

WESTERN'S RWANDA COURSE

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE LAND OF A
THOUSAND HILLS



CELEBRATING 10
YEARS OF THE
RWANDA COURSE &
PROFESSOR HENRI
BOYI

ONLINE PRESENTATION
& PANEL DISCUSSION
JAN 14, 2021, 7-8:30 PM

SATELLITE PROJECT
SPACE JAN 7-16, 2021
121 DUNDAS ST.,
LONDON, ON

Dr. Michael Milde

DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



This exhibition celebrates 10 years of an exceptionally innovative and, in many ways, pedagogically revolutionary course and learning experience. The course is called Rwanda: Culture, Society and Reconstruction and it combines in-class study with an extended trip to Rwanda. The classroom work introduces students to the context of Rwanda, a country that most of us associate only with horrific news stories about the 1994 genocide. Starting from the catastrophe that catapulted Rwanda to tragic international prominence, the course traces out the national and local responses, including reconciliation and re-building. This necessary background is then given immediacy and a human frame as the students travel the country and meet the people, while participating in activities supporting local social and educational organizations.

As you will see, the effect is extraordinary, transformative. Engaged learning that combines academic work with immersion in the community and rigorous self-reflection produces a unique and profound experience. In this exhibition, and its accompanying video, the participants from across the years express not only the full force of what they learned, but also their deep appreciation of the opportunity they were afforded.

The course has been one of the Western's great success stories: a clear demonstration of the power of engaged education. It is with great admiration that I commend Professor Henri Boyi, Department of French Studies, who has led this course and arranged the contacts and partnerships in Rwanda, and has provided dedicated and inspired leadership to each iteration of this class. Congratulations go out to all those who participated in the production of this exhibition, and to the many individuals in the Department of French Studies, The School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities who have supported this endeavour over the years.

Dr. Michael Milde
Dean

Prof. Henri Boyi

FRENCH STUDIES PROFESSOR, RWANDA COURSE
COORDINATOR AND PROFESSOR



A Note of Gratitude

Welcome to Western's Rwanda Experiential Learning Course Exhibition, 2021 celebrating 10 years of the UWO *Ubuntu* Experiential Learning Journey in the *Land of a Thousand Hills*.

When the course began in 2009, I had no idea how exceptionally successful and life-changing it would be, and continues to be to this day. My passion for giving back to the community and helping others combined with my enthusiasm of being able to give the best possible academic experience to my students has culminated in the development of this signature course on and in Rwanda. This Community Service-Learning course, Rwanda: Culture, Society, and Reconstruction (French 3140B/ ARTHUM 3992G), was initially solely based in the Department of French Studies at Western University and was later cross-listed with the School of Advanced Studies in Arts and Humanities (SASAH). The course was founded by my colleagues Jeff Tennant, Stephanie Hayne-Beatty and myself in 2009 when we selected three Western students to embark on a six-week Experiential Learning opportunity at the then National University of Rwanda, in Butare, Rwanda.

“Choosing to embark on this experience was the bravest and most physically and emotionally challenging thing I have ever done. That being said, it was also the most rewarding thing I have ever done.”
Anita Dabirzadeh (2015-2016 Rwanda course student and TA)

The following year, I taught the new course and took students on a five-week trip to do Community Service Learning in four different sites in and outside Kigali, the Capital City of Rwanda: The National University of Rwanda, Kigali Health Institute, Gisimba Orphanage and Nursery School, and Hope Village orphanage. The rest is history! We had just embarked on an intellectual and moral journey of a new way of learning that led us to reimagining John Dewey's deep quest to understand the meaning of liberal education which breeds wisdom and human dignity.

This Interdisciplinary Experiential Learning course intends to give opportunities to Western students from a variety of educational backgrounds to learn about Community Engaged Learning and many other related topics such as the values of liberal education, intercultural competence, cross-cultural communication, *Ubuntu*, leadership, global citizenship, and the 1994 Genocide of Tutsis to name a few. Over the course of 10 years, 101 Western students have participated in and successfully completed this program. The key to success for this course is the preparation that students receive throughout the entire winter term on the above topics. This assists them for the five to six weeks of hands-on experience and service at a variety of local NGOs based in Rwanda, mainly in the capital city of Kigali. It is important to note that all the former students have been extremely successful in their careers (See video testimonials and more) in the public and private sectors varying from teachers, social workers, nurses, Federal Government workers, medical doctors, lawyers, medical students, Law students, CEOs and top leaders in International companies in Canada and abroad.

Throughout the years, our main partners have been the National University of Rwanda, Kigali Health Institute (KHI), the College of Medicine and Health Science, Hope Village Orphanage, Centre Marembo, Gisimba Orphanage and Nursery School, Les Enfants de Dieu, Caritas – Kigali, and Aspire Rwanda. Suffice to say, we could have never hoped for better partners. They've helped create an environment which helped my students receive what they themselves have described as the best learning opportunity and experience. Colleagues, students, and partners have all witnessed and experienced the high measure of success of this course, which inspired the creation of many like it.

Prof. Henri Boyi

FRENCH STUDIES PROFESSOR, RWANDA COURSE
COORDINATOR AND PROFESSOR



My vision for this course has always been motivated by the African philosophical and ethical concept of *Ubuntu*, which means “I am because We/You are”, or, put simply, human-ness, humanity to others. If I learned one thing through teaching this Experiential Learning Course, it is that the greatest value of our lives can only be measured by our fully and ethically engaged service to other human beings. And if learning were the single most important aspect of our life, it would be the search to comprehend our own being in the world with *abantu*, i.e. other human beings. Using the power of *Ubuntu* while deeply reflecting on the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda, my students and I have learnt so much about ourselves (See students video testimonials). It is only through Ubuntu ethics that we can sustainably learn about ourselves, but also about Humanity in its ever-present landscapes of binarisms such as good and evil, beauty and ugliness, love and hate, destruction and reconstruction, war and peace, and conflict and reconciliation. This is the best gift Western University has given me in my professional career. I am extremely grateful for being able to teach this course and having the chance to work with the best partners and guide the most exceptional students.

“All members of this group are very hardworking young people with passion and compassion; they are very committed team players and admirable polite persons. This group is sincerely unique. They came for community service learning but they taught more than we could ever expect.”

-Nicolette Nsabimana, Director of Centre Marembo.

“[The UWO students] transformed the children’s lives through education...These lessons were thoroughly prepared at home after they ended the day’s work and were delivered with passion and dedication. They have shown true love to the children and always put a smile on their faces...”

-Charles Hazabintwali, Director of Les Enfants de Dieu

“I continue to be impressed and struck by the work you have done with this course and the positive impact it has had on your students. You truly represent to me the best of what internationalization at this university is about.”

-Professor Marianne Larsen.

I would like to express my wholehearted gratitude to: Dr. Michael Milde, Dean of Arts and Humanities who has given unwavering support to this course which was the first of its kind when it started; my colleague and friend Prof. Jeff Tennant, who co-founded the course and diligently accompanied the students and I to Rwanda in 2010; my colleagues Dr. Nandi Bhatia and Dr. Julia Emberly who accompanied us to Rwanda in 2016 and deeply inspired my students; my colleague Dr. Tracy Isaacs who accompanied us in 2019 and left everyone in tears when she came back to Canada; my colleague Stephanie Hayne Beatty from Western Student Center who gave continued support and well informed guidance to me and my students throughout the first several years; all the colleagues who strongly supported and guest lectured in the course, namely Dr. Joanna Quinn, Dr. Amanda Grzyb, Dr. Jeff Tennant, Stephanie Hayne Beatty, Lise Laporte, Prof. Nanda Dimitrov, Prof. Alain Goldschlager, Prof. Helene Berman, Aimée Utuza, and Dr. Joel Faflak; colleagues Debbie Smith, Mirela Parau, and Jennifer Tramble who handled the sometimes quite demanding administrative aspects of the course; Dr. Julie McMullin, Vice-Provost of Western International for the support and the contacts she always made for us with the upper administration of the University of Rwanda; Dr. Valerian Marochko, Ms. Robyn Lindsay, and to all the other people, not mentioned here, who have been nothing but supportive.

Prof. Henri Boyi

FRENCH STUDIES PROFESSOR, RWANDA COURSE
COORDINATOR AND PROFESSOR



I am unable to express in words the immense gratitude I have for all of my students who have participated in the Rwanda course. With each one of you, I could only grow as a person and as an educator. Thank you to all who showed such highly dedicated involvement into the preparation of this exhibition through the unfailing guidance of Misha Apel (Western Law School). This exhibition would not have taken place without the outstanding professionalism and generosity of my dear friend and colleague, Distinguished University Professor Patrick Mahon.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the global leaders, true partners and friends in Rwanda: Professor Phil Cotton, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rwanda (UR); Dr. Jeanne Kagwiza, Principal of The College of Medicine and Health Sciences, UR; Gr. Désiré Ndushabandi, former Rector of Kigali Health Institute (KHI); Late Prof. Firmard Nsabimana, KHI, UR; Ms. Nicolette Nsabimana, Director of Centre Marembo and staff, Peace Ruzage, Director of Aspire Rwanda and staff, Mr. Charles Hazabintwali, Director of Les Enfants de Dieu and staff; Ms. Josianne Umushashi, Coordinator at Caritas *Abadacogora & Intwari* and staff; Eric Niyikiza Maniragaba, UR; Prof. Joseph Kalisa, UR; Dr. Vincent Sezibera, UR; Prof. Didier Umwungeri, UR; Prof. Alain Rumenge, UR; Francis and Bernadette Kabango; Abbé Jean de Dieu Uwamungu, Centre St Paul; Abbé Wellars Uwamungu, Centre St Paul; Sr. Xavera, Centre St Paul; Sr. Marie Louise, Centre St. Paul; Emmanuel Hakizamungu (Hakim). We sincerely thank all the beautiful children and the youth we worked with in all the centers.

Last but far from least, a heartfelt gratitude goes to my family for their moral support and boundless patience as they always seemed to be the only ones who knew that each and every single trip was quite a heavy load of responsibility on my shoulders.

This exhibition showcases stories from Rwanda through the artwork, paintings, and photographs from those who took part in the course program over the years. Rwanda's meta-discourse of stories about human and social reconstruction has been a privileged learning space for my students, colleagues and I as we have come to witness how a people can uniquely engage in a resilient quest for the good in humanity even when the latter has so badly failed. The value of this exhibition is that it is a gallery of an infinity of such stories silently but eloquently told by each of the pieces of art, the picture of Romeo Dallaire, each painting by Keyona Gallucci, Nandi Bhatia, Katie Butler, Natalie Colquhoun, and Jasmine Wu, and each of the photos (selected from several thousands of them) from Tracy Isaacs, Sean Cousins, dozens of students and myself.

The exhibition is divided into the following categories:

- Rwandan Artwork
- The 1994 Genocide of Tutsis
- Students Travelling Throughout the Years
- Exploring the Beauty of Rwanda
- Western Students in Action
- Celebrating Graduation in Rwanda
- Student Videos and Testimonials

Coordinators: Patrick Mahon, Henri Boyi and Misha Apel

Gallery Coordinator: Shannon Taylor-Jones

Special thanks to: Tasmin Alam, Jasmine Wu, Zareen Cherian, Sean Cousins, Katie Butler, Eva Chang, Thomas Mahon, Gregory De Souza, and Orietta Akimana.

Thank you everyone and Happy New Year 2021!

Misha Apel

RWANDA PARTICIPANT 2016 & 2019; EXHIBITION
COORDINATOR



My first time in Rwanda was in 2016. Though it was almost five years ago, it feels like it was just yesterday. I still play my Rwanda playlist I made with the kids to dance to just to pretend I'm there. I was privileged to continue working with Prof. Henri Boyi throughout my undergraduate degree and to return to Rwanda in 2019 as the course's Teaching Assistant.

Only the select few students who participated in this course will ever understand why this program means so much to us all. This exhibition is our effort to show you even just a small part of its immense significance. Part of what we learn in the course is that those who have not experienced what you have likely will not be able to understand the tremendous learnings and teachings we receive in a short period of time, but it is important to bring people, especially those that matter most to us, into our experiences to take them on our intercultural competence journey.

Rwanda and Prof. Boyi taught me more than I have ever learned about myself, and the world through an intercultural competence, post-conflict and transitional justice lens. Most importantly, I learned about the meaning of *Ubuntu*, a Bantu philosophical term which means "I am because you are," a concept of mutual human kindness. This program taught me to be more appreciative of the influences of people around me and who have helped steer me to become the person I am today. No matter where we come from or what we do, we are part of one large family which supports each other in becoming the best versions of ourselves, for mutual growth and the benefit of the collective.

A significant group exercise we partake in during our time in Rwanda is group and personal reflection. University is an important place that allows young adults to grow, find themselves, and to learn important lessons. This program encourages and provides an environment for students to experience the real world, with real application. We were all given the chance to learn the ideas, theories, lessons and lectures in class and then apply them in Rwanda. This comes with immense training, understanding, respect and critical thinking to go into a country which we do not know and go to work. This course ensures students have the relevant understanding of how to do so respectfully, with cultural awareness and participate in Rwanda as true global leaders to then take these skills and experiences into every aspect of their lives.

I had the privilege of helping organize this exhibition and the most rewarding was reaching out to past participants. It has been an incredible journey seeing how the course developed. To all of us, this experience is so much more than just one course. From the first group in 2009 to the group that is still here at Western, years of students can attribute this course as a pivotal moment of growth and inspiration. One course connects us, and the teachings will continue to live on and influence us all.

Professor Henri Boyi has not only changed my life but my entire outlook. Prof. Boyi has this amazing capacity for caring about each and every person; he is the true embodiment of *ubuntu* and anyone who has the chance to learn from his selfless compassion, let alone his intelligence and expertise should be the most honoured and privileged. I am lucky to have gone to Rwanda so early on in my undergraduate career to have had the opportunity to work with Prof. Boyi from our return in 2016 and to continue today during my law degree. I may not be eligible to take the course for a third time, but its preservation is something I hope to continue to support, even when I finally leave Western!

Rwanda will always hold a special place in my heart, and I (as do many others) hope to return someday.

Thank you for supporting the course and its continuation, you are all now part of our growing team!

TIMELINE

2009

First organised trip by powerful teamwork between Prof. Jeff Tenant, Stephanie Hayne Beatty and Prof. Henri Boyi that set the Rwanda International Experiential Learning to go until today.

Students worked at the National University of Rwanda in Butare for 6 weeks helping to recover University archives which were destroyed in the genocide.

2011

Team built a second water tank at Hope Village as part of a continuous partnership.

Two new partnerships established with Centre Marembo and Les Enfants de Dieu (EDD) which continue to this day.

2013

Groundbreaking work for Centre Marembo's new clinic which provides medical access for the surrounding area and the centre's own youth and babies.

2015

New partner with Caritas (Abadachogora). Students worked on a National Day of Advocacy for abused Women and Girls with Centre Marembo and taught sexual health and family planning to 250 high-school aged students for 4 weeks.

Students Rachel, Anita and Brooke win World's Challenges Challenge bringing a solution to a world challenge with their experiences in Rwanda

2017-2018

Course intermission due to Rwandan elections.

2020

Students were more than ready to embark on their journey, but the trip was cancelled due to COVID-19.

2010

First full team of 12 travelled to Rwanda. Team built Hope Village's first Water Tank and began a started a new partnership with Gisimba Genocide Memorial and Nursery. Team was joined by Prof. Jeff Tenant.

2012

Strengthened continuing partnerships with Gisimba, Centre Marembo and EDD.

2014

Last year at our very special partner, Gisimba Genocide Memorial and Nursery, as it shut down its services.

2016

New Location for Caritas Nyamirambo. National Day of Advocacy for Abused Women and Girls and a travelling campaign to do community workshops. Team was joined by Prof. Nandi Bhatia and Prof. Julia Emberly.

2019

New partner with Aspire Rwanda. Centre Marembo moves to a new location and students help paint and set up the new home. Team was joined by Prof. Tracy Isaacs.

2021

Offered remotely due to COVID-19; students will not travel to Rwanda

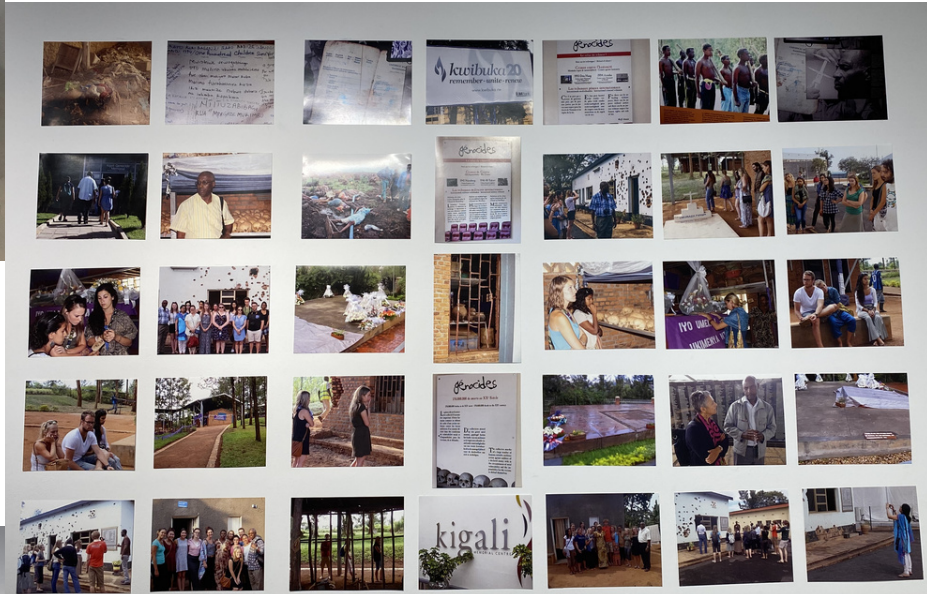
CELEBRATORY EXHIBITION

JAN. 7-16, 2021

SATELLITE PROJECT SPACE







2009

The following pages hold student reflections throughout the years starting with the first group of three sent by Prof. Boyi (**Juliana Chesterfield, Aaren Griff and Wiktoriana Kagan**) who travelled to Rwanda alone and paved the path for the years to come.



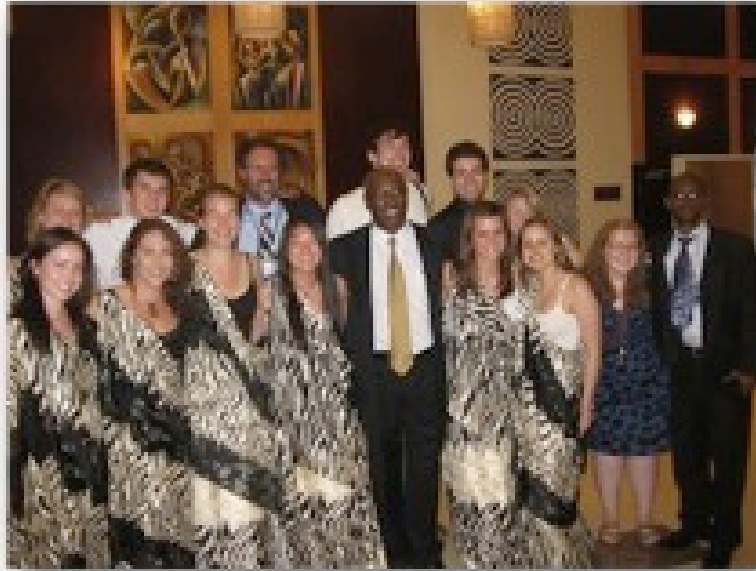
"My experience in Rwanda is hard to capture in words and I still feel overwhelmed by how much I learned and developed in such a short period of time...Embracing diversity, showing empathy, and bringing out the best in those around me have been critical to my success in my world today."

-Wiktoriana Kagan

"The best thing that I learned through my experience in the Rwanda program was getting comfortable being uncomfortable, being thrown into different environments different contexts around new people with different languages really encouraged me to get comfortable being outside my comfort zone and that is something that has continued to reap benefits throughout my entire life since the program."

-Juliana Chesterfield

2010



Alexandra Forsyth, Jordan Adams, Prof. Jeff Tennant, Philip Ofierski, Jessie Gardner, and Sheila Casaddy, Pamela Keegan, Aleshia Denny, Meagan Rust, Ashley Ho, Prof. Henri Boyi, Sandra Gowdy, Diane Tisdall, Melyssa Kerr, & Prof. Alain Rumenge

"We're all more similar than we are different and we all crave human connection in some form or another...Everyone you meet and every situation you come across is an opportunity to learn more about different cultures, about ourselves, about how things we work, about the world we live in."

-Ashley Ho

"Professor Boyi has got to be the most gentle, kind and patient person that I know. Just as an example, he was the only one who spoke the language there so anytime that one of our group needed to communicate with someone he had to be the interpreter... being our go-to person all the time."

-Jordan Adams

"My time in Rwanda impacted me greatly. It was 10 years ago however I still think about it often....My favourite memories from my time were the meals that we shared with our local host and local connections that we made throughout our time there. Those meals, those opportunities, experiences were truly a way to get to know Rwandan culture...Since Rwanda I've been to many countries around the world, but some of my fondest times abroad and most memorable learning experiences were from the opportunity I had in Rwanda, thank you."

-Sandra Gowdy

2011



James Dasten, Didier Umwungerimwiza, Jennifer Gowan, Prof. Henri Boyi, Luisa Fernandez, Carra Pauzé, Simran Chahal, Kayla Ranken, Kayla Nesbit, Meagan Rust, Courtney Lindsay, Travis Frampton, Elizabeth Dupuis, Tara Dupuis, Patricia Omoruwa, and Prof. Alain Rumenge

"My love of travelling was sparked at an early age, but it wasn't until I went to Rwanda that I truly learned how to move from tourist to service learner and how to put a proper emphasis on intercultural competency...My cross-cultural experiences in Rwanda taught me to reach across the divides that separate people and gave me the skills necessary to meet new people and embrace new experiences that I never would have before... I value the service-learning framework that we learned before we even arrived in Rwanda, because it led to a much more rich and valuable experience."

-Elizabeth Dupuis

"Rwanda is one of those magical countries I feel that when you go there, you instantly fall in love with it and it becomes part of you for the rest of your life...People from the Gisimba orphanage that I met as kids who are now adults and I've kept in touch with them since. It's amazing to have these connections with people that are so far away and has such a different way of life...If you have the opportunity to go I would not hesitate to say just do it, you won't regret it and you'll have some of the most amazing experiences of your life."

-Megan Rust

2012



Prof. Henri Boyi, Kylie Spafadora, Melody Ren, Alison Curcio, Franklyn Searle, Tara Dupuis, Pierre-Philippe Turnbull, Savroop Mann, Anne-Marie Dolinar, Martha Elliott, and John Zachary

"Taking part in the Rwanda course I believe has had a very significant impact on my life. It's motivated me to maintain a connection with meaningful work in the field of social justice and The Human Experience...To take part in such an impactful and significant experience has truly been a genuine honour and an absolute privilege for me. It's hard to put into words what my experience was like in Rwanda but it was so much greater than I ever could have imagined...One of the most striking lessons I learned was the value of cross-cultural learning and Equitable Exchange. As much as I was able to give to this experience I took so much more from it."

-Tara Dupuis (2011 & 2012 TA)

2013



Francine Navarro, Shelby Gobbo, Vindaya Seneveratne, Alyssa Kelly, Jasmine Irwin, Kaitlin Rocha, Pierre-Philippe Turnbull, Prof. Henri Boyi, Adrienne Siberry, Sarah Ellam, and Malory Maroccia.

"Rwanda is a trip that I talk about all the time...The experience was truly life-changing... this experience that was so intimate and special with the people that we met there....You know you can read facts, but nothing's quite like actually experiencing it and touching it, with lack of better words, with your own hands... I am so grateful to have gone, I hope to go back one day"

-Shelby Gobbo

"My experience in Rwanda shapes the way I help teams build inclusive web apps and taught me that empathy should always come with dignity. It taught me to challenge my own assumptions for acting on them and taught me to communicate with people in creative and resourceful ways when language or ability becomes a barrier. I'm grateful to Professor Boyi for taking me on the trip of a lifetime."

-Francine Navaro

"I got to spend two summers in a row in Kigali, and both experiences were amazing and definitely have shaped who I was back in my early twenties and then still have an impact on who I am today.. as a lawyer. The pivotal moment where I really decided that I want to continue studying after my undergrad and that I realized I had a keen interest in international development and international criminal law was during my time in Rwanda."

-Pierre-Phillippe Turnbull (2012 & 2013 TA)

2014



Gaelle Mumi Naira Groux, Nicholas Kenneth Picombe, Natalie Abeysena, Mariana Prado, Steven Ronald Brunet, Prof. Henri Boyi, Alyssa Best, Rachel Goldstein, Robyn Smith, and Yong Qing Zhu.

"When Henri asked me to be the teacher's assistant in 2015 he told me something along the lines of that he thought I was a quiet leader and I think that was the first time someone had described me as a leader and not just quiet...That was in itself something that really affected my life moving forward. It taught me to speak up and to think of myself as a leader and I think that's really the magic of the course, is that no matter where you are at the beginning, Henri will find something in you that you maybe didn't see in yourself."

-Rachel Goldstein (2014 & 2015 TA)

"To this date, my experience in Rwanda is the most impactful learning experience that I've had, and is something that I carried in everything I do...It's a very big part of my story to pursue an international career where I could have the impact that I was seeking, that I was so motivated to have....The single word that I think synthesizes my experience in Rwanda is *Ubuntu*. Even though it's just a word, I think it's the core essence of everything that I learned in Rwanda, and it means 'I am what I am because of you'.

-Mariana Prado

2015



Justine A. Lewis, Daniella Stevie-Lynn Puccini, Clarisse Fata, Avery Nicole Lafortune, Jacqueline Lau, Jonah Hetherington, Marie-Ange Symmonds, Brooke Porter, Megan Brooks Kimble, Anita Dabirzadeh, Rachel Goldstein and Prof. Henri Boyi

"Through the course we learn the importance about really contributing to the communities around you...Empathy, one of the most important things about the course was being able to understand and really think through our shared humanity as people."

-Jonah Hetherington

"If I had to describe my experience in two words it would probably be rewarding and inspiring. I learned a lot on the trip about Rwanda and about myself as well and one of the biggest takeaways was the power of forgiveness. We spoke a lot in class about the grassroots approach that Rwanda took in the reconciliation period after the genocide, and having spoken to a lot of the Rwandans who were affected, having lost loved ones in the genocide, they all ended their stories saying they forgave the perpetrators and I think that not only spoke to their strength as a people and just their collective resilience but truly that animosity and lack of forgiveness really does hinder us as a society in any kind of growth that we can only hope for not only between countries on a global scale but in our personal relationships and amongst other individuals in societies as well."

-Justine Nuess

"I describe the course as a fantastic learning experience firstly because you get to interact with the academic discourse on genocide reconstruction and read about reconciliation, and secondly because to just go there and experience it firsthand is second to none. My biggest lesson learned is no matter what hand you're dealt, resilience is key. It was amazing to see how Rwanda was dealt a bad hand and through the resilience and strength of their people, and being unafraid to take non-traditional approaches how the country was able to succeed beyond any expectations."

-Marie-Ange Symmonds

"This course taught me many things but one of the most valuable was certainly how individuals work within broader contexts of history and politics and social change... I really learned this in relation not only to myself as an individual, but also with the children who I have had the privilege of meeting and the local social workers who worked at Caritas full time."

-Avery LaFortune

2016



Prof. Henri Boyi, Prof. Phillip Cotton, Sean Cousins, Maxie Crawford-Holland, Keyona Galluci, Kristen Nadal, Bandna Dhaliwal, Mareike Van Nieuwkoop, Kristine Pettita, Anita Dabirzadeh, Prof. Firmard Nsabimana, Maricel Hope, Amy Gaskin, Kaitlyn Fortune and Misha Apel.

Visiting Professors: Prof. Julia Emberly, Prof. Nandi Bhatia (not pictured here).

"Looking back, I can definitely say this course was one of the most challenging courses I took but also definitely the most rewarding course and just overall experience I had during my undergrad...What makes the experience in this course really unique is the fact that for 8 or 9 years before I went and even more now, Henri and his students had put in a lot of work already over the years, and our community partners in Rwanda had put in a lot of work to building relationships between Western and these partners... So when we showed up we weren't starting from scratch, we were continuing to build these relationships."

-Sean Cousins

"This community engaged learning course has had a huge impact in shaping who I am, what I'm doing academically and professionally, and really pushed my social awareness as a student, as a teacher, as a community worker, and just as a person in general...Before, during, and after the course there was a lot of reflection involved which has made me a more critical and reflective person and of course when we were there we were working with the same people in Rwanda every day for five weeks, and in my experience that was where the real learning was happening."

-Maxime Purdy Crawford-Holland

"Learning about Rwanda from Professor Boyi provided a completely different perspective from what I was familiar with...Participating in [this] course did not change my life so much as it helped change my perspective on life. That experience helped me understand as a person who values community and never felt represented by Western curriculums, my purpose is to use the privileges I do have to create space for other people and other ways of knowing that are commonly excluded from narratives of the West...I will be forever grateful for what I learned in Professor Boyi's course."

-Keyona Gallucci

"I really think that the two years I spent volunteering and working as a part of this course helped shape my education, my career to come. Professor Boyi... is truly the best leader and educator you could ever ask for and the organizations that they work for in Rwanda are truly life-changing not only for the people on the ground there but for the students as well."

-Anita Dabirzadeh (2015 & 2016 TA)

2019



Olivia Ezman, Michael Juranka, Abigail Edwards, Alexandria Hesketh-Pavilons, Jayme Russell, Katherine Butler, Prof. Tracy Isaacs, Prof. Henri Boyi, Misha Apel, Charles Hazabintwali, Kayla Caissie, Natalie Colquhoun, Veronica Botnick, Layne Clarke and Eva Chang.

"One lesson learned is not to worry so much. We always say 'nta kibazo' which means 'ain't no problem'... we focus on the little things when really everything is going to be okay, so there's nothing that we can't fix. That's something that I've also tried to take into my life."

-Kayla Caissie

"The course spent a lot of time learning about the concept of *Ubuntu*, a philosophy of mutual human kindness, which isn't something that any of us could have just studied but was something that we really needed to experience to capture its true meaning."

-Misha Apel (2016 & 2019 TA)

"I learned a lot from the partners at EDD, especially Gratien who explained that there needs to be a reframing of how we view society to prevent behaviours from repeating themselves. I have been really reevaluating myself, how effective shame and punishment really are when we should be working together as a community to reach this overall goal of equity and equality."

-Veronica Botnick

"This experience gave me a whole new perspective on the pluses, the benefits of teamwork, how great it is to be part of a community, the importance of grassroots organizations, why engaging the beneficiary in programs is so important, the key of bottom up versus top down approaches and so much more."

-Katie Butler

"This class enhanced my cultural curiosity, and gave me a deeper understanding of intercultural engagement and the importance of community."

-Eva Chang

"There's only so much you can learn about the world and how international engagement works on the paper, and being able to actually set foot in a place and start working with inspiring individuals in the community to create change and get a sense of how you can be involved and how really all you need to make a difference, a really big difference in someone's life, is putting in hard work, and that is something I am going to be taking with me into my future career."

-Michael Juranka

2020

Yujian Bai, Audrey Soo-Eun Bang, Natalie Colquhoun, Charlotte Claire Grows, Ashif Khair Mohammad, Rachel Ellen Lundrigan, Jane Patricia Rideout, Jasmine Wu, Magdalena Masciantonio, Betty Wang, and Prof. Henri Boyi

"I believe that the best way to learn isn't in the classroom or online. Rather, it's experiential learning experiences such as this. It provides you with a new perspective on global and local cultures, issues, and relations. My time in Rwanda taught me not only the importance but the strength of community. Centre Marembo has an incredible sense of community and family within the organization. The girls rely on each other and on staff to build each other up, and to work collectively towards a better future for themselves and to reintegrate back into the broader community. The power of a community rallying behind a common cause is something I hope to be able to translate into my future career and the environmental field. The notion that if enough people stand behind you the opportunities are endless."

-Natalie Colquhoun (2019 & 2020 TA)



"Even though we weren't able to travel physically to Rwanda due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I was fortunately able to participate in virtual student exchange sessions with students and faculty of the University of Rwanda where we shared our perspectives about various global issues, such as COVID-19, mental health, media misinformation/disinformation, and social injustice. Exploring the shared humanity of others was a highlight of the course for me, especially when applying it to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide."

-Jasmine Wu (2019 & 2020 TA)



Morning warmup at Gisimba Orphanage.



The 2011 group with Nicolette Nsabimana at Marembo.



2013 team helping prepare the ground for Centre Marembo's newly built clinic.

2015 team enjoying lunch.





Alyssa Kelly
and Vindya
Seneviratne at
Ntarama
Church
Genocide
Memorial
(2013).



Prof. Boyi at
Ntarama
Church
Genocide
Memorial
(2013).



2010 Team at Hope Village Orphanage helping build a water tank.



Jonah Hetherington helping a student at Les Enfants de Dieu.



"Land of a
Thousand
Hills" taken by
Sean Cousins
(2016)

The 2016
Team on a
Hike- taken by
Sean Cousins
(2016)





In a boat on
Lake Kivu
(2016) taken by
Sean Cousins



Misha, Anita
and Amy on
Lake Kivu
(2016).



Celebrating the Day of the African Child at Caritas (2016)



Misha at Caritas (2016).

Prof. Boyi, Dr. Jeanne Kagwiza, Prof. Nandi Bhatia, Prof. Firmard Nsabimana and Prof. Julia Emberly at the College of Medicine (2016).



Kayla Caissie, Layne Clarke, Jayme Russell, Mickey Juranka, Prof. Tracy Isaacs and Misha Apel at Centre Saint-Paul (2019).

Keyona Gallucci at Les Enfants de Dieu (2016).





Prof. Tracy Isaacs and Nicolette Nsabimana at the new Centre Marembo location (2019).



Peace Ruzage, Abigail Edwards, Eva Chang, Jayme Russell, Lexie Hesketh-Pavilons and Prof. Henri Boyi at Aspire Rwanda (2019).



Aspire
Rwanda
classroom
taken by Prof.
Isaacs (2019).

On the road
to Kibuye
taken by Prof.
Isaacs (2019).



Prof. Patrick Mahon



DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN THE ARTS
AND HUMANITIES (SASAH); RWANDA EXHIBITION DIRECTOR

The opportunity to work alongside Prof. Henri Boyi, founder and instructor of the Rwanda Course, and Misha Apel, a Rwanda course participant (2016) and Teaching Assistant (2019) on the production of this celebratory exhibition has been an inspiring one.

In my role as Director of SASAH, and as an artist who has produced many exhibitions, I have a history of bringing culture into the public arena, often in art galleries. Rarely have I experienced the level of energy and commitment to a project that Henri, Misha, and a host of student volunteers showed as we worked together to realize the display at Satellite Project Space in London, Ontario, in late December 2020. I am certain that their collective enthusiasm is a reflection of their belief in the importance of the Rwanda Course, and in their sense of the significance of Community Engaged Learning as a tool of cultural transformation and a means to promote social justice.

On our website for SASAH, we say that our “advanced program fosters academic innovation and promotes excellence and creativity as well as community engagement to produce ethical, knowledgeable citizens capable of meeting the challenges of an evolving world and assuming leadership roles.” The involvement of many SASAH students in the Rwanda course over the history of our comparatively fledgling program is a testament to the synergy that exists between the aspirations of Prof. Boyi for his students, and SASAH’s goals for its learners. What a pleasure it is to be able to assist SASAH students in connecting with the Rwanda Course, and through this project, to be able to bring some of the course’s stories and images to an audience in London and beyond.

Readers of this publication will understand that the restrictions associated with the COVID pandemic in early January 2021 necessitated our presenting the exhibition to the public mainly via online means, as well as through this catalogue. While it was disappointing not to be able to open the doors of Satellite gallery to visitors as we had planned to do when we installed the show in December 2020, it proved to be a pleasurable challenge to be involved in producing this booklet as one of the ways of bring the show into the light. I thank and congratulate Misha Apel for her wonderful conceptual approach and design, as well as Prof. Henri Boyi, and Dean Milde of Arts and Humanities at Western, for their written contributions, and the numerous other contributors, as well. It is my hope that you will have caught something of the enthusiasm that surrounds the course, within these pages, and may have been encouraged to go further in search of other components of the project that were produced: a video of the exhibition, a recorded Panel Discussion, and video commentaries from a host of committed graduates of the course, its Partners, and other supporters.

I want to express my warmest thanks to the many who have given their labours to this exciting project, working alongside Misha Apel, Henri Boyi, and me: students, Tasmin Alam, Katie Butler, Eva Chang, Zareen Cherian, Sean Cousins, and Jasmine Wu; Faculty Panelists, Dr. Nandi Bhatia and Dr. Tracy Isaacs; Student Panelists, Rachel Goldstein, Anita Dabirzadeh and Misha Apel; Gallery Coordinator, Shannon Taylor-Jones; Video Editors, Thomas Mahon and Gregory De Souza; and the many donors and sponsors whose logos and project titles appear in this publication. Your collective generosity echoes that which has been empowering the enterprise of the Rwanda Course for ten years, and will surely enable its success in years to come.

WESTERN'S RWANDA COURSE



< Artist:
Katie Butler,
2019 UWO
Rwanda
Student, at
Centre
Marembo
Placement Site

2016 UWO Rwanda Students
at the Caritas Placement Site



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE LAND OF A THOUSAND HILLS

JAN. 7-16, 2021 - SATELLITE PROJECT SPACE

121 DUNDAS ST., LONDON, ON - WED. TO FRI., 2-7 PM; SAT. 12-5PM

Join us for a celebration & panel discussion, Thurs. Jan. 14, 7-8:30 pm.

For information: Prof. Henri Boyi (hboyi@uwo.ca) & Prof. Patrick Mahon (pmahon@uwo.ca)

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