

MUS 143B/AFST 188B-African Music Ensemble
Fall 2009

Class Time: Friday 1–3
Room: FA 104, FA 27
Instructor: Dr. James Burns
Office: FA 116
Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2PM
Contact: Email: jburns@binghamton.edu ; Office Phone: 777-2595

Teaching Assistant:

Marc Silvagni
Email: msilvag1@binghamton.edu
Office TBA

Required Texts:

Course pack is required, *Introductory Course for African Drumming*, available at the BU Bookstore.
Please bring this to class everyday.

Overview:

This course will teach you the fundamentals of African drumming including timeline patterns, rhythmic awareness, group cohesion and percussion techniques using sticks and hands. For the first half of each class, you will go to room FA27 with the TA Marc Silvagni to work through an exercise book, *Introductory Course for African Drumming*, which will take you through a graduated series of lessons, each with a benchmark exercise that must be successfully completed before progressing to the next level. For the second half of class, you will join the rehearsal of our performance ensemble, Nukporfe, playing whichever parts you have mastered. You will also learn to sing the songs that accompany the dances, using the songbook in the back of the textbook. This course should prepare you to join our performing ensemble in the future as a drummer. On **Thursday November 19, 2008 from 1-2PM**, you will give a **Mandatory** performance with live dancers in Casadesus recital hall in the Fine Arts Building. There will be a **mandatory** rehearsal on **Wednesday November 18 from 6–8PM**. Throughout the semester Nukporfe will also be performing outside, and you will be given the chance to accompany us if you choose. Additionally, we will be hosting a visiting artist, Kwadzo Tagborlo, a professional African drummer from Ghana, from October 7–22, 2009. Kwadzo will join our dance teacher Pierrette Aboadji in giving a series of workshops at the University and in the community.

Grades

Grades will be based on class participation including: attendance, participation, attitude, motivation, and technical growth. Your technical growth will be measured by the exercises you complete from the textbook. Final averages will be tabulated as follows:

Participation	50%	92-100	A	78-79.9	C+
Technical growth	50%	90-91.9	A-	72-77.9	C
		88-89.9	B+	70-71.9	C-
		82-87.9	B	60-69.9	D
		80-81.9	B-	Below 60	F

Attendance

As discussed above, attendance (and resultant class participation) accounts for half of your grade. Each day you will be given up to 10 points for class participation. Dates for which you have unexcused absences will be counted as 0 for class participation. Excused absences must be approved by the instructor.

Care and Maintenance of the Instruments

The instruments we will be playing on have been specially purchased for the Music Department, and require extreme care in both playing and upkeep. In many cases these instruments are only available in Africa, and are therefore difficult to replace or repair. You will be given specific instructions for the care and maintenance of each instrument by the instructor or TA, and these rules must *always* be followed. If you are observed mishandling the instruments you will not be allowed to continue using them.

At this time students are not charged an access fee for the privilege of using the instruments in class and to practice on. In return, however, it is expected that students be ready to volunteer their time, outside of class, for the purpose of seasonal maintenance and care of the instruments.

Use and Access to the Instruments

The instruments are stored in **FA 36**. Students will be responsible for **transporting** the required instruments to and from the storage room to the classroom for each meeting. In order to start the class on time, and not keep the instructors waiting, make sure you arrive early. We will also have to **remove** our shoes before entering the dance studio, and set up a mat on the dance floor to put the instruments on, as well as set up chairs to sit on. Everything must be taken down at the end of class, and the studio left as we found it. Please assure that the instruments, mat, and chairs are stored correctly.

Students will be allowed to check out instruments for practice outside of class. There is a key and sign out sheet located in the Music Department Office, FA 165. The instruments may be used in any of the practice rooms. **Instruments must never be taken out of the Music building**, without prior approval of Dr. Burns.

Update on Swine Flu (H1N1 virus)

The university is expecting an outbreak of swine flu- if you are sick you will be excused from coursework and exams until you are able to return. The university advises:

“If you have a fever, body aches, cough, and/or sore throat please do not come to class. Please remain at home or in your room and follow instructions from the University’s Health Services that will be available on the web– <http://www2.binghamton.edu/news/daily-newsbriefs/updates/swine-flu.html>.

Important Dates:

Sept. 7	Labor Day (No class)
Sept. 11	Course Add/Drop Deadline
Sept. 18-20	Rosh Hashanah (No Class on Wednesday)
Sept. 28	Yom Kippur
Oct. 30	Course Withdraw Deadline
Nov. 19	Performance in Casadesus Hall.
Nov. 25-29	Thanksgiving Break