cultural Politics

Klevor Abo, presenter, instructor, African American Studies

This presentation situates the rise of the brightly colored kente as an internationally recognizable icon of Black pride in three interwoven strands of history: the European colonization of West Africa, the movements for African political independence and civil rights in the United States, and the emergence of “Black Atlantic” elites in Africa, the Americas, the Caribbeans and Europe. An examination of these histories is critical for an understanding of the deployment of the kente and other cultural artifacts and practices in the making of global African identities.

Klevor Abo is a member of the core teaching faculty in the African American Studies program at Eastern. He holds a PhD in American Culture Studies from Bowling Green State University, Ohio. He began his academic career in his native Ghana, at the University of Ghana, his undergraduate alma mater. Dr. Abo’s teaching and research interests revolve around the nature and character of the political and cultural relationship between the African continent and its diasporas.



February 24

7:00 p.m. Library Conference Room 4440

Film – *Daughters of the Dust*

Ann Boswell, moderator, professor, English

An award-winning and wonderful, beautiful film directed by an African American, Julie Dash, about the Gullah culture of South Carolina, and how Gullah people cherish the ways of their West African ancestors (1991).

Parley Ann Boswell is a professor of English at Eastern, where she teaches courses in American Literature and Film Studies. She received her MA in colonial American history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a PhD in English from Loyola University. Dr. Boswell is the author of several essays on film and American literature, and has also published *Reel Rituals: From Baptisms to Funerals in Hollywood Film, 1945-1995* (Popular Press, 1999), and *Edith Wharton on Film* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2007).





February 26

4:00 p.m. Library Conference Room 4440

An Introduction to Kofi N. Awoonor: Reconciliation and Atonement
in *Comes the Voyager at Last: A Tale of Return to Africa*

Michael Loudon, presenter, professor, English

Arguably Ghana's premiere postcolonial poet, Awoonor's work spans several genres and five decades. Interweaving poetry and prose, myth and history, Awoonor moves from exile and satirical critique of modern Ghana in *This Earth, My Brother* (1971) toward return and reconciliation *Comes the Voyager...* (1992). This lecture introduces Awoonor's work through selected readings from and commentary on his poetry with an emphasis on his mythic rendering of returning to Africa as an Ewe man soon to serve as representative to the United Nations of the nation that had once detained him on subversion charges for nearly a year. Awoonor's career exemplifies the compassion of black humanism that fashioned his politics of poetry and the poetics of politics.

Michael Loudon is a professor of English and has taught at Eastern for the past 25 years. He completed his AB at Wabash College in Indiana and his MA and PhD at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He served as Acting Coordinator of the African American Studies Program, 2006-2008. He has taught courses on the British Romantic poets, 19th and 20th Century American literature, African American literature, Native American literature, Anglophone postcolonial literatures, cultural studies and criticism, and, with colleagues in the Department of Philosophy interdisciplinary courses in Cultural Foundations. He studied Gandhian nonviolent resistance in India as an undergraduate, was Fulbright Professor of African American Literature in 1990-91 at the University of the West Indies—St. Augustine in Trinidad, taught at the University of Guam in 2002, and participated in Study Abroad—Cape Town, South Africa in 2007.





March 3

4:00 p.m. Library Conference Room 4440

The Ceremonial Aspects of Ghanaian Kente

Johnson Kofi Kuma, presenter, professor, Library Services

Johnson Kofi Kuma, a native of Ghana, will present a workshop on the ceremonial aspects of Ghanaian Kente. His presentation will include a slide presentation and discussion.

Johnson Kofi Kuma is a Reference Librarian at Booth Library, Eastern. He received his BS in Biology from Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, MLS in Library and Information Science from St John's University in New York, and MA in Political Science from Eastern. Johnson is a subject bibliographer for African American Studies, Biological Sciences, and Technology. He loves to explore the western landscape of the United States of America.

