

# Class in Swahili offered

"Ninataka kujifunza ki Swahili (I want to learn Swahili)," was the wish of several UNL students that prompted the start of a new language course this semester.

Robert Mushi, a UNL graduate student from Tanzania who is working on his doctorate in agronomy, said many people approached him last semester with their desire to learn Swahili. Swahili is the national language of such countries as Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan. Most of these people previously had visited parts of Africa and had an interest in learning a new and different language.

"Some people knew I spoke Swahili and told me they wished to learn how," Mushi said. "Then I went to IES (International Educational Services) and told them about my idea of starting a Swahili class." They liked it.

The Swahili class is open to any UNL student or faculty member, and is free because it is not an official UNL course. The

class meets in the East Campus Union from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays.

Although about 32 students attended the class at first, only about 16 people are taking the class now, Mushi said. Most of the students enrolled are from foreign countries, but about seven are Americans who have never spoken anything like Swahili before, he said.

"Swahili is a very easy language to learn," Mushi said. "It only takes a person about six weeks of lessons before he can speak it." The language is derived from various other languages, including Spanish and Arabic, and has influenced the English language by adding words, such as safari, he said.

More than 100 forms of the Swahili language are spoken; Mushi is fluent in four of the dialects.

"I'll continue to teach the class until the students can speak it well," he said. "It's all voluntary on both their part and mine; they want to learn and I want to teach them."

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