
Ethnic Diversity Newsletter

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Minnesota State University, Mankato, Dept. of Ethnic Studies

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Ethnic Diversity Commitment

by Yueh-Ting Lee, Ph.D. Chairperson

On October 10, President Richard Davenport was invited to our Ethnic Studies Department meeting. As the 12th president at Minnesota State University, Mankato, he came here in Fall, 2002.

All our faculty and students were very eager to meet with him and to know about his view of ethnic diversity. Dr. Davenport was also very eager to meet and know about our faculty and students.



At the meeting, each of the faculty and graduate students introduced themselves to the President and also talked about their accomplishments in the past with him. He was very pleased with and impressed by the faculty's accomplishments. After he complimented faculty and department on work that was being carried out, President Davenport stated he has 5-6 measurable goals and would like to move forward and have these goals achieved in 2 years. One objective deals with diversity. The role of the Ethnic Studies Department in undergraduate and graduate education fits well with the University goals. President Davenport foresees growth in the Ethnic Studies degree.

President Davenport's commitment to Ethnic Diversity is consistent with his strategic priorities. In fact, one of his priorities is to promote diversity (see <http://www.mnsu.edu/president/>). We thank President Davenport for his support and commitment to ethnic diversity and look forward to working with him.

Understanding Somalia ---Somali Culture and Refugees

by Michele R. Rydeen, a Graduate Student in [Helping Across Cultures](#) in Fall, 2002

The need to learn and understand the growing population of Somali refugees, as a nation and individuals, is essential. I intend to present an introduction into the culture and beliefs to better serve quality care to the Somali population.

The most concise format for presenting the geographical, government and history of Somalia was found in Brunner's TIME Almanac (2000). This information accuracy was cross-referenced with several other sources of information. Below is the excerpt regarding Somalia as a Nation.

Somalia

Somali Democratic Republic

National name: Al Jumhuriya As-Somalya al-Dimocradia

President: Abdiqassim Salad Hassan

Area: 246,199 sq. miles (637, 660 km)

Population (1999 est.): 7,140,643 (average annual rate of natural increase: 2.94%); birth rate: 48.0/1000; infant mortality rate: 125.8/1000; density per sq. mi: 29

Capital and largest city (1990 est.): Mogadishu, 900,000.

Monetary unit: Somali shilling.

Languages: Somali (official), Arabic, English, Italian.

Ethnicity/race: Somali 85%, Bantu, Arabs.

Religion: Islam (Sunni).

Literacy rate: 24%

Economic summary: Political turmoil in 1991-92 resulted in widespread famine and a substantial drop in economic output. Much of the economy has been devastated by the civil war. Agriculture is the most important sector with livestock accounting for about 40% of GDP and about 65% of export earnings.

GDP/PPP (1996 est.): \$8 billion; \$600 per capita.

Real growth rate: 4%. **Inflation:** n.a.

Unemployment: n.a. Arable land: 2%.

Agriculture: livestock, bananas, sorghum, cereals, sugar cane, maize sesame seeds, beans.

Labor force: 3.7 million; very few are skilled laborers; agriculture, 71%; industry and services, 29%.

Natural resources: uranium.

Exports: \$130 million (1994 est.); livestock, skins and hides, bananas.

Imports: \$269 million (1994 est.): textiles, foodstuff, construction materials and equipment, petroleum products.

Major trading partners: Saudi Arabia, Italy, U.S., U.K., Germany.

Geography: Somalia, situated in the Horn of Africa, lies along the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. It is bounded by Djibouti in the northwest, Ethiopia in the west, and Kenya in the southwest. In area it is slightly smaller than Texas. Generally arid and barren, Somalia has two chief rivers, the Shebelle and the Juba.

Government: The previous president was overthrown in January, 1991; since then Somalia has been plunged into

anarchy. Effective in 2000, President Hassan has resided as Somalia's President.

History: From the 7th to the 10th century, Arab and Persian trading posts were established along the coast of present-day Somalia. Nomadic tribes occupied the interior, occasionally pushing into Ethiopian territory. In the 16th century, Turkish rule extended to the northern coast and the Sultans of Zanzibar gained control in the south. After British occupation of Aden in 1839 the Somali coast became its source of food. The French established a coal mining station in 1862 at the site of Djibouti and the Italians planted a settlement in Eritra. Egypt, which for a time claimed Turkish rights in the area, was succeeded by Britain. By 1920, a British protectorate and an Italian protectorate occupied what is now Somalia. The British ruled the entire area after 1941, with Italy returning in 1950 to serve as United Nations trustee for its former territory. By 1960, Britain and Italy granted independence to their respective sectors, enabling the two to join as the Republic of Somalia on July 1, 1960. Somalia broke diplomatic relations with Britain in 1963 when the British granted the Somali-populated Northern Frontier District of Kenya to the Republic of Kenya.

On October 15, 1969, President Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated and the army seized power, dissolving the legislature and arresting all government leaders. Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, as president of a renamed Somali Democratic Republic, leaned heavily toward the U.S.S.R. In 1977, Somalia openly backed rebels in the easternmost area of Ethiopia, the Ogaden Desert, which had been seized by Ethiopia at the turn of the century. Somalia acknowledged defeat in an eight-month war against the Ethiopians that year, having lost much of its 32,000-man army and most of its tanks and planes. President Siad Barre fled the country in late January, 1991. His departure left Somalia in the hands of a number of clan-based guerrilla groups, none of which trusted each other.

Africa's worst drought occurred in 1992, and coupled with the devastation of civil war, Somalia was plunged into a severe famine—an estimated one-third of the population was in danger of dying of starvation. U.S. troops were sent in to protect the delivery of food in December, 1992. In May the U.N. took control of the relief efforts from the U.S. The warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid ambushed U.N. troops and dragged American bodies through the streets, causing an about-face in America's willingness to involve itself in the fate of this anarchic country. Peace talks in Kenya

appeared to be moving slowly but steadily toward an agreement on an interim government, at least in principle, when on March 23, 1994, they collapsed. The last of the U.S. troops left in late March, leaving 19,000 U.N. troops behind.

Since 1991 Somalia has been engulfed in anarchy. Over the past seven years peace negotiations between the various factions have been fruitless, and no attempt has been made to rebuild the government. In 1991, a breakaway nation, the Somaliland Republic, proclaimed its independence. Since then several warlords have begun to set up their own ministates—colonel Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed is president of breakaway Puntland and Mohamed "General Morgan" Said Hersi began setting up Jubaland in the fall of 1998.

In 1999, Somali warlord Hussein Mohamed Aidid allied himself with Eritra in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which caused the conflict to move onto Somalian territory.

In the year 2000, President Abdiquassim Salad Hassan was elected to the Democratic Republic. (Brunner, ed., 2000, 302).

This information provides the basic details of Somalia and its people. It is wise to consider that when speaking of Africa there is the danger of considering it as one homogenous entity whereas often parts of the same country differ due to their geographical position, language, history, religion and economic situation (Kilaini, 2001).

The basic religious tenet is stated in its creed: "There is no god but God Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet." "The five pillars of faith include reciting the creed, daily prayers performed according to predetermined rules, fasting during the month of Ramadan (when Muhammad received his initial revelations), almsgiving, and the pilgrimage to Mecca." (Metz, 1993).

Islam interacts with a person's life such as dressing, eating, fasting, prayers, relationships and interactions. Muslim's are not to eat pork or drink alcohol. Women are to wear head coverings and submit to men. The prayers are often done up to five times a day. These are considerations to make when counseling or assisting Somali immigrants into the United States. Often counselors in the USA attempt to impose Western views through counseling techniques or beliefs without our being aware of this. It is imperative to establish an understanding of practices used in our society not conducive to assisting other cultures, in this paper the Somali population.

References

- Brunner, B. (Ed.). (2000). *TIME Almanac 2000*. USA: Family Education Company.
- Kilaini, M. (2001). Ecumenism in a Multi-Religious Context. (Africa). *The Ecumenical Review*, July, 1-19.
- Metz, H. C. (1993). *Somalia: A country study*(4th Ed). Washington, DC. Library of Congress, Federal Research Division.

Joint Program in Ethnic Studies and Humanities as a New Minor

The mission of this minor is to offer students an opportunity to explore the connections between ethnic experiences and cultural expressions. Students that enlist in this minor will gain an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of ethnic groups, as well as assess the values, beliefs, and ideologies of varying perspectives. This joint minor will expose students to an interdisciplinary approach to understanding human culture and the contributions of Western and Non-Western cultures. All students will be encouraged to focus in-depth on culturally diverse issues in order to gain a broader perspective of their community, both locally and globally. The total credits for this joint minor are 21-22 credits. Please feel free to contact Dr. Joann Quinones-Perdomo, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies Department (joann-quinones.perdomo@mnsu.edu) or Dr. Bill Dyer, Professor of English Department (william.dyer@mnsu.edu) for more information.

Redesigned (New) Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies (EMCS)—MS as a free-standing Graduate Program at MSU (subject to final approval)

The Department of Ethnic Studies, an interdisciplinary program, is academically committed to promoting multicultural and ethnic knowledge, values, and skills both within and outside the United States and to preparing students for effective functioning across the culturally diverse and global community. Subject to final approval, the Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Studies Program (EMCS) with an M.S. degree is offered to meet the diverse needs of students concerning scholarly academic work, practical application of knowledge and personal growth. Our EMCS graduate program will provide students with multi-ethnic and cross-cultural knowledge, values and skills from American and global perspectives.

First, students will gain factual knowledge by taking courses focusing on different ethnic, racial and cultural groups as well as discrimination, immigration, stereotypes and other important issues. Second, they will learn how to understand and appreciate the different values and beliefs each cultural or ethnic group has. Third and most importantly, students in this program will be expected to gain the following skills---e.g., (a) research skills, writing skills and/or computer/statistical

analysis skills, (b) human resources management and leadership skills, (c) counseling skills, and (d) cultural competency skills or cross-cultural training and diversity management skills. There is a strong emphasis on competency in applied skills because advocacy must have practical application as its foundations to be credible.

Credits

Thesis Plan --33 credits

Alternate Plan Paper --34 credits

Admission requirements

1. An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale;
2. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university;
3. At least 9 credits in ethnic and cross-cultural areas. This requirement may be waived if the applicant can show relevant work (related to other social sciences) or other experiences that provide the necessary background to pursue graduate work in EMCS;
4. Have knowledge of or skills in two languages (i.e., English plus preliminary level of another language---i.e., six credits of undergraduate language courses), but this may be subject to arrangement and discussion between the applicant and the Department); and
5. When students do not meet the normal admission requirements, they may be recommended for admission by the department subject to removal of deficiencies or other conditions.

Contact Information: Please feel free to contact Dr. Lee (leey@mnsu.edu) or Dr. Wayne Allen (wayne.allen@mnsu.edu) for more information.

Professional Events and Research Activities

Cross-Cultural/Ethnic Work

Allen, Wayne, (2002). Tellin' the Tales and Teaching the Traditions: Dene Oral Narratives and the Universal Themes of Ethnocentrism, Xenophobia and Neophilia. A paper presented at the XVI Biennial Conference of the International Society for Human Ethology in Montreal on Aug. 7-10.

Lee, Yueh-Ting, Takaku, S, Ottati, V., & Yan, G. (2002). Terrorism and Heroism as Seen by Islamic, Eastern and Christian Civilizations. Paper presented at the 110th Annual Convention of American Psychological Association, August 22-24, Chicago, Illinois.

Lee, Yueh-Ting, Fan, H.-X., & Shi, K. (2002). Perception of Zhong Guo (China's) Peripheral Countries. Paper presented at the 8th International Conference of the Association of Chinese Professors in Social Sciences, October 25-27, San Jose State University, California.

Lee, Yueh-Ting, Ottati, V., & Guo, D. (2002). Understanding and preventing depression among mainland Chinese children. Prevention and Treatment, (the first e-journal of American Psychological Association)
<http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume5/pre0050010c.html>

Lee, Yueh-Ting, & Ottati, V (2002). Attitudes toward to American immigration policy: The role of ingroup-outgroup bias,

economic concern, and obedience to law. Journal of Social Psychology, 142(5), 617-634.

Quinones-Perdomo, Joann (2002). A Splendid Little (Postcolonial) War: Colonial Theory and Popular Images of the Spanish American War. A Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English, University of Iowa.

Quinones-Perdomo, Joann (2002). Race War on San Juan Hill: The Legacy of Roosevelt's Rough Riders and African American Troops during the Spanish American War. Paper Presented at the English Department Research Forum at Minnesota State University, Mankato on Nov. 20.

Accomplishments of Program Faculty

Bevacqua, Maria (2002). Diversity issues. A new-advocate training workshop conducted for the Sexual Violence Resource Center of Blue Earth County, Minnesota, on November 12.

Slocum, Frederick (2002). Assessing Authoritarianism as a Predictor of Pictorial Racial Responses. Paper presented at the International Society of Political Psychology annual conference in Berlin, Germany on July 16-19.

Slocum, Frederick (2002). Revising the road to a split presidential election: Do state disparities in Electoral College representation matter? A discussant at Southern Political

Science Association annual conference in Savannah, Georgia, November 7-9, 2002.

Ethnic Studies Faculty Advisory Subcommittee

We thank the following program faculty members who are willing to serve on the advisory subcommittee and to represent different colleges on campus in 2002-2003

Carlson, Julie A. (Education) julie.carlson@mnsu.edu
Dyer, William D. (Arts and Humanities) william.dyer@mnsu.edu
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Support and Sponsorship of Ethnic and Cross-Cultural Events/Activities

1. The Department of Ethnic Studies invited and sponsored Prof. Wang Da-you, a world known cultural anthropologist, art historian as well as an expert of Native American cultures, who visited Minnesota State University and different reservations in Minnesota and South Dakota on July 22-27, 2002.

2. Wayne Allen coordinated the 14th Annual Mankato Intertribal Powwow Education Day on Sept. 20, 2002. Approximately 850 third graders attended over 35 indigenous teaching stations that day.

3. With the Kessel Peace Institute, the Department of Ethnic Studies co-sponsored Sr. Cornelio Rivera's lecture entitled The Human Cost of a Cup of Coffee: Nicaraguan Coffee Farmers, the Global Economy and You at Minnesota State University, Mankato on October 15, 2002.

4. The faculty and students in the Department of Ethnic Studies participated in the American Indian Awareness week (Oct. 7-11), the Asian American Symposium (Oct. 17-18) and the MSU Diversity Week (Nov. 18-22).

5. Department of Ethnic Studies co-sponsored/supported and participated in the Cultural Diversity Dinner on November 22 with the Cultural Diversity Office.



Martin Luther King III will be at MSU, Mankato

In 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. visited Mankato and spoke to the community of Mankato. Thirty-two years later, Mankato is the first city in Minnesota to designate a street as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. To celebrate his father's visit and this designated street here, Martin Luther King III, the son of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will speak in the Taylor Center at 6:30pm on January 30 (Thursday), 2003. This event is organized by the MLK Commemorative Board, Inc in southern Minnesota and Minnesota State University. Please mark your calendar to celebrate this event.

Ethnic Studies Scholarships

The Department of Ethnic Studies will provide special opportunities and recognition for our Ethnic Studies students. We will have several scholarships/awards. Each year we plan to recognize two outstanding Ethnic Studies students (major/minor/graduate) with awards of at least \$200 each. One is E. S. Academic Excellence Scholarship/Award which goes to the student with the highest GPA. The other is E.S. Achievement Scholarship/Award to the student who has overcome great difficulty or challenge in maintaining a very high GPA. A new scholarship "Timothy Price Scholarship" will award two outstanding students (-\$300 for each student with a GPA of at least 3.00 and excellent leadership skills and community experiences). We invite nominations and applications for these awards/scholarships (109 Morris Hall; or x2798 or cynthia.veldhuisen@mnsu.edu).

In order to continue providing our students with scholarships and interactive multi-cultural experiences, we need continuous support from colleagues and friends. Please consider a contribution to the Ethnic Studies Department's foundation account for scholarships (Acct # 335814). Thank you for your active support and contribution to our students and program.

Spring 2003's Schedule

For the schedule of Spring, 2003, please visit our website:

<http://www.mnsu.edu/dept/ethnic/class.html> Our mission statement states, **"The Department of Ethnic Studies, an interdisciplinary program, is academically committed to promoting multicultural and ethnic knowledge, skills and values both within and outside the United States and to preparing our students for effective functioning across the culturally diverse and global community."** Since its inception in 1989, the Ethnic Studies Department has sought to recognize and study ethnic diversity. The Department has sought to bring people of different cultures/ethnic groups together in an academic setting. We would like to continue to make a difference for all people and establish a strong student-oriented academic program that encompasses a wide range of individuals' different backgrounds. For more information about the Ethnic Studies undergraduate or graduate programs, please call the Department of Ethnic Studies at (507)-389-2798 or visit our website (<http://www.mnsu.edu/ethnic>).

Happy 2003!

Ethnic Diversity

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