Africa House

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OVERVIEW

The African House’s participation in the Living and Learning Center’s Global Village program are threefold. First to offer students an awareness and appreciation for the rich variety of African cultures the continent is able to provide, second to outline historical events that have helped shape modern African cultures through the study of historical events, and lastly to enhance students’ educational experience at UVM by attending various cultural immersion programs geared towards alerting students of various African countries. Activities will be afforded to students for the purpose of cultural immersions, educational knowledge, and a better understanding of African cultures’ role in the world. Africa House will be a valuable program in helping students develop a deeper appreciation of African cultures and traditions as well as increase their educational experience in a diversified topic area. The program promotes interactions between participating students, Africans, and Africanist scholars in both the UVM community and the greater Burlington community. Through its residential component, Africa House offers students shared experiences as well as opportunities for participation in the exploration of Africa’s incredibly rich and diverse cultures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective 1: To offer students a sense of the rich and diverse cultures found in Africa

Action Steps:

- Africa has an elegant performance tradition of poetry, story-telling, music, dance, and theatre. Students will participate in a variety of workshops on each of these. Students are also encouraged to attend African performances in the local theaters and other local artistic venues. One event planned will be the collaboration with Sayon Camara, a West African drum artist in the Vermont/New Hampshire area. Sayon is a very talented teacher with a great story. He will be a great introduction to one aspect of the art culture found in Africa. Members will have the opportunity to participate in dance lessons with the local
West African dance group, Jeh Kulu to encourage students to stay fit while learning the beautiful art of dance throughout various African countries.

- Africa has a growing indigenous film industry to which students will be given the opportunity to be exposed to. Students will view traditional African films and plays that have helped shape the numerous African cultures and will also be encouraged to expose themselves to non-African film productions that deal with African issues. Members will watch a variety of films addressing current African issues and the history of those issues. The films include Hotel Rwanda, Invictus, Nowhere in Africa, The Gods Must Be Crazy and many more titles.
- For centuries, African cuisine and culinary practices have influenced the food culture in the United States. Students explore the food cultures of Africa and prepare African dishes. Culinary work exposes students to not only an artistic aspect of African culture, but an educational aspect of African traditions. Members will learn about diverse foods, preparations, changing interpretations, and traditions behind them.
- One cannot speak of Africa without speaking of the influences language has had on the culture of each country. Within each country, individuals are exposed to a variety of languages that resemble a tribe and the tribe’s culture. Through language, we aim to give students a sample of how dialect plays an important role in distinguishing cultural practices and traditions within a country. Members will work with community members to learn about the impact dialect has created cultural, political, and social diversification across parts of Africa.

**Learning Objective 2:** To provide an introduction to different topics in African Studies such as health, agriculture, technology, education, politics, and economy

**Action Steps:**

- Members will discuss developmental issues in Africa, with a focus on different important themes.
- Africa House will engage with African scholars and artists, presently in the United States, to expose students to up-to-date developments in African issues.
- Members will invite local Africans in the UVM and Burlington communities to discuss issues they faced in coming from their homeland to America. By listening to these stories, members will be able to see what life as a refugee in America is like and will be able to develop a deeper appreciation for the diversity offered to us by these refugees.

**Learning Objective 3:** To encourage students’ initiatives in the exploration of Africa’s diverse environments and cultures

**Action Steps:**
• Members will plan year-long extracurricular activities of their choosing for the program. Throughout the year, all members of the African Cultural Traditions Program join in organizing events focusing on African issues and Africa’s heritage, including public lectures, videos and films, symposia, exhibitions, performances, African dinner, drum, and dance, for example.
• Members will host a Vermont African Community Gathering at the end of the year. This event will allow the refugee community as well as others to celebrate the holidays together here at the Living and Learning Center and also allow students of Africa House to be more in touch with the African Community in the greater Burlington area.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Africa House will encourage participation in some community service projects related to Africa. In the past, African Cultural Traditions has participated in various community-based activities which included (1) guest teaching on Africa in middle and high schools around the state; (2) teach-in for Vermont teachers on Somalia; (3) guest-lecturing for a Summer Institute on Africa sponsored by the Vermont Council for the Humanities; (4) volunteering with event set-up for various African events hosted by the African community in Burlington and Winooski. This year we will continue exploring ways of helping to facilitate the integration of African immigrants in the larger Vermont community.

About the Global Village

This program is part of the Global Village Residential Learning Community (RLC). For UVM students interested in exploring other cultures, studying abroad, or pursuing lives and careers in an increasingly interconnected world, the Global Village may be just the place for you! Drawing on the resources of the Living/Learning Center and its dynamic network of student- and faculty-led programs, the community of learners that make up the Global Village will be engaged in coursework, lectures, concerts, exhibits, faculty and peer mentoring, social connections with international students, group meals, and trips that:

• Explore the many connections among language, art and culture at regional, national, and international scales.
• Share disciplinary expertise within an environment that values a holistic approach to “living and learning.”
• Encourage formal and informal contacts among students, faculty, and staff within the Global Village, the Living/Learning Center, the other Residential Learning Communities, and the university as a whole.
• Aim to be a complement to existing international and cross-cultural programs at UVM.
• “Think globally and act locally” by outreach to the international community at UVM and within the greater Burlington area.

More information about the Global Village RLC can be found at: http://www.uvm.edu/globalvillage

GRS 025: The Global Village Seminar

GRS 025: The Global Village Seminar is a largely self-paced, one-credit course designed to help you get the most out of your experience as a citizen of the Global Village Residential Learning Community. All new Global Village residents must enroll in GRS 025 for one credit during the fall semester or spring semester. (Returning Global Village students who have not yet satisfactorily completed the class must enroll in GRS 025 during the fall semester.) This course will be graded on a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” basis. The course will be partly comprised of a series of “Common Hour” community gatherings held on Thursday afternoons. The primary purpose of the Common Hour meetings is to build a stronger sense of community among the members of the many Global Village houses and programs. As well, the Common Hour gatherings will help Global Village citizens build a common knowledge and skill set, including such topics as intercultural communication, globalization, etc. A variety of program offerings will take place during Common Hour meetings, such as special guest lectures, interactive dialogue and social gatherings. During weeks when the Common Hours are not held, you are expected to participate in one educational event or activity with a global cultural theme. We’ll provide you with a list of suggested events and activities, or you can identify other events/activities with a global cultural theme; you choose which ones you wish to attend.

We’ll provide you with a Global Village Passport; use it to keep track of your activities and explorations. In addition to documenting participation in Common Hours and the educational events/activities, you will need to do reflective writing in the form of five short journal entries on the cultural/educational events that you participated in, along with a lengthier essay looking back on your most meaningful experience of the semester within the Global Village.

Returning Global Village students are also invited (but not required) to enroll in GRS 025 during the fall semester or spring semester.
If you anticipate a problem with fulfilling this course expectation (such as if you will already be enrolled in 18 credits), please contact Prof. Joseph Acquisto, Faculty Director of the Global Village, at Joseph.Acquisto@uvm.edu

For more details about this course, visit:

http://www.uvm.edu/~gvrlc/?Page=passport/passport.html&SM=passport/sub-menu.html