AFRI-A 731 Contemporary Africa Speaker Series Spring 2017:
African Mobilities and Expressive Culture

Professor Mhoze Chikowero,
University of California-Santa Barbara
and
Thomas Mapfumo

Chimurenga Intersections: Epistemologies of Self-Liberation through African Music Scholarship and Performance

Wednesday, April 5 | 5:30-7:00pm | SGIS 1122

Mhoze Chikowero is Associate Professor of African History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Visiting Research Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He is also a co-founder and Director of Research of the Mbira Institute, a Zimbabwe-based think tank that researches colonial trauma and deploys African intellectual and cultural capital for self-development. His articles on music and politics, nationalism, electrification, and broadcasting have appeared in the Journal of Southern African Studies, in Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa, and in numerous edited volumes. He is currently completing two books: The Military-Entertainment Complex: Music, Media and Power in Post-colonial Zimbabwe, and Tools of Empire, Technologies of Self-liberation: Radio Broadcasting as Political Engineering in Colonial Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Thomas Mapfumo is Zimbabwe’s and one of Africa's greatest living musical legends. He rose to prominence as a guerrilla artist during the height of Southern Africa's liberation struggles against British settler colonialism in the early 1970s.
Composing militant songs that utilized as their musical foundation the mbira sound demonized by Christian missionaries and proscribed by the settler state, Mapfumo helped propound a musical style called Chimurenga, that attacked the colonial system and mobilized for the popular armed struggle that birthed Zimbabwe in 1980. His crusade against injustice saw him not only harassed and jailed by the colonial regime, but he has also been persecuted by the post-colonial state that inherited some of the same modes of governance from its colonial predecessor. Mapfumo's music, videos and fuller biography can be accessed here: [www.Thomas-Mapfumo.com](http://www.Thomas-Mapfumo.com)

**Abstract:** Professor Chikowero's talk will revolve around his first book: African Music, Power and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe (winner of the 2016 Society of Ethnomusicology KwabenaNketiaBook Prize), which considers Chimurenga as a philosophy and epistemic engagement in reverse engineering, self-defense and self-liberation. Threatened by colonial regimes of dehumanization, subjugation, debasement, and criminalization, generations of Africans have had to struggle to defend, articulate and reassert their being. This history of self-rehumanization informs the need to seriously conceptualize African modes of self-authorship as multifaceted, interconnected and on going. The cultural archive allows an understanding of this undertaking as deeply rooted in African historical consciousness and popular, participatory practices. As such, Professor Chikowero will share the stage with the proponent of Chimurenga (self-liberation) music, Dr. Thomas Tafirenyika Mapfumo, bringing to the fore the shared modes of African indigenous intellect. This program draws the battlelines for the unfinished program of African intellectual and cultural self-liberation.