

# GRADUATE LEARNING PLAN

for

<b><u>FOCUS AREA:</u></b>	- <b><u>descriptive phrase</u></b> Using traditional African Ancestral healing rituals, dream interpretation, and the arts to affect transformative change in African Diasporic communities.
<b><u>Prof. Advisor:</u></b>	
<b><u>Faculty Mentor:</u></b>	
<b><u>Cluster:</u></b>	
<b><u>Approval:</u></b>	

## **► PART I: Personal/Professional Background & Goals**

Directions: In Part I, the student provides a context for the Graduate Learning Plan and a rationale for both his/her career direction and choice of the MAAPS Program of study as a vehicle to assist movement in that direction. Specifically, Part I is to include three sections:

- A. a brief description of the student's personal and professional history (including education, past/current positions, key interests, etc.);
- B. an explanation of the three or more years of experience (or equivalent) offered in support of the Graduate Focus Area;
- C. a brief description/explanation of the student's personal and professional goals.

### **A. Description of My Personal/Professional History:**

I am a practitioner and priestess in the West African spiritual tradition of Ifa, as well as a metaphysician, dream interpreter, holistic healer, and artist. I remember trying hard to fit the Spiritual memories of the Ancestral realm into the physical body of an infant, and I recall pondering the purpose of my existence in this lifetime and finding some small consolation in feeling/hearing Spirits telling me to remember, wait, and see. While I have been a student of non-western Spiritual practices most of my life, my Spiritual journey, in this lifetime, started in the Baptist church. As a young child attending church, I found connection through the songs but rarely through the lessons taught, nor the spectacle of a typical service. I would sit quietly and wonder why....Why was I there?....Why was I bored?....Why did I know there was something incomplete for me in the stories being told? Thus, the internal search for something closer to my truth began.

I had the good fortune of being connected to parents, who encouraged me to listen to my inner voices, i.e. Ancestors and Spirit Guides, and allowed me the freedom of choice. Those choices manifested in many ways, but Spiritually, I was no longer mandated to regularly attend church after the age of thirteen. This new, self-directed leg of my Spiritual journey, through reading and reflection, always gravitated toward non-Western,

ancient traditions. Those ancient traditions always lead me back to traditional African practices, and the research of those traditions complimented my love of learning, art, anthropology, nature, animals, healing, social justice, and Spiritual/cultural empowerment.

While my Spiritual journey continued to add fluidity to my life, there was no freedom of choice academically. My mother is the oldest living sibling of ten, academically brilliant, yet highly impoverished children. She was born in the South, raised in Chicago, and graduated from high school with honors at fifteen. My father is the youngest male sibling out of five, who was raised in the South, served two tours of military duty, and survives the daily challenges of living with a thirty year old brain tumor.

Their expectations for their three children were extraordinarily high, and the lessons taught in our home were a blending of honey coated steel. The mastery of self awareness, academic and athletic prowess, family honor, community involvement, and the respect of elders was skillfully woven together with the love of music, the joy of laughter, the acknowledgement of tears, and the peace of contemplation. This tapestry of resilience and respite encouraged my individuality, as well as my responsibility to self and others. I was encouraged to make my mark and hone my mind, so that when I used my voice, it would not only be heard, but it would be worth hearing.

I have always been a thoughtful renegade, standing up to traditions and mores that stifle me while observing and attempting to understand the personal traditions of others. This thoughtful observation sharpened my intuitive abilities, which enabled me to quickly assess situations and people. I became adept at 'reading' the intention and energy of others and thus, I surrounded myself spiritually and psychically with a coat of ancestral

armor. This, coupled with the teachings of my parents and other relatives, prepared me to avoid the pitfalls so many in the African Diaspora have experienced. I knew that many of the societal life choices of African descent people were predicated by racial and social oppression, which often leaves many of those individuals predisposed to societal and familial ills and discord. Avoiding pitfalls allowed me to develop my spiritual, academic, and artistic abilities. I learned to see the grey areas and hazy lines between the physical world and Spiritual world; the local and global African cultures and Western culture; the 'now' and 'then' of the histories of African people.

My technical artistic practices and Western academic experiences were further enhanced by the Spiritual and anthropomorphic ways of being in African cultures, and I challenged myself to always think and grow outside of the preconceived notions of who I was expected to become, as opposed to who I chose to be. My first few years as an undergraduate student at the University of XXXXXX were filled with the continued development of strong interpersonal skills, which paralleled a strong sense of academic and life purpose frustration; while I strengthened my ability to interact and communicate with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds, I grew more resistant to the academic path I was pursuing, as well as the environment in which I existed. I had chosen not to major in the arts, nor the social and anthropological sciences because of an unrealistic belief that if something felt too easy or natural, it was not challenging enough. I had not yet mastered the ability to fully recognize the guidance of Spirit.

I spent more time away from campus believing that was a way to resolve my unrest. My grades began to suffer, and I carried the burden of hiding this reality from my expectant parents. Ultimately, I decided to withdraw from the university, so that I could sit still for a moment and contemplate what I pretended to not know: my personal truth.

After several years of sampling other academic institutions and taking various arts courses, I was fortunate enough to interact with a professor, who spoke with the wisdom of the Ancestors and challenged me to no longer create from the perspective of what I believed others wanted to receive or view from me but to create from my personal conceptualization of what I chose to give and receive for myself. Art became for me a medium through which I could examine and tell the stories of the Universe, the Ancestors, and Spirit. I became more aligned with traditional African ways of making, and this opened the portals for me to formally pursue traditional spiritual practices at the School of Metaphysics, Chicago and with my Ifa Babalawo, Chief Khalilu, while co-existing more resiliently and harmoniously in Western academic institutions, ultimately resulting in a BA in Performing Arts (Design/Directing track) and a minor in Studio Arts from the University of XXXXXX.

Those portals led me to become a professional artist, educator, mentor, metaphysician, dream interpreter, and priestess in the African spiritual system of Ifa. These practices are the foundation for my interest in using African traditional healing practices and the arts throughout the African Diaspora, particularly within Diasporic communities, which are beleaguered and embattled. My experiences and personal journeys equip me with the wisdom and understanding of the importance of discovering and embracing the Soul's purpose, while navigating the environmental and cultural matrixes in which one resides.

## **B. Explanation of My Experience in Support of My Graduate Focus Area:**

My professional experiences within the K-12 educational system in Chicago during my seven year tenure as an arts integration and community service educator, curriculum and mentor program designer repeatedly revealed the pervasiveness of multi-faceted issues of disempowerment in the African Diaspora. I was often struck by the lack of knowledge and acceptance of cultural heritage among African descent students, administrators, and parents. While there was a perfunctory reference in some students', parents', and administrators' historical repertoire of the more obvious cultural icons, e.g. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, there was rarely any knowledge of any person who preceded the Civil Rights Movement, and there were no references to any event which occurred in African culture or history prior to slavery in America. Additionally, there were oft times vehement rejections, particularly by African descent students, of the reality that they actually had cultural, spiritual, or familial ties which originated in Africa.

This cultural, Spiritual, and historical ignorance, when challenged, produced either feelings of great anger, disingenuous humor, or profound sadness. No matter the initial reaction, the resulting consequence was an undying thirst to know more. Some people were at a loss to truly comprehend the strategically manipulative machinations, which had and continued to deprive them of their cultural knowledge and power and the impact that this deprivation had upon their interactions with themselves, their families, their communities, and the world. The more willing they were to receive information about their non-Western selves and practice traditional African spiritual modalities, the more they could tangibly feel Spiritual and

emotional wounds heal. This healing expanded beyond the original recipients, and I repeatedly had the fortune of witnessing people sharing this information with others in their lives thereby hastening the healing and evolution of the people with whom they shared this understanding and knowledge.

Similarly, my experiences as a conceptual artist, Ifa priestess, intuitive healer, and dream interpreter have afforded me the frustrations and benefits of sharing the traditions and wisdoms of African rituals and Spiritual practices with African descent members of various Diasporic communities throughout the United States. I have been a professional artist (anthropomorphic, mixed media painting) for seventeen years, gallery co-owner for seven years, an intuitive healer (metaphysics and dream interpretation) for twelve years, and an Ifa practitioner and initiated priestess for eight years. I use these practices as vehicles for the utilitarian implementation of the wisdom, guidance, and messages of Ancestors, cultural history, and the primordial forces (Orisha). This shared knowledge is sometimes received with an open, expansive embrace of people who look for and try to create Spiritual oases out of the deserts of cultural and social stratification experienced by many African people. Conversely, I have also been met with impassioned, judgmental resistance by those Diasporic members, who have become accepting, overwhelmed, or complacent with the sojourn of imposed Spiritual and cultural subjugation. They have come to view that sojourn as a self-actualized generational journey, which they have unwittingly refused to redirect or conclude. Nonetheless, it is the combination of these embraces and rejections that temper my life's purpose and rejuvenate it simultaneously.

### **C. Description/Explanation of My Personal/Professional Goals:**

Many communities throughout the African Diaspora suffer from the effects of post-traumatic stress/slavery disorders. The fracturing of family structures and the displacement from ancestral lands, spirituality, traditions and histories has had a tremendously debilitating impact upon generations. Violence, poor understanding of or access to proper nutrition, single parenthood, inadequate education, incarceration, economic disempowerment, limited access to adequate healthcare, and the subjugation of women and children are all the after effects of systematic/institutionalized racism and have become common occurrences in many Diasporic communities.

Chicago represents a microcosmic example of many of the challenges faced by communities throughout the Diaspora that bear the scars and ills of industrialized societies, while struggling to regain their equilibrium in an inconsistently post-colonial world. My goal is to create short term residency programs, first locally, then nationally, and ultimately abroad, to help members of those Diasporic communities empower themselves by consciously reconnecting with themselves, their ancestors, and their communities through traditional African ancestral healing rituals and dream interpretation, while providing a platform on which their often stifled voices can be heard through documentary and interactive art installations. The residencies would consist of sessions spent with community members discussing the most prevalent discordant issues and then teaching the ritualistic healing practice that will be most beneficial in addressing the identified issues. The sessions would also consist of community



members learning the significance of dream language and Ancestral communication, the methods for remembering and recording dreams, and the beginning practices for the translations and implementation of dream and Ancestors' messages for personal, generational, and communal empowerment. Although my long term goal is to document the process, challenges, and successes of the residencies' outcomes via mixed-media art installations exhibited in nationally and internationally based galleries or community centers, my immediate goals may only allow time for personal documentation via journaling, recorded interviews, photography, and/or video-documentary work.

## ► **PART II: Liberal Learning Self-Assessment**

Directions: In Part II, the student reflects upon and assess his/her current performance in relation to the five LIBERAL LEARNING skills and specific facets associated with each (See HANDBOOK SECTION IV.) This self-assessment is important in identifying gaps between where the student sees him/herself now and where he/she wants to be in each of these areas at the end of the MAAPS Program. In this way, both strengths and limitations can be identified and either built-upon or resolved through specific Learning Activities in the student's Focus Area and/or through all-the-more purposeful participation in the Liberal Learning Seminars. Specifically, this section is to include:

- A. a description of the student's strengths & limitations regarding each of the **Liberal Learning Skills & Facets** including initial intended strategies for developing areas of limitation and enhancing areas of strength. *(For fuller description of LL Skills & Facets, see HANDBOOK SECTION IV.)*
- B. a description of the student's particular interests in each of the six Liberal Learning Seminar topics. *(For a fuller description of the LL Seminars, see HANDBOOK SECTION IV.)*

### **A. Liberal Learning SKILLS—My Strengths & Limitations**

(1) My facility with Self-Assessment & Self-Managed Learning (+intended strategies)

I am very adept at evaluating and re-evaluating my skill set as it pertains to my professional competency and relevancy. Although I thrive in the structured freedom of self-managed learning, I recognize the importance of building upon time management skills and setting agendas for long term and short term goals. I appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with others to successfully complete a project, but I must continue to develop the ability to delegate more readily and not to isolate myself and my thoughts when working to resolve or explore a challenge. Some methods for that may include:

- Group or community think tank sessions
- Continued working relationship with Professional Advisors
- Continued working relationship with Peer Advisors

(2) My facility with Critical, Creative & Systemic Thinking (+intended strategies)

As an artist, my ability to think creatively and critically is highly developed. Innovation and conceptualization are at the core of my professional experiences, both in the arts as well as traditional healing. Although there is some flexibility inherent in the process of creating art and intuiting the Spiritual wounds, strengths, and healing, there is also a systematic approach that is required in the technique of making art and Spiritual and ritualistic healing. My abilities in creative, critical, and systematic thinking may be strengthened by:

- Attending and participating in art critiques and open studio sessions
- Continued research in current and historical trends in African Diasporic socio-economic issues
- Continued research and hands-on healing session work in various traditional African ritual/healing methods
- Continued working relationships with Spiritual Advisors in the healing arts

(3) My facility with Applying Values-based Decision-Making (+intended strategies)

I am very aware of the necessity for understanding and respecting the significance of personal and cultural values in the decision making process. Our values tend to shape how we see and move through the world. My values are at the core of personal and professional expressions and decisions, and I trust that my values will afford me the opportunity to attract people who hold similar values

and, perhaps, intrigue those with opposing values. Some strategies for consistently applying values-based decision –making include:

- Creating a professional/personal journal in which I keep an accounting of my daily values based decision-making, so that I may reflect upon my decision-making processes and when those processes are or are not successful.
- Consistently comparing and contrasting my values based decisions to the values based decisions of cultures and individuals I admire.

(4) My facility with Various Modes of Communication (+intended strategies)

As a traditional intuitive healer and artist, I am hyper aware of the various modes of communications. In order for me to be effective, I must pay close attention to the verbal and non verbal language, which tells the state of Spiritual being and awareness of an individual. I must also be mindful of various cultural, generational, and personal preferences of communication. Strategies for increasing communicative effectiveness are:

- Asking an individual or community members which method of communication is most preferred and not making assumptions.
- Continuing to utilize and hone my intuitive abilities when listening for the unspoken dialogue between others and myself.

- Immediately journaling or reflecting upon notes taken during healing sessions to have a tangible reference for what may or may not have been effective communication.

(5) My facility with Interpersonal Relations (+intended strategies)

I give very high regard to my ability to foster and develop impactful and/or harmonious interpersonal relations. My years spent as an educator and role as an Ifa priestess have afforded me the ability to be mindful of the energetic and Spiritual exchanges between people within the dynamics of relationships, and I appreciate and respect the intricacies that create the nature of most relationships and the people within. I understand that the litmus test for harmonious community and familial environments centers around the health of the interpersonal relationships within those units and the consideration given to the development of those relations. My intended strategies for the continued development of my abilities are;

- Continuous check-ins, particularly when working with community members, to discuss issues, successes, and concerns of the participants.
- Daily meditations focusing on Light and harmony within myself and those around me.
- Thanking community members and myself at the beginning of each session for the willingness to share and expand self.

## **B. Liberal**

### **Learning SEMINARS—My Hopes & Interests**

- (1) My hopes/interests for Exploring Modes & Processes of Systematic Inquiry (LLS-425)

This course will provide me with invaluable research skills and resources. It will set the foundation for my ability to be thorough and effective when discovering and documenting information for my Masters and Doctoral degrees, as well as my professional and Spiritual pursuits.

- (2) My hopes/interests for Understanding Personal & Org. Change (LLS-435)

This course will enhance my ability to more accurately assess and address the multiplicity of disorder issues in African Diasporic communities. This will be of particular use when determining how pre-existing issues or beliefs may make communities members resistant to change and the various ways of affecting transformative change.

- (3) My hopes/interests for Improving Interpersonal Dynamics (LLS-445)

This course will enhance my ability to have a positive communicative impact in Diasporic communities where there has previously been discord. It will also encourage me to co-create more effective group or community problem solving methods with community members.

(4) My hopes/interests for Valuing Human Differences (LLS-455)

It is my hope that this course will remind me of the intricacies and dynamics, which comprise and shape the differences between people and cultures, and that I will value, even more, the notion that equality does not have to equate to sameness.

(5) My hopes/interests for Engaging Ethical Reasoning (LLS-465)

I look forward to examining an extensive history of cultural perspectives on ethics. This examination will encourage me to consider the differences and philosophies of what is considered to ethical or unethical by various communities and how that reasoning impacts and shapes the behaviors of the people of those communities and cultures.

(6) My hopes/interests for Exercising Effective Leadership (LLS-475)

Exercising Effective Leadership will provide invaluable examples and methods of leadership. These examples will provide insight and strategies for ways in which I may inclusively lead the surge for affecting transformative change that will include community members in the creation of the change process.

## ► **PART III: The Graduate Focus Area**

Directions: In Part III, the student offers a thorough definition and explanation of the individualized, career-related area that serves as the focus for his/her graduate study. Specifically, Part III is to align clearly with Part I (above) in terms of the student's background, current situation and goals and include the following:

- A. a PHRASE describing the student's individualized Graduate Focus Area including its core activity and primary context for application (i.e., "doing what? where?")
- B. an EXPLANATION of the phrase including its meaning, major components, major trends, knowledge base(s), major contributors, "cutting edge" areas, and list of resources consulted.

*(For a fuller description of the Graduate Focus Area, see HANDBOOK SECTION V.)*

### **A. My Graduate Focus Area PHRASE:**

Using traditional African Ancestral healing rituals, dream interpretation, and the arts to affect transformative change within African Diasporic communities.

### **B. EXPLANATION:**

- (1) Meaning: What does the phrase (above) mean? Please provide here a brief narrative explanation of the Focus Area phrase (above).

The issues that plague far too many African Diasporic and continental African communities rest in a place of disempowerment and cultural subjugation. These societal ills are birthed from the concerted efforts to perpetuate the systematic genocide of African Diasporic people exhibited, in part, by dismantling or disregarding their cultural and Spiritual traditions within Western societies and the invaluable, historical impact African civilizations have had upon the world. The aftermath of these societal ills is a people have either forgotten themselves or who must continuously work far too hard to prove their viability to Western society and, often, themselves.



In many of these Diasporic communities, the root of the internalization of this societal stratification is the disconnection from traditional African ritualistic practices and the demonstrative exchange between the Ancestral Spiritual realm and the physical realm. An exceedingly large amount of African Diasporic members have chosen or been forced to reject the rich traditional Spiritual tapestry of traditional African practices and belief systems in order to assimilate into other cultural patterns. This inability to navigate the Western, industrialized societies with the acknowledged guidance of Ancestors has perpetuated the onset of the global destruction of African descent communities and cultures.

A very tangible way of affecting transformative change is through the reconnection of those disconnected Diasporic members and communities through the utilization of traditional African Ancestral healing rituals and dream interpretation from the Ifa, Dagara, and Sangoma Spiritual systems. It is with the consistent and systematized use of those practices that the living connection between the Ancestors and those in the physical realm will be strengthened. That strengthened connection will enable the healing and fortification of fractured individual, familial, and generational relations and it will encourage those members to remember who they truly are Spiritually and discard the disempowering notions of who they have either chosen or been told to be in the physical realm.

(2) Major Components: What are the major components included in this Focus Area and how do they relate to each other?

The major components included in this Focus Area are:

- **Ancestor veneration**: The benefits of familial and individual connection to Ancestors and the important role of the Ancestors in shaping and guiding the direction of generations and day-to-day life comprises this component.
- **Socio-economic, cultural, and historical African Diaporic issues**: The global, historical, and generational impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Western division of African cultural lands, the modern destabilization of African Diasporic societies, and the impact of the media, food deserts, inadequate healthcare and sub-standard education comprise this component.
- **Traditional African Spiritual and ritualistic practices**: The importance of ritual in traditional African societies and the benefits of those practices in modern Diasporic societies, various African Spiritual belief systems( Ifa, Dagara, and Vodou) and the connection of those systems to Diasporic belief systems comprise this component.
- **The Arts**: Throughout African history, art has been used to link the physical and Spiritual realms. Its utilitarian nature has allowed the arts to transcend the confines of aesthetic value and find a place within African societies' expressions of culture, history, and Spirituality.

These components work together to not only shape and define the Spiritual components and complexities of traditional African cultures, but they also give broader scope to the magnitude of Diaporic challenges and methods for overcoming and learning from those obstacles.

(3) Major Trends: What are the major trends affecting this Focus Area?

The major trends affecting this Focus Area include:

- Increased level of Black on Black violence, particularly among Black youth, in urban and industrialized societies.
- Systematic, global attempts of cultural and physical genocide of African descent people under the auspices of religious fanaticism, political unrest, industrial expansion, missionary outreach, food deserts, modern media manipulation, inadequate healthcare, disproportionate incarceration, war on drugs, excessive accessibility to illegal guns, and substandard education.
- Grass roots, concerted efforts for retaining and institutionalizing cultural education, economic empowerment and sustainability, and social balance within African Diasporic communities.

(4) Knowledge Base(s): What areas of knowledge (disciplines/fields) are most relevant to this Focus Area?

- African and Africana Studies
- African-Centered Research Methodologies
- African Spirituality and Ritual
- Community Psychology
- Cultural Anthropology
- Dagara Spiritual System
- Ifa Spiritual System
- Liberatory Education/Psychology
- Metaphysics
- Sociology
- Vodou Spiritual System

(5) Major Contributors: Who are some of the major contributors in this Focus Area (e.g., authors, researchers, professional associations, etc.)?

Some of the major contributors in this Focus Area are:

XXXXXX, **Hunter H., PhD**: neuroscientist, author, lecturer, social entrepreneur

XXXXXX, **Na'im, PhD**: clinical psychologist, author, lecturer, expert on African Psychology

**Amnesty International** ([www.amnestysyusa.org](http://www.amnestysyusa.org)): According to their site, "Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights."

**Association of Black Psychologists** ([www.abpsi.org](http://www.abpsi.org)) : According to their site, "The Association of Black Psychologists sees its mission and destiny as the liberation of the African mind, empowerment of the African character, and enlivenment and illumination of the African Spirit."

XXXXXX, **Llaila O.(ND)**: doctor of naturopathy, author, educator

XXXXXX, **Dawoud**: artist, professor

**Center for Inner City Studies, Northeastern Illinois University**

**Civic Knowledge Project, University of Chicago** ([www.civiknowledge.uchicago.edu](http://www.civiknowledge.uchicago.edu)): According to their site, "The mission on CKP is to develop and strengthen community connections, helping to overcome the social, economic, and racial divisions among various knowledge communities on the South Side of Chicago."

XXXXXX, **John Hope**: historian, professor, author

XXXXXX, **Maxine**: author, educator

XXXXXX, **Sue A.**, author

**Karnak Wellness Institute** ([karnakwellnessinstitute.com](http://karnakwellnessinstitute.com)): As stated on its website, "The vision of Karnak is to rebuild the village/community for the purpose of re-creating

and restoring the “social fabric” in the community and a culture of mutual and self-respect of all (men, women, and children).”

**Kemetic Institute** ([www. myspace.com/kemeticinstitute](http://www.myspace.com/kemeticinstitute)): As stated on its website, “The Kemetic Institute is a research organization which is dedicated to the renewal of African civilization through research, education, artistic creativity, and Spiritual development.”

XXXXXX, **Kerry James**: artist, professor, lecturer

XXXXXX, **Khalilu** : Sierra Leonian chief, Ifa Babaláwo, African historian

XXXXXX, **John S.**: canon professor, author

XXXXXX, **Raymond Sambuli, PhD**: professor, author

XXXXXX , **Malidoma, PhD**: Initiated Dagara Elder, diviner, author

XXXXXX, **Sobonfu**: Initiated Dagara Elder, author, educator

**Survival International, USA** ([www.survivalinternational.org](http://www.survivalinternational.org)): According to their site, “Survival is the only organization working for tribal peoples’ rights worldwide...Our vision is for a world where tribal peoples are recognized and respected; an end to unjust treatment tribal peoples are subjected to; a world where tribal peoples are free to live on their own lands safe from violence, oppression, and exploitation.”

XXXXXX, **Derise, PhD**: clinical psychologist, professor, author; Director, Tangaza Project, School for New Learning, DePaul University

XXXXXX **Ivan, PhD**: professor, author, researcher, lecturer

XXXXXX, **Bobby E., PhD**: psychologist, author, community activist

- (6) Cutting Edges: What are the key areas of knowledge and skill required to be on the “cutting edge” of this Focus Area? In which areas do you already possess competence? In which areas are you seeking new learning?

In order to be on the cutting edge of affecting the transformative change referenced in the Focus Area, I have to be knowledgeable and practiced in the traditional healing systems of dream interpretation and African Ancestral rituals, while understanding the ways in which modernized African Diasporic communities may benefit from those traditional practices. I possess competence and experience in both of those areas, but when dealing with Spiritual realm issues, the practice of ancient traditions, and the adaptation of those skills for the applicability to modernized Diasporic communities, there is always room for expansion and honing of one’s skills. I will seek continued learning in traditional African healing rituals and seek other traditional rituals in which I am, thus far, unpracticed.

Similarly, I will seek to become more familiar with African-Centered research methodologies, sociology, and psychology. The collection and documentation of oral histories through interviews, documentary film production, and video-documentary work is an essential element, because many Diasporic Spiritual and cultural practices are based on information generationally shared via unwritten communication; these

forms of documentation can lend themselves to illustrating the commonalities within many Diasporic experiences.

(7) Resources Consulted: What resources did you consult in answering the previous questions and building your Graduate Learning Plan?

Doumbia, A. & Doumbia, N. (2004). *The way of the elders; West African spirituality & tradition*. Woodbury, MN: Llewelyn Publications.

This book examines spirituality and ritual systems of the Mande culture. It discusses the importance of a holistic approach to living, including the reverence of animals and nature. It also discusses the importance of elders and cycle of life rituals, including marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, and death. The book would appeal to anyone interested in learning more about the Mande culture of West Africa and Mande rituals and forms of spirituality.

Adama Doumbia is a Senegalese master dancer and drummer from the West African Mande culture, who was raised in both Senegal and Mali. Naomi Doumbia is an African American, who focuses on comparative literature and world religions, particularly African spirituality. The authors are husband and wife and seamlessly synthesize their individual experiences within traditional African spirituality and village life. They provide very specific and detailed information about a variety of ritual practices and tools, as well as the philosophy behind those rituals and ritual objects. In summary, *The Way of the Elders; West African Spirituality & Tradition* is very relevant, because it illustrates a convergence of the Western raised and the traditional African ritualistic approach to life. It discusses specific rituals and rites of passage experienced in communities.

Ephirim-Donkor, (2008). *African spirituality: On becoming ancestors*. Pittsburgh, PA: Red Lead Press.

This book examines the traditional West African Akan belief system regarding the natural progression of life starting in the realm of the ancestor then to the physical realm and back to the ancestral realm. It gives specifics about the Akan's way of charting and ritualizing the phases of life and how Spirit and ancestors impact and influence those phases. This book would appeal to psychology students and those interested in delving deeper into African spiritual development and the Akan approach to spirituality. Ephirim-Donkor is an author,



ordained Methodist minister, and ruler of an Akan community in Ghana. His interest lies in traditional and diasporic African religions. The topics examined in this book are very applicable to current issues including reincarnation, conception, pregnancy, childhood, reasoning and knowing patterns, eldership, death, ancestors, and ancestor worship. It gives thorough exploration of the Akan belief system pertaining to the natural phases of life. It lends itself to the life progressions shared with Western life and, summarily, it is this universality which makes *African Spirituality: On Becoming Ancestors* a valuable resource.

Johnson, C. P.(2007). On leaving and joining Africanness through religion: The Black 'Caribs' across multiple diasporic horizons. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 37, 174-211.

This article focuses of the diasporic journey of the Garifuna people and how that journey, although influenced by Amerindian, African, and European cultures, finds its reconnection to the diaspora through traditional African religion. This article is aimed toward anthropologists and anthropology students and anyone who has an interest in African Diasporic cultures. Through the perils and forced migratory issues of slavery, the Garifuna have shaped and reshaped themselves in a variety of cultural forms, most notably as Black people. However, their traditional religious practices clearly draw upon African ritualistic practices that rely heavily upon ancestor communication and guidance. Paul Christopher Johnson is an author, anthropologist, and the Director of the Doctoral Program in Anthropology and History; Center for Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan. Much of his research focuses upon religious practices of the African Diaspora, particularly Brazil and the Caribbean. This article is currently relevant to the specifics of the application of traditional African healing and ancestor rituals and deals more specifically with the Garifuna people's continued traditional ritual practices while journeying through the African Diaspora.

Lambrecht, I. (n.d.). *Cultural artifacts and the oracular trance states of the Sangoma in*

*South Africa*. Retrieved from

<http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/oracle/essaylambrecht.html>

This essay gives a first hand perspective of the use of traditional ritualistic healing practices of South Africa's Sangoma people. It is written for anthropologist, historians, psychologists, and students of those disciplines. Ingo

Lambrecht is a clinical psychologist, who was trained and initiated by a Sangoma (South African shaman) teacher. This provides Lambrecht with the unique perspective of a Western trained clinician, who is well versed in the benefits and applications of using traditional African healing in modern cultural experiences. The essay gives detailed accounts of the methods and uses of traditional healing and the symbolism behind the rituals. It also stresses the importance of the Sangoma and ancestral communication to the traditional community and to individuals who leave the community for urban life. *Cultural Artifacts and the Oracular Trance States* provides valuable information and insight into the details of the Sangoma traditional rituals and gives clear examples of how these traditions impact Sangoma people outside of the traditional geographic borders.

McCarthy, P. J. (2008). The archaeology of community identity in the past and remembrance in the present. *American Nineteenth Century History*, 9(3), 305-314.

This article focuses on the important role that the cemetery and ancestors play in the African Diaspora and how the cemetery or burial ground helps to define many of the communities throughout the diaspora both past and present. In particular, the article address the issue of lost cemeteries of enslaved and freed Blacks in antebellum Philadelphia. The article is aimed toward archaeologists, historians, and students of either field. John P. McCarthy is an archaeologist and architecture historian whose work tends to center on the enslaved Africans and their former neighborhoods in the South. The importance of the ancestral burial ground spans the existence of the African culture, and the Black cemeteries in the United States, during slavery time, often became the only place where enslaved Africans were free to express their traditional ancestral communication and honoring practices. *The Archaeology of Community Identity* emphasizes the significance of these rituals upon those past and present African descent communities and the archaeology used to unearth so-called lost cemeteries. The article is relevant when examining the translation of traditional African ancestral ritual practices in past and present diasporic communities.

Ramphele, M. (2008). How does one speak of social psychology in a nation in transition?  
*Journal of Analytical Psychology* 53, 167-187.

This article addresses the psychological impact apartheid has had and continues to have upon South Africa, particularly Black South Africans. It is aimed toward an audience of psychologists and psychology students but also toward anyone who has a vested interest in learning about the effects of institutionalized racism on a people and how traditional ritual and healing practices help those people maintain some sense of balance in an unbalanced environment. Mamphela Ramphele is a medical doctor, author, professor, and first South African elected as one of the managing directors of the World Bank. She and Steven Biko co-founded the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. It is with this world, medical, and traditional activist knowledge that she addresses the importance of the psychology and medical practices of the West learning to acknowledge and understand the traditional ways in which Africans view illness and mental disease. The illness of the person is embraced and addressed as a message from the ancestors, and as such, the ill person becomes a messenger to the community. *How Does One Speak of Social Psychology* proves to be a relevant article, because it challenges Western doctors and psychologists to become more ritualistic in their approach to healing and, therefore, more effective.

Schiele, J. H. (2005) Cultural oppression and the high-risk status of African Americans.

*Journal of Black Studies* 35 (6), 802-826.

This article examines the culturally oppressive issues faced by African Americans and the societal and cultural vulnerability created by these issues. The historical forced migration of Africans in America has resulted in a people dealing with issues of spiritual disenfranchisement and cultural amnesia and displacement. The article discusses how the social, economic, emotional, and spiritual conditions faced by many African Americans often prohibits the self and familial empowerment, which has a devastating impact upon the larger African American culture. Jerome H. Schiele is a professor and director of the PhD programs in social work at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. and Norfolk State University in Norfolk Virginia. He is also an author of numerous publications, including *Human Services and the Afrocentric Paradigm*, and his scholarly focus is in social welfare policy analysis, social work practice theory, and oppression studies. *Cultural Oppression and the High-Risk Status of African Americans* provides valuable insight in the multi-layered impact that forced separation from cultural and spiritual identity, along with continued cultural oppression, can have on a people.

Some, M. (2007). *Ritual: Power, healing, and community*. New, NY: Penguin.

This book shares Some's insights about how ritual instills societal balance. He discusses and illustrates how those ritual practices can be modified and applied to Western cultures to repair the ills of communities and individuals while restoring balance and harmony. It is written to be accessible and inviting to college level students and anyone interested in learning about the traditional ritual practices of the Dagara people of Burkina Faso, West Africa and the modification of traditional African rituals for Western societies. Malidoma Some is an initiated Dagara diviner and elder, who was kidnapped by missionaries as a young child and educated in Western schools. He returned to his village as a young man and became initiated and further educated by village elders and spiritual leaders about traditional Dagara life. He became an initiated diviner and was encouraged by village elders to live in Western society and share Dagara wisdom regarding societal harmony.

Some is a lecturer and author of several books, including *Of Water and the Spirit*, which gives a detailed account of his early village life, kidnapping, Western education, and initiation. In summary, *Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community* is a very informative source and helpful guide to understanding how spiritual and community rituals help make a culture work harmoniously without succumbing to the issues of industrial life.

Some, S. (2000). *The spirit of intimacy: Ancient African teachings in the ways of relationships*. New York, NY: Harper Publications.

This book examines the roles that Spirit and ritual play within the everyday phases of life, including birth, romance, marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, divorce, and death. Some discusses and analyzes the traditional West African Dagara approach to these rituals and relationships and how that approach can harmoniously enhance the Western approach. College or graduate students, as well as anyone who has experienced relationship, would gain valuable insight about the Dagara belief about ritual and Spirit of relationships and community. Author Sobonfu Some, the former wife of Malidoma Some, is a teacher, mentor, and initiated member of the Dagara people from Burkina Faso. She travels extensively and shares the teachings of her ancient village, Dano, with modern society. Some is a master storyteller, who uses a subtle empathy and intuitive approach to connect to reader. She examines the impact of Western culture upon intimate relationships and how traditional African approaches to relationships can help strengthen relationships in Western environments. It is her empathy and intuition that make this book feel relevant, regardless of the cultural

identity of the reader; most readers can relate to some aspect of relationship. In summary, *The Spirit of Intimacy: Ancient African Teachings in the Ways of Relationships* is a very beneficial source when investigating how the wisdom of traditional African approach to relationship and ritual can benefit global communities.

Wallace, M. (2003). 'Making tradition': Healing, history, and ethnic identity among Otjiherero-speakers in Namibia, c. 1850-1950. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29(2).

This article, although based upon ritual references from the late nineteenth through mid twentieth centuries, illustrates how traditional ritualistic practices in Namibia shaped the history of the Otjiherero -speakers and still impact the present day culture and the larger Namibian culture. The writing is aimed toward anthropologists and historians. The history of traditional ritualistic healing and how it shapes cultural boundaries is often overlooked by Western historians and anthropologists, and this article focuses on the importance of tradition. Marion Wallace is African curator of the British Library and a historian of Namibia. Wallace discusses the misinterpretation of Herero healing ritualistic practices by nineteenth century missionaries and how those misinterpretations still impact the misunderstandings by current biomedical practitioners. He focuses on the importance of undertaking the daunting task of delving into the culture, history, and oral traditions of the Herero people to better understand the complexities of traditional ritual practices and social uprising against South African and German oppression. This article is relevant because it illustrates how the ritualistic traditions of the Herero people of Namibia strengthen, guide, and buffer them even when ethnic boundaries are breached.

Williams, C. (1987). *The destruction of black civilization: Great issues of a race from 4500 b.c. to 2000 a.d.* Chicago, IL: Third World Press.

This book closely examines the history of continental African civilization and Africans in America and the diaspora. It discusses the empires of Ancient African and the subsequent dismantling of Black African kingdoms and strongholds and the systematic reasons behind these occurrences, including transatlantic slavery and colonialism. This book is aimed toward students of African history and anthropology, as well as anyone interested in understanding the historical

journey of people of African descent. Author Chancellor Williams was a historian and educator, who was determined to explore and bring attention to the reasons behind slavery and the impact it had upon generations of people of African descent. He was invested in discovering all of the roles that Africans played in the civilization of humankind, not just those of the enslaved or oppressed. Although published in 1987, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* still plays a vital role in understanding the issues of modern day Africans and people of African descent in the diaspora. It is beneficial in examining the impact that disconnection from one's extensive history can have upon a people and world populations.

Zahan, D. (1983). *The religion, spirituality, and thought of traditional Africa*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

This book addresses the pivotal role that spiritual and ritualistic rites play in traditional African societies and the formation of African philosophy. Traditional African philosophy, regardless of the ethnic variances, places the tenants and energies of ancestors and the Creator in the center of spirituality but it does not view spirituality outside of the self. This viewpoint lends itself to the importance of ritual and spirituality in traditional life. It illustrates the symbiotic relationship between ritual, spirituality, the individual and the culture. Dominique Zahan was an artist, anthropologist, author. He was the first professor of ethnology at the University of Strasbourg and he was the chair in African sociology at the Sorbonne. His research focused heavily upon the religious and traditional spiritual beliefs of West African cultures, particularly the Bambara people. His work would appeal to anthropologist, sociologist, and those interested in the spiritual philosophies and traditions of African cultures. *The Religion, Spirituality, and Thought of Traditional Africa* is still applicable to many of the current philosophical understandings of traditional African spirituality.

Zuesse, M. E. (1985). *Ritual cosmos: The sanctification of life in African religions*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

This book closely examines the psychology and cultural meanings behind traditional African rituals. It discusses African ideology and practicality about traditional spirituality. It also deals with the African understanding of universes and natural cycles of life. This book is aimed toward students of anthropology and religious studies and those interested in understanding the African

perspective on the mysteries and rituals of life. Evan M. Zuesse is a researcher and scholar of world religions, as well as a religion professor. He has published articles regarding African ritual and religion. Although he discusses different traditional religions from Zaire and Zambia, he illustrates the underlying connectivity between those religions. He also points out the differences between traditional African ritual and religious practices and Christianity. Although republished in 1985, *Ritual Cosmos: The Sanctification of Life in African Religions* is still relevant to the understanding of traditional African religions, which are all too often examined from a Christian perspective and, thus, misunderstood.

## ► **PART IV: Application Setting**

Directions: In Part IV, the student describes the setting (work or otherwise) that will serve as his/her “laboratory” for both applying learning to practice and deriving learning from practice with respect to the Focus Area and the Liberal Learning Skills/Seminars. In short, the question to explore here is “where will you apply learnings from your graduate study...and how (in what capacity)?”

### **A. My Application Setting:**

My application setting is currently the “*The Living Room*,” a teen counseling session, and “*Heal the Healers*,” a professional psychologist peer counseling session, both in Chicago, Illinois and sponsored by Dr. Beverly XXXXXX, clinical psychologist. These environments allow me to work with members of African descent communities who have been emotionally or physically traumatized by some of the negative experiences of modern, Western society and who seek a safe space in which to share and work through their issues and concerns and plan for future successes. I utilize dream interpretation and Ancestral healing rituals to enable the participants to learn the language of the mind and the Ancestors, so that they may begin to empower and heal themselves Spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. I also work with individual, locally and nationally based clients addressing similar concerns and issues of the aforementioned groups.





## ► **PART V: Professional Competencies**

### **Title Page to Part V**

This page provides an overview of the following NINE PAGES of the Graduate Learning Plan. In brief, these nine pages outline the plan for the student's development and demonstration of graduate-level comprehension and skill regarding the **eight Professional Competence Areas**. One page is devoted to each of the eight competence areas—with the ninth page reserved for a supplemental competence in one of the previous areas. A fuller description of each competence area is included at the top of each of the subsequent pages.

DIRECTIONS: In designing Part V, please use the following nine pages as templates. Each page includes a general description of a particular Professional Competence area and a table or grid for your individual design.

- AP-510:** Ability to understand the main theories that guide and explain practice in the Focus Area.
- AP-520:** Ability to understand methods of research appropriate to the Focus Area.
- AP-530:** Ability to apply specialized skills appropriate to the Focus Area.
- AP-540:** Ability to engage communication modes appropriate to the Focus Area.
- AP-550:** Ability to understand the organizational and/or interpersonal dynamics within which practitioners in the Focus Area define and fulfill their roles/responsibilities.
- AP-560:** Ability to interpret challenges from larger contexts (e.g., temporal, social, or international) facing the Focus Area.
- AP-570:** Ability to analyze ethical issues involved within the Focus Area.
- AP-574:** Ability to engage reflection in/on practice within the Focus Area.
- AP-585:** A second competence (supplemental) in one of the previous areas.

## • Professional Competence AP-510 •

### Ability to understand the MAIN THEORIES/IDEAS guiding and explaining Focus Area practice.

*“can describe and analyze at least two significant ideas (e.g., theories, models, principles, concepts) relevant to the focus area or related fields and explain their implications for professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-510 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses knowledge and understanding of theories, models and/or theoretical frameworks—including their implications for practice—relevant to the Focus Area. In areas where theories are not well established (e.g., emerging fields of study or in unique combinations of fields), this area includes exploration of theories in related fields. As the student addresses contemporary theories, he/she should be familiar with their relationship to theoretical traditions. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Knowledge of the differences among the terms—theory, concept, principle and model;
- (b) Ability to analyze (compare, contrast, critique—not merely describe or react to) theories or their counterparts including their application to practice.

<b>PLAN for AP-510</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze the importance of Ancestors and dreams in the Ifa, Dagara, and Vodou Spiritual Systems.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Activities:</b> Self managed learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a literature review of significant historical and current practices of African religion and Spirituality.</li> <li>2. Continue the practical application and study of the Ifa, Dagara, and Vodou Spiritual systems under the tutelage of initiated Elders in those systems.</li> </ol> <p><b>Initial Literature:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. <i>IFA': A Complete Divination</i> by Ayọ Salami</li> <li>B. <i>Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman</i> by Malidoma Some'</li> <li>C. <i>The Healing Wisdom of Africa</i> by Malidoma Some'</li> <li>D. <i>Vodou Shaman: The Haitian Way of Healing and Power</i> by Ross Heaven</li> <li>E. <i>Vodou in Haitian Life and Culture: Invisible Powers</i> by Patrick Bellegarde-Smith and Claudine Michel</li> </ul>
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Comparative research paper about the aforementioned Spiritual systems.</li> <li>2. Annotated bibliography</li> </ol>
<b>(4) Assessor</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	TBD
<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	

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## • Professional Competence AP-520 •

### Ability to understand METHODS OF RESEARCH appropriate to the Focus Area.

*“can describe and analyze at least two methods of gathering data appropriate to the focus area and develop a detailed protocol for implementing one in professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-520 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses the systematic gathering of data and interpretation of findings as practiced within the focus area and/or related fields. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Knowledge of the types, purposes, and relative utility of research methods (not “tools” such as library and internet research per se) currently practiced in the profession;
- (b) Understanding contingencies involved in the appropriate application of each; and,
- (c) Ability to develop a protocol for implementation.

<b>PLAN for AP-520</b>	
<b>(NOTE: Students are advised to register/complete this competence (AP-520) during the same quarter in which they register/complete LL Seminar LLS-425.)</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze Post-Modern Interviewing and oral histories as two methods of gathering data appropriate to my focus area and develop a detailed protocol for implementing Post-Modern Interviewing in professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Activities:</b>            Self managed learning            1. Become an active member of the Oral History Association (<a href="http://www.oralhistory.org">www.oralhistory.org</a>) and attend area oral history workshops            2. Interview Erin McCarthy, PhD, Associate Professor of History at Columbia College, Chicago and board member of the Consortium Oral History Educators            3. Engage in weekly instructional conversation with Selly K. Thiam, Non On Record Program Manager, journalist, oral historian            4. Interview Abdul Karim Bangura, PhD on Post-Modern Interview methodology            5. Literature Review</p> <p><b>Initial Texts:</b>  <i>African-Centered Research Methodologies: From Ancient Times to the Present</i> by Abdul Karim Bangura</p>
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	1. A comparative analysis essay which compares the use of oral history and Postmodern interview for obtaining Diasporic community information  2. Protocol for conducting Postmodern interviews  Annotated Bibliography
<b>(4) Assessor</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	
<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	

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## • Professional Competence AP-530 •

### Ability to apply SPECIALIZED SKILLS appropriate to the Focus Area

*“can describe and demonstrate a skill (or set of skills) relevant to the focus area and explain its application to professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-530 (2 cr hrs):** This area involves identifying skills that are particular to the profession and the context(s) in which these skills are applied. The emphasis is on actual demonstration of specialized skills used in practice. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Selection of a skill (or set of skills) that appropriately represents the profession & one’s professional goals; and,
- (b) Application of skill (or set of skills) at a level appropriate to both professional contribution & graduate study.

<b>PLAN for AP-530</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and demonstrate dream interpretation as a specialized skill relevant to my focus area and explain its application to professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Independent Studies and Work Projects</b> Participate in webinar classes with the School of Metaphysics’ Dream School ( <a href="http://www.dreamschool.org">www.dreamschool.org</a> ). Conduct monthly traditional African healing and dream interpretation sessions at my application settings. <b>Initial texts:</b> <i>Dreamer’s Dictionary</i> by Dr. Barbara Condron <i>Lucid Dreaming 99,000 Opportunities for Awareness</i> edited by Dr. Teresa Martin <i>Behind Closed Eyes: Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt(None)</i> by Kasia Szpakowska
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	1.Video-documented African Ancestral Healing and dream interpretation session with pre-session explanatory introduction  2. Annotated bibliography
<b>(4) Assessor</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	
<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	

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## • Professional Competence AP-540 •

### Ability to engage COMMUNICATION MODES appropriate to the Focus Area

*“can describe and demonstrate a communication mode/method relevant to the focus area and explain how its applied in professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-540 (2 cr hrs):** This area involves facility with communication modes relevant to professional practice in the focus area. It requires an understanding of the relationship among key communication variables (the message, the method, the audience and the context), a repertoire of communication strategies, and a dexterity or ease of access permitting the professional to adapt communication strategies to changing situations as necessary. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Selection of appropriate communication mode/method in relation to the context (audience and environment) in which the communication will occur; and,
- (b) Application of mode/method at a level appropriate to both professional contribution & graduate study.

<b>PLAN for AP-540</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and demonstrate documentary film production as a communication mode/method relevant to my focus area and explain how it is applied to professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	Formal University Course at DePaul University MCS 542- Topics in Production (Documentary Film) Course # 21476 with instructor Kim Clark Course Description: The purpose of the course is to develop students thinking as documentary filmmakers. Developing documentary ideas and writing proposals will be analyzed and practiced. Students will work on a short digital documentary and exercise shooting and editing techniques. The course will explore various documentary story-telling approaches and students will try to find their own documentary voice.
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	Class assignments and final grade
<b>(4) Assessor</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	
<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	

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• **Professional Competence AP-550** •

**Ability to understand the ORGANIZATIONAL and/or INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS within which practitioners in the Focus Area define their roles and fulfill their responsibilities.**

*“can describe and analyze an organizational and/or interpersonal dynamic (or set of dynamics) relevant to the focus area and explain its implications for professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-550 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses the human and structural issues that professionals encounter within practice (work) environments. It provides an opportunity for students to consider how their professional role affects and is affected by systems, technology, structure, and other people within their practice settings. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Identification of a relevant dynamic (e.g., open/closed systems, power, trust, culture, conflict, diversity, gender, communication, change, impact of technology, etc.); and
- (b) Description and analysis of particular dynamic in relation to its impact on professional practice and vice versa.

<b>PLAN for AP-550</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze community empowered social change as an organizational or interpersonal dynamic relevant to my focus area and explain its implications for professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	Formal University Course at DePaul University Psy 654 Community Psychology Course Description: Focus on systemic and ecological theories of human behavior, diversity, social support, community intervention and evaluation, empowerment, social change, and working with underserved populations. Community service project strongly encouraged.
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	Class assignments and final grade
<b>(4) Assessor (anticipated)</b>	
<b>(5) Schedule (anticipated)</b>	TBD

## • Professional Competence AP-560 •

### Ability to interpret CHALLENGES FROM LARGER CONTEXTS facing the Focus Area.

*“can describe and analyze a challenge (or set of challenges) from the larger context impacting the focus area and explain its implications for professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-560 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses the ability to see the profession (including its issues and problems) within a context that includes at least one of the following aspects: the temporal (historical development and future directions of the profession); the social/cultural (relationship of the profession to its societal context); and, the international (the state of the profession globally). Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Identification of a significant challenge facing practitioners in the profession; and,
- (b) Analysis of selected challenge within a framework that emphasizes one or more of the aspects listed above (temporal, social/cultural, or international).

<b>PLAN for AP-560</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze systematic Spiritual genocide as a challenge from the larger context impacting my focus area and explain its implications for professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Independent Studies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research texts, articles, and new media sources of historical and current trends</li> <li>2. Conduct Postmodern Interviews with Chief Khalilu Massaquoi, Sierra Leonian Chief, Ifa Babalawo'; Professor Hunter H. Adams, author, scholar, social entrepreneur, and neuroscientist, who has lectured internationally on African morality, philosophy, and Spirituality.</li> </ol> <p><b>Initial Texts:</b></p> <p><i>Let the Circle Be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora</i> by Marimba Ani</p> <p><i>How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Secular Thought</i> by Gerrie ter Harr</p> <p><i>African Traditions in the Study of Religion in Africa: Emerging Trends, Indigenous Spirituality and the Interface With Other World Religions (Vitality of Indigenous Religions)</i> edited by Afe Odogame, Ezra Chitando, Bolaji Boteye</p>
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Situational Analysis through research and Postmodern interviews with Chief Khalilu XXXXXX and Professor Hunter H. XXXXXX</li> <li>2. Annotated bibliography</li> </ol>
<b>(4) Assessor (anticipated)</b>	
<b>(5) Schedule</b>	TBD



<i>(anticipated)</i>	
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## • Professional Competence AP-570 •

### Ability to analyze ETHICAL ISSUES involved within the Focus Area.

*“can describe and analyze an ethical issue or dilemma (or set of issues/dilemmas) relevant to the focus area—using various philosophical/ethical frameworks—and explain its implications for professional practice.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-570 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses the relationship between beliefs and assumptions regarding humanity, good/evil, right/wrong, etc., and behavioral outcomes (including conflicts). Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Identification of a significant problem, dilemma, or circumstance in the focus area requiring ethical decision-making;
- (b) Ability to both analyze such using various philosophical/ethical frameworks or constructs and propose an appropriate response/solution.

<b>PLAN for AP-570</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze the cultural disdain that many African Diasporic people have for African culture and Spirituality as an ethical issue or dilemma relevant to my focus area-using various philosophical/ethical frameworks and explain its implications for professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Independent Studies; Work Projects:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct Postmodern Interviews with three Chicago based, African Diasporic members regarding their perspectives on African culture and Spirituality and how those perspectives shape their personal and group identities.</li> <li>2. Identify African-centered philosophical and ethical frameworks</li> <li>3. Interview Na'im XXXXXX, PhD, Clinical Psychologist at Florida State University, author, lecturer, and recognized expert on African psychology</li> </ol> <p><b>Initial Texts and Article:</b></p> <p><i>African-Centered Research Methodologies: From Ancient Times to the Present</i> by Abdul Karim Bangura</p> <p>Schiele, J. H. (2005) Cultural oppression and the high-risk status of African Americans. <i>Journal of Black Studies</i> 35 (6), 802-826.</p> <p><i>Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community</i> by Malidome Some'</p> <p><i>The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.</i> by Chancellor Williams</p> <p><i>The Psychopathic Racial Personality</i> by Bobby Wright</p> <p><i>Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery</i> by Na'im Akbar</p>

	<p><i>Black Power: A Moral, Political, and Economic Imperative for the Twenty-First Century</i> by Amos Wilson</p> <p><i>Let the Circle Be Broken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora</i></p>
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	<p>1. Situational Analysis of some African Diasporic people's disdain for African culture and Spirituality culture followed by analysis of causes and possible ways to address this disdain using at least two different African-centered philosophical/ethical frameworks.</p> <p>2. Annotated Bibliography</p>
<b>(4) Assessor</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	
<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	

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## • Professional Competence AP-574 •

### Ability to engage REFLECTION ON/IN PRACTICE in the Focus Area

*“can describe and analyze an approach to reflection and apply such to a particular personal situation involving one’s professional practice in the focus area.”*

**DESCRIPTION of AP-574 (2 cr hrs):** This area addresses the interplay between and among thinking, doing and reflecting in the often-ambiguous and complex contexts of daily practice. Whereas action provides for the practice of ideas, reflection allows for the creation of new ways of mentally organizing ideas in order to find additional possibilities (e.g., new ideas, new perspectives, new choices, new understanding of continuing choices, etc.) to inform future action. Successful demonstration of competence in this area includes:

- (a) Identification of a particular approach to reflection (e.g., experiential learning, transformative learning, emancipatory learning, mindfulness, meditation, contemplation, journaling, after action review, etc.); and,
- (b) Ability to analyze one’s own experience through said reflective approach.

<b>PLAN for AP-574</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and analyze photo-documented, personal journaling as an approach to reflection and apply such to my personal communicative effectiveness in my professional practice in the focus area.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Work Projects; Independent Studies</b> 1. Interview photographers/photojournalists Dawoud XXXXXX, Lee XXXXXX, and Cecil XXXXXX about their creative processes and conduct studio visits to view their work.  2. Conduct Ancestral ritual offering to express gratitude for my process.  3. Receive Obi reading Initiated Elder in Ifa Spiritual systems to assess my Spiritual/professional progress. 4. Take photographs of clients and community members with whom I have worked  <b>Initial text:</b> <i>Voices in the Mirror: An Autobiography</i> by Gordon Parks
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	Photographs and personal reflections
<b>(4) Assessor (anticipated)</b>	
<b>(5) Schedule (anticipated)</b>	

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• **Professional Competence AP-585** •  
(Supplemental Competence I)

**DESCRIPTION of AP-585 (2 cr hrs):**

- When ready, replace this italicized materials with your response.
- Review the previous eight areas (theories, research methods, specialized skills, etc.) and choose an area in which to develop a **SECOND** Competence Statement.
- Follow the directives from that area and insert the entry for the **SECOND** Competence Statement (including its Learning Activities, Learning Product, Assessor and Schedule) on this page.

<b>PLAN for AP-585</b>	
<b>(1) Competence Statement</b>	Can describe and demonstrate New Media as a communication mode/method relevant to my focus area and explain how it is applied to professional practice.
<b>(2) Learning ACTIVITIES</b>	<p><b>Independent Studies:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Receive professional instruction on creating a blog from Jonathan XXXXXX, Creative Director, As'e Kreative Group</li><li>2. Research effective New Media communication modes</li><li>3. Receive professional insight from Selly K. XXXXXX on maintaining a successful, culturally focused blog</li><li>4. Create a blog</li></ol> <p><b>Initial Texts:</b></p> <p><i>Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content That Works(Interactive Technologies)</i> by Janice Redish</p> <p><i>Sticky Readers: How to Attract a Loyal Blog Audience by writing More Better</i> by Margaret Andrews</p> <p><i>Create Your Own Blog: 6 Easy Projects to Start Blogging Like A Pro</i> by Tris Hussey</p>
<b>(3) Learning PRODUCT(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A long term blog which focuses on intuitive healing from an African Diasporic perspective addressing Spiritual concerns, cultural issues, and utilizing dream interpretation. This blog should be active for three months prior to its evaluation.</li><li>2. Annotated bibliography</li></ol>
<b>(4) Assessor</b> (anticipated)	

<b>(5) Schedule</b> <i>(anticipated)</i>	
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## ► **PART VI: Plans for Culmination**

Directions: In Part VI, the student is to identify which of the two Culmination Options he/she is currently considering and, regarding such, with what possible focus per option chosen. To be sure, Part VI's plans are held as *tentative—pending further evolution and refinement as study in the Focus Area progresses*. As possible, the student is encouraged to identify his/her Culmination Option as early as possible in order to integrate all aspects of the Program together and, most directly, use the earlier parts of the program to build toward the latter. (For a fuller description of Culmination Options, see HANDBOOK SECTION V.)

**At this point, I'm leaning toward...** *(Please check one and elaborate.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Option A—Four Supplemental Competencies (2 cr hrs each)**  
*[AP-586, AP-587, AP-588, AP-589]*

Additional areas I am currently considering to pursue through the four supplemental competencies include:

*-When ready, replace this italicized material with your response. List areas that may eventually be developed and proposed as additional Supplemental Competencies.*

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\_\_\_x\_\_\_ **Option B—Integrating Project Proposal & Final Product (8 cr hrs)**  
*[AP-591 (2 cr hrs) & AP-592 (6 cr hrs)]*

The topic/area I am currently considering for exploration via an Integrating Project is: producing a culminating art installation, which gives voice to the communities where I will apply traditional African healing methodologies and dream interpretation. The mixed media exhibition will represent the various components of communities and individuals before, during, and after the healing process.

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\_\_\_\_\_ **Uncertain**

*-When ready, replace this italicized material with your response. Briefly explain the nature of your uncertainty.*

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## ► **PART VII: Professional Advisor & Working Relationship**

**Directions:** In Part VII, the student addresses the matter of his/her Professional Advisor (PA). (For a fuller description of the role of the PA, see HANDBOOK SECTION II. Specifically, Part VII is to include a brief description of the following:

- A. What led the student to nominate the particular PA. (See HANDBOOK SECTION II for PA qualifications.)
- B. What the student hopes for regarding the nature of the relationship with the PA;
- C. What the student believes he/she (the student) brings to that relationship; and,
- D. An initial plan for interaction between the student and the PA (e.g., frequency, method, etc.)

[NOTE: Early in the process, these four areas will be addressed in terms of PLANS in general. Once the PA is approved, the content of these areas should be updated more specifically in relation to the particular PA.]

### **A. Rationale/criteria for nominating specific PA:**

↳ **What led you to nominate the particular PA you nominated? (e.g., qualities? commitments? education? field of practice? position in field? etc.)**

I nominated Derise XXXXXX, PhD, because she is extraordinarily knowledgeable about the issues affecting and shaping the various aspects of the African Diaspora. She possesses not only extensive historical and social Diasporic knowledge but, also traditional African spiritual knowledge and practice, as well. Derise is visionary enough to understand and encourage the artistically spiritual components of traditional African healing methods.

### **B. What I *bring to* the “Student—PA” relationship:**

↳ **What do you believe you bring to the “working/learning relationship” with your Professional Advisor?**

I bring a strong passion and desire to help fractured communities and members of the African Diaspora to remember who they *really* are and consciously reconnect with Ancestral and traditionally holistic ways of being. I am focused on helping the disempowered Diasporic members/communities to remember/learn how to empower themselves through healing. These passions and desires make me excited about learning more about these methodologies and Diasporic stories. They also leave me very open-minded and eager to do the work.

### **C. What I hope to *build into* the “Student—PA” relationship:**

↳ **Describe the “working/learning relationship” you hope to build with your Professional Advisor.**



I hope to forge a close working/learning relationship that allows me to feel comfortable when seeking insight or guidance from Derise. I would like structured freedom within the relationship, which includes mutual respect, constructive criticism, and consideration....and a witty sense of humor.

**D. Initial Plan for “Interaction Process” between Student & PA:**

↳ Describe the interaction process that you and your PA have agreed upon (frequency of contact, method of contact, etc.).

TBD