

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES & THE  
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES PRESENTS

# RUDOLPH WARE

(University of Michigan)

## Lecture: "Seeing into the Unseen: Embodied Knowledge and Disembodied Spirits in Islamic West Africa"

Friday, April 21, 2017

5:00 - 6:30 PM, 630 William Pitt Union

**Pre-keynote reception from 4:00 - 5:00 PM**

This talk explores relationships between embodied knowledge transmission and spiritual vision in Islamic West Africa, with particular attention to Senegal. Here spiritual vision encompasses visions where spirits, especially jinn and angels are seen, as well as visionary experiences where in the human spirit—rather than the body—does the seeing. In short, this talk is about how people in Islamic West Africa come to see into the unseen. Drawing on research from *The Walking Qur'an* and from a current book project, *Visionaries: Second Sight & Social Change in Islamic West Africa*, the goal is to develop a theory of religion rooted in Islamic, African, and Diasporic thought and practice rather than in European religious historiography. For the purposes of the talk, I am taking seriously the notion that there is a durable invisible world that lies just beyond the ordinary perception of the senses. Seen from this standpoint religion can be understood as all that characterizes, informs, or otherwise regulates interaction between the material world of the human senses—the seen world—and the unseen world which lies just beyond it.



**Bio:** Professor Ware is a historian of Africa and Islam. Ware earned his Ph.D. in history in 2004 from the University of Pennsylvania where he was trained in African History, African-American History, and Islamic Intellectual History. He is currently an associate professor in the department of History at the University of Michigan, and the founder and director of the IKHLAS research initiative for the study of Islamic Knowledge, Histories & Languages, Arts & Sciences. He is the author of multiple articles on slavery in Islamic Africa and the Atlantic World, as well as *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*, a book that explores the history of a thousand years of Qur'an schooling in the region.

This PUBLIC LECTURE is part of the *Diverse Spiritualities Symposium* taking place from April 20 - 22, 2017.



**FOR THE FULL SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE VISIT:** [www.religiousstudies.pitt.edu/events](http://www.religiousstudies.pitt.edu/events)

*Diverse Spiritualities* is sponsored by the Year of Diversity, the Humanities Center, the Faculty Research Scholarship Program, the Dept. of Africana Studies, the African Studies Program, the Dept. of Religious Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, the Global Studies Center, the World History Center, the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, the Dept. of History, the Cultural Studies Program, and the Dept. of Theatre Arts.