

The Africa Multiple Cluster Gender and Diversity Office
presents an ICDL Lecture by

Prof. Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo

Syracuse University, New York



Thursday, 9 June 2022

2 – 4 PM

Venue:

Cluster Knowledge Lab

S 58, RW I,

University of Bayreuth Campus, Germany

This is a hybrid event: <https://uni-bayreuth.zoom.us/j/68396130569?pwd=K2500G9IS3F30XVrdUFBL2UzUIFSZz09>

Meeting ID: 683 9613 0569

Passcode: 897688

Discussants:

Dr. Rahab Njeri,
University of Cologne

Prof. Catherine Kiprop,
ACC Moi, Eldoret, Kenya

In Celebration of Utu/Ubuntu-inspired leadership: Profiles of Two Kenyan Women Freedom Fighters

Narratives of Kenyan freedom fighters have mainly focused on men, leaving the stories of their female counterparts in the cold and altogether untold, except for a cursory mention here and there.

This lecture highlights the stories of two women freedom fighters: Me Katilili wa Menza (late 19th century to 1924?) and Field Marshal Mũthoni wa Kĩrĩma (1930? - still alive). In Me Katilili wa Menza, we commemorate the sheroism of a woman freedom fighter who organized rebellion against the settlement of British colonial settlers in Giriamaland (on Kenya's coast) between 1914-1915; while in Field Marshal Mũthoni wa Kĩrĩma, we celebrate the only woman who achieved the rank.

The Utu/Ubuntu-inspired leadership qualities of these women freedom fighters are motivated by self-sacrifice and guided by the clear vision that they are committed to a collective struggle, as opposed to a desire for personal fame, or gain. The narratives of these Utu/Ubuntu-inspired women leaders will be used to reflect upon Africa's neo-colonial leadership and the bankruptcy of self-aggrandizement. While these women have never designated themselves as feminists, nor claimed any acquaintance with feminist theoretical scholarship, current leadership would do well to learn from these two Utu/Ubuntu-inspired leaders and their lived "feminism."

Chaired by:

Dr. Christine Vogt-William

Director of the Gender and Diversity Office

Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, UBT Germany



Prof. Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo

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Syracuse University, New York.

A playwright, literary critic, social and political activist, Professor Micere Githae Mugo is Professor Emerita of African American Studies at Syracuse University, New York State where she previously served on the faculty of the African American Studies Department for 22 years.

Not only did she serve as chair of the Department of African American Studies but was also instrumental in developing the department's MA programme in Pan African Studies.

Born in colonial Kenya, Professor Mugo has always been a pioneer, with milestones like becoming one of the first Black women to join a previously segregated academy after high school, and the first woman faculty dean in Kenya as Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Nairobi in the 1970s.

Micere Mugo fought against human rights abuses in Kenya, whereby political activism made her an enemy of the state and forced her into exile. Since 1984 she has been a citizen of Zimbabwe and lived in the United States since December 1991.

Professor Mugo's scholarship is marked by a transnational Pan-Africanist and feminist perspective, transcending borders much like her life has been continental. She has always advocated for justice and equality, challenging colonial and neocolonial rule in Africa and racism in Syracuse, New York and around the United States.

One play written with Kenyan colleague Ngugi wa Thiong'o, entitled *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976) about a Mau Mau independence fighter, is considered a classic of political drama.

Micere was a founder of the Pan African Community of Central New York which started volunteer programs in two prisons; she is one of the organization's first presidents. She is also the founder and former president of the Syracuse-based United Women of Africa Organisation.

She has been an official speaker for Amnesty International, a consultant for influential foundations, and served on the boards of various journals. She has also acted as chairperson of the board of directors of SARIPS, the Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies in Harare.