Letter from the Chair

July 20, 2022

This has been a challenging year. With the rigorous Covid testing protocols of the University, we finally returned to campus and moved into our new home in Morrison Hall. Despite our excitement about the new year back on campus, faculty, students, and staff evidenced the wear and tear of these Covid-days. Lingering anxiety characterized AY 2021-2022. We all struggled with how to be together again—especially in a new space. I noticed that students struggled with adjusting to some sense of normalcy. The rigors of Princeton are hard to manage under the best circumstances. The shadows cast by Covid did not help matters. Our students stumbled a bit. They battled the virus, too. We saw several of them enter the University’s Covid protocols. But, in the end, the students survived, and some even flourished.

In 2021-22, we graduated our fifth class of ten concentrators. They were joined by one of our largest cohorts of certificate students (38 recipients). And we had one student receive a graduate certificate. Despite all the challenges, we witnessed a modest 4.21% increase in our enrollment, with 1,088 students taking our classes. I expect that number will be even stronger next year. We were also delighted that fourteen sophomores declared AAS as their concentration.

I am confident in the direction of the unit. We now face the challenge of our immediate future. We will lose two of our senior faculty in the coming years. Professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor has accepted an offer from Northwestern University, and Professor Imani Perry has decided to leave us, after next year for Harvard University. Their departure constitutes a serious blow to the Department. But they leave behind an extraordinary legacy in helping build one of the best departments in the country.

I must admit I continue to marvel at the AAS faculty. They are masterful in the classroom and brilliant on the page. I am especially excited for our junior faculty. One minor correction, though: Professor Arabindan-Kesson is no longer among the junior ranks. She was recently promoted. Her book, “Black Bodies, White Gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World” (Duke University Press, 2021) has been widely praised. Professor Womack’s recently published book, “The Matter of Black Living: The Aesthetic Experiment of Racial Data, 1880-1930” (University of Chicago Press, 2022), is pathbreaking in every way. Given their success along with Professor Goldthree’s, the future of African American Studies at Princeton is bright and strong.

Of course, all of this is happening against the backdrop of a nation in turmoil. It seems that the political storms just keep coming. The country is bitterly divided, and race matters sit at the heart of these troubled times. Our faculty have worked tirelessly on campus and beyond Fitz Randolph Gates to help the country through these storms—to help us all get to the other side.

I am so proud to be a member of this Department. Despite the challenges of this year, the faculty, our dedicated staff, and our brilliant students make Morrison Hall a special place and ours the best department of African American Studies in the world.

Sincerely,

Eddie S. Glaude Jr.
Chair, Department of African American Studies,
James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor
# Table of Contents

## About the Department
- Overview ........................................................................................................... 3
- Our Staff ............................................................................................................. 4
- Advisory Council ............................................................................................... 5
- Undergraduate Board of Advisers (UBA) ........................................................ 6
- AAS Academic Committees ............................................................................... 7
- Academic Courses .............................................................................................. 9-10
  - Fall 2021 Courses .......................................................................................... 9
  - Spring 2022 Courses ...................................................................................... 10

## AAS Undergraduate Studies
- Overview .............................................................................................................. 11
- Course of Study & Subfields ............................................................................. 12
- Undergraduate Certificate Requirements ....................................................... 14
- Undergraduate Certificate Recipients ............................................................. 15
- Concentration Overview and Requirements ............................................... 19
- 2022 Concentrators .......................................................................................... 21
- Undergraduate Reflection ................................................................................. 33
- 2022 Senior Prizes & Winners ......................................................................... 35
- Study Abroad Opportunities ............................................................................. 37
- AAS Undergraduate Funding Opportunities ................................................. 38

## AAS Graduate Studies
- Overview .............................................................................................................. 39
- AAS Faculty-Graduate Seminar ....................................................................... 41
- Graduate Reflection ............................................................................................ 45
Programming & Highlights
Featured Events & Programs .......................................................... 47
2022 Class Day Celebration & Reception ....................................... 48

AAS Faculty
Core Faculty .................................................................................. 49
Associated Faculty ........................................................................ 65
Faculty Emeritus ........................................................................... 67
Fellows & Visiting Faculty ............................................................. 68

Newsroom Articles
When the Fro Talks, Listen ............................................................ 71
Dannelle Gutarra Cordero on her first book, “She Is Weeping” ........ 73
Historical Fiction Through the Lens of Black, Queer Love .......... 74
Welcome to Morrison Hall ............................................................ 76

By The Numbers
AAS Facts & Figures ..................................................................... 77
About the Department

This academic unit has grown from a program to a center to a department. Today, the Department holds many of the most prolific and notable African American Studies scholars in the world.

The Department of African American Studies at Princeton University provides an exciting and innovative model for teaching and research about African descended people, with a central focus on their experiences in the United States. We embody this mission in a curriculum that reflects the complex interplay between the political, economic, and cultural forces that shape our understanding of the historic achievements and struggles of African descended people in this country and around the world.
Our Staff

Anthony Gibbons Jr.
Communications & Media Specialist

Jana Johnson
Administrative Coordinator

Elio Lleo
Technical Support Specialist

April Peters
Manager, Finance & Administration

Dionne Worthy
Assistant to the Chair & Events Coordinator
Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is an external group of experts and advocates who help the Department in the execution of its mission.

Donna Beverly Ford ‘82
Chair, Hillsides Board of Directors
La Cañada Flintridge, California

Brent Henry ‘69
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo, P.C, Partners HealthCare System
Boston, Massachusetts

Claudia Mitchell-Kernan
Professor Emerita of Anthropology, Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, UCLA
Los Angeles, California

Wes Moore
Chief Executive Officer, Robin Hood
New York, New York

Ruth J. Simmons
President, Prairie View A&M University
Providence, Rhode Island
HONORARY BOARD MEMBER
Undergraduate Board of Advisers (UBA)

The UBA acts as the voice for students in the Department and plans events each year. We aim to integrate students into the intellectual life of the Department beyond the classroom and offer input on matters related to curriculum and programming activities. Students serve as ambassadors for the Department and provide a support network for all undergraduate students who are concentrators and certificate students as well as students who are enrolled in AAS courses.
Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee is tasked with the oversight of issues, concerns, policies and procedures relating to the concentration and/or certificate in African American Studies. In addition, the committee reviews requests from faculty to teach new courses, reviews and signs off on hiring visiting faculty and lecturers, assigns courses to incoming fellows, and reviews semester to semester coverage of required courses for the concentration and certificate. Finally, this committee is responsible for allocating funding requests for course support, senior thesis and dissertation funding, and conference travel for undergraduate and graduate students. Committee appointments are for a two-year period.

Members

- Ruha Benjamin
- Joshua Guild
- Naomi Murakawa (Chair)
- Kinohi Nishikawa
Priorities Committee

The Priorities Committee is the executive committee for AAS. It is tasked with reviewing the yearly budgets proposed by the chair, and with crafting the policies, procedures and guidelines governing faculty roles, expectations and responsibilities. Policies, issues and concerns relating to the process governing tenure and promotion originate with this committee, as well as decisions representing significant changes in the organization, direction, or functioning of the Department. The Priorities Committee is also responsible for selecting postdoctoral and distinguished visiting fellows each year, and for proposing names of faculty to deliver the Toni Morrison and James Baldwin lectures.

Programming Committee

The Programming Committee responds to requests and allocates funds for co-sponsorship funding from student groups, faculty, and other academic departments. They are also responsible for proposing to the Chair yearly programming that would support the vision, mission, and growth of AAS.

Members

- Ruha Benjamin
- Eddie S. Glaude Jr. (Chair)
- Naomi Murakawa
- Autumn Womack

Members

- Reena Goldthree (Chair)
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
- Anna Arabindan Kesson
Academic Courses

Fall 2021 Courses

AAS 201 / PHI 291 (CD or EC)
African American Studies and the Philosophy of Race
Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

AAS 244 / ART 262 / LAS 244 (CD or LA)
Introduction to Pre-20th Century Black Diaspora Art
Anna Arabindan-Kesson

AAS 245 / ART 245 (LA)
Introduction to 20th Century African American Art
Chika Okeke-Agulu

AAS 300 (SA)
Junior Seminar: Research and Writing in African American Studies
Reena N. Goldthree, Naomi Murakawa

AAS 303 / GSS 406 / HUM 314 (HA OR SA)
Topics in Global Race and Ethnicity: Scientific Racism Then and Now
Dannelle Gutarra Cordero

AAS 306 / GSS 428 (SA)
Topics in Race and Public Policy: Institutional Anti-Blackness and the Power of Naming
Dannelle Gutarra Cordero

AAS 331 / HIS 382 (CD)
Beyond Tuskegee: Race and Human Subjects Research in U.S. History
Ayah Nuriddin

AAS 359 / ENG 366 (LA)
African American Literature: Harlem Renaissance to the Present
Kinohi Nishikawa

AAS 366 / HIS 386 (HA)
African American History to 1863
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

AAS 426 / HIS 426 (HA)
Memory, History, and the Archive
Joshua B. Guild
Spring 2022 Courses

AAS 302 / SOC 303 / ANT 378 / GHP 302 (CD or SA)
Political Bodies: The Social Anatomy of Power and Difference
Ruha Benjamin

AAS 303 / LAS 363 / HIS 300 (HA)
Topics in Global Race and Ethnicity: Race, Revolution, and Counterrevolution
Navid Farnia

AAS 306 / HIS 312 (CD or HA)
Topics in Race and Public Policy: History of Anti-Black Racism in Medicine
Ayah Nuriddin

AAS 313 / HIS 213 / LAS 377 (HA)
Modern Caribbean History
Reena N. Goldthree

AAS 318 / REL 318 / GSS 375 (LA)
Black Women and Spiritual Narrative
Wallace D. Best

AAS 319 / LAS 368 / GSS 356 (HA)
Caribbean Women’s History
Reena N. Goldthree

AAS 339 / EGR 339 (CD or SA)
Black Mirror: Race, Technology, and Justice
Ruha Benjamin

AAS 341 / ART 375 (LA)
Enter the New Negro: Black Atlantic Aesthetics
Anna Arabindan-Kesson

AAS 353 / ENG 352 (LA)
African American Literature: Origins to 1910
Autumn M. Womack

AAS 367 / HIS 387 (CD or HA)
African American History Since Emancipation
Joshua B. Guild

AAS 380 / AMS 382 (CD or HA)
Law and Public Policy in African American History
Naomi Murakawa

AAS 411 / ART 471 / AFS 411
Art, Apartheid and South Africa
Chika Okeke-Agulu

AAS 500
African American Intellectual Tradition
Eddie S. Glaude Jr.
Undergraduate Studies in AAS

The Department of African American Studies offers both an Undergraduate Concentration and an Undergraduate Certificate that expand and deepen a student’s understanding of race in the United States and in the world. Students who pursue and fulfill all requirements for the concentration are awarded a Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies. The Certificate in African American Studies is equivalent to an academic ‘minor.’ Undergraduate students in both tracks select from the same course offerings.

The curriculum requirements in the undergraduate program in African American Studies reflect the complex interplay between political, economic, and cultural forces that shape our understanding of the historic achievements and struggles of African descended people in this country and their relation to others around the world. The course of study is defined by three distinct subfields: African American Culture and Life, Race and Public Policy, and Global Race and Ethnicity. In addition to offering a Concentration and Certificate program for students, the Department organizes a Junior Research Seminar, a Senior Thesis Colloquium, as well as an array of courses, public events, and lecture series open to all students.
Course of Study & Subfields

**African American Culture and Life (AAACL)**

In this subfield, students encounter the theoretical canon and keywords, which shape the contemporary discipline of African American Studies. Accessing a range of interdisciplinary areas, situated primarily in the United States, students learn to take a critical posture in examining the patterns and practices that order and transform Black subjects and Black life.

**Race and Public Policy (RPP)**

In the Race and Public Policy subfield students use and interrogate social science methodologies in examining the condition of the American state and American institutions and practices. With an analysis of race and ethnicity at the center, students examine the development of institutions and practices, with the growth and formation of racial and ethnic identities, including changing perceptions, measures, and reproduction of inequality.

**Global Race and Ethnicity (GRE)**

In this subfield, students use the prevailing analytical tools and critical perspectives of African American Studies to consider comparative approaches to groups, broadly defined. Students examine the intellectual traditions, socio-political contexts, expressive forms, and modes of belonging of people who are understood to share common boundaries/experiences as either:

1. Africans and the African Diaspora outside of the United States and/or
Undergraduate Certificate Requirements

Undergraduates who opt to pursue a Certificate in African American Studies (AAS) gain access to an extraordinary bibliography that prepares them to think about difference in sophisticated ways.

Earning a Certificate in African American Studies

Students must complete two AAS core survey courses from the list below:

• AAS 244 Introduction to Pre-20th Century Black Diaspora Art
• AAS 245 Introduction to 20th Century African American Art
• AAS 353 African American Literature: Origins to 1910
• AAS 359 African American Literature: Harlem Renaissance to Present
• AAS 366 African American History to 1863
• AAS 367 African American History Since Emancipation

Students must take three additional elective courses in AAS, cross-listed by AAS, or from our approved cognates list, and at least one of these must be in the Global Race and Ethnicity subfield.

Additionally, students are encouraged to make African Americans and/or African American Studies central to their senior thesis topic.
2022 Undergraduate Certificate Recipients

Veronica Abebe
Department of Computer Science
Rockefeller College

Leyla Arcasoy
School of Public and International Affairs
Whitman College

Selam Bellete
Department of Psychology
Mathey College

Elijah Benson
Department of Politics
Whitman College

Silma Berrada
Department of English
First College

Alia Bradley
Department of History
Butler College

Turquoise Brewington
School of Public and International Affairs
Forbes College

Jonathan Carroll
Department of Religion
Mathey College

Gabriella Carter
Department of Anthropology
Butler College

Julia Chaffers
Department of History
First College

Shannon Chaffers
Department of Sociology
Rockefeller College

Daniella Cohen
Neuroscience Institute
Rockefeller College

Hailey Colborn
Department of English
First College

Ndinelago Coleman
Department of Astrophysical Sciences
Forbes College

Emily Downey
Department of History
Rockefeller College
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES IN AAS

John Sullivan  
Department of History  
Forbes College

Brittani Telfair  
School of Public and International Affairs  
Whitman College

Saran Toure  
Department of Politics  
Butler College

Frelicia Tucker  
Department of Computer Science  
Butler College

Frances Walker  
Department of Anthropology  
First College

Robert Webb  
Department of Computer Science  
Whitman College

Emmandra Wright  
Department of Computer Science  
First College

Soo Young Yun  
Department of English  
Mathey College
CERTIFICATE OF Completion

awarded to

Selam Bellete

for fulfillment of the requirements for the certificate in African American Studies

May 15, 2023
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES IN AAS

Undergraduate Concentration

Overview and Requirements

Students who declare a Concentration in African American Studies experience a fuller account of the field, preparing them for a range of professions, as well as graduate work in African American Studies.

The steps to complete the concentration:

Students complete two core survey courses listed below. At least one of these must be a Pre-20th century course.

- AAS 244 Introduction to Pre-20th Century Black Diaspora Art (pre-20th century)
- AAS 245 Introduction to 20th Century African American Art
- AAS 353 African American Literature: Origins to 1910 (pre-20th century)
- AAS 359 African American Literature: Harlem Renaissance to Present
- AAS 366 African American History to 1863 (pre-20th century)
- AAS 367 African American History Since Emancipation

In the fall of their junior year, concentrators take AAS 300 Junior Seminar: Research and Writing in African American Studies. This course introduces students to theories and methods of research design in African American Studies in preparation for the junior paper. At the end of their fall semester, juniors declare a subfield to pursue, selecting from:

- African American Culture and Life (AAACL)
- Global Race and Ethnicity (GRE)
- Race and Public Policy (RPP)
Additional Requirements
Concentrators must demonstrate proficiency by completing independent writing and research. In the spring of their junior year, students engage in independent research in order to write a junior paper in the field of African American Studies. Seniors complete independent reading and research to develop a senior thesis that reflects their chosen subfield. Seniors also take a comprehensive exam derived from the work of their thesis.

Senior Colloquium
In the Senior Colloquium, concentrators workshop their thesis for clarity and improvement and also practice becoming conversant about their research by contextualizing their work alongside pertinent contemporary issues and news stories. Workshopping the theses of each student as a group, guided by a member of the core faculty, gives all concentrators a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the field of African American Studies.

Senior Thesis & Exam
As mentioned, during the senior year, each student, with the guidance of a faculty adviser, must complete independent work, which consists of writing a thesis. The senior thesis will then serve as the basis of the senior comprehensive exam.
CLASS OF 2022

Left to Right:
Ché Rogers, Oluwatamilore Ajeigbe, Priya Vulchi, Kennedy Collins, Fedjine Victor, Brooke Johnson, Daisy Torres, Josiah Gouker, Niara Hightower, MiKayla Green

Photo by FOTOBUDDY
Tamilore M. Ajeigbe

Newark, Delaware

Oluwatamilore Ajeigbe is a member of the class of 2022 from Newark, Delaware. She concentrated in the Department of African-American Studies with a Certificate in Statistics and Machine Learning. Being raised in a family that sacrificed everything for education, as well as being one of the few Black students in her middle/high school led to her being concerned about the inequalities of the education system and wanting to dive deeper. Although initially interested in how the brain functions in different environments, after taking AAS courses her first and sophomore years, she quickly started to see the value in interdisciplinary courses and thinkings that AAS offers that could help her to better understand the intricate educational system and the many factors and conditions that disproportionately affect Black people when learning, as well as the historical structure of education and how that affects the current structure of education.

On campus, Oluwatamilore engaged in numerous activities, including being an Advising Fellow for Matriculate, an intern in the Women’s Center, Middle School Liaison for Community House Executive Board, President for the African Students Association, as well as a RISE Peer facilitator. After Princeton, Tamilore hopes to enroll in a graduate program, obtain a master in either public policy or education policy, and have a career in policy and education.

Senior Thesis

“What Are We Doing Wrong? The Need for Policy to Address Black STEM Retention in PWIs”

Adviser: Joshua Guild
Kennedy Collins
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Kennedy Collins is a member of the Class of 2022 from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She pursued a degree in African American Studies with a focus on Race and Public Policy and received a Certificate in Spanish. As someone who likes to dip her toes in every possible interest before making a concrete decision, she certainly reflected this in choosing her major. Ultimately, she recognized the value of the AAS Department and declared it as her concentration. She appreciates the interdisciplinary nature of the Department, as she has been able to use what she has learned in various on-campus and work experiences. She also resonates with the Department as it reflects Black experiences that are not monolithic, but a collective of multifaceted, authentic experiences.

Kennedy has served in leadership for Christian Union Nova (TruThursday), Our Health Matters, and BAC Dance. She is a former Fellow for the Carl A. Fields Center as well as a former Orientation Leader for Dialogue and Difference in Action.

Kennedy is exploring many passions for her future, but plans to go to graduate school after working for a year.

Senior Thesis

“Uncovering our EdTech: How Risk Assessment Tools May Exacerbate Social Inequity”

Adviser: Ruha Benjamin
Josiah Gouker

Joshaa Tree, California

Josiah Alexander Gouker is a member of the Class of 2022 and concentrated in African American Studies with certificates in French Language and Culture and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Hailing from the small desert town of Yucca Valley, Josiah's experience in a predominantly white town led him early on to become concerned with the ways in which race operates in society. He found the language necessary to understand the causes and manifestations of racism in the U.S. during his first class in African American Studies, “Race Is Socially Constructed: Now What?” Taking this course with Professor Benjamin assured him that this Department would be where he would find his academic home, where he had the freedom to ask critical questions about race in America.

Josiah’s research interests cast a wide net. His junior paper, titled “From Coded Language to Codified: The Welfare Queen’s Reign over Reagan’s 1981 Reform,” looked at the policy impacts of the welfare queen myth during the Reagan administration. Now, he has returned to the ideology of the nation, exploring the connection of the American civil religion to today’s race issues, especially as it relates to discourses around critical race theory. Having always had an interest in policy, he is also interested in the current laws and institutions that perpetuate the suffering of African Americans, as well as discussions on the intersections where Black and LGBTQ+ people are marginalized.

Senior Thesis

“Culture War or Civil Crusade? Critical Race Theory, American Civil Religion, and the Battle for America’s Schools”

Adviser: Reena Goldthree
MiKayla Green

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MiKayla Green is a member of the class of 2022 from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She pursued a degree in African American Studies through the subfield of Race and Public Policy, as well as a certificate in Statistics and Machine Learning.

Her research interests are primarily focused on policing and dismantling the carceral system. In addition to this, she is passionate about using data analysis in ways that support human rights initiatives.

At Princeton, MiKayla was a Writing Center Fellow and worked within the Just Data Lab. She also performed with the Aerial Arts Club.

Senior Thesis

“Gaps in Abolition: A Study on Understanding the Support and Non-Support for Abolishing the Police in Philadelphia”

Adviser: Ruha Benjamin
Niara Hightower  
Boston, Massachusetts

Niara Hightower is a member of the class of 2022 from Boston, Massachusetts. She pursued a degree in African American Studies through the subfield of Race and Public Policy, as well as certificates in Statistics and Machine Learning and Global Health and Health Policy.

Her research interests are primarily focused on the ways in which U.S. institutions, especially those in the realms of carcerality, economics, and health, marginalize Black people and their communities. She is also interested in examining and challenging existing theoretical approaches to dismantling these institutions and their reproduction of inequality. In addition to this, she is passionate about analyzing the ways in which Black women are especially targeted and marginalized in U.S. institutions and culture.

At Princeton, Niara was a Mellon Mays Fellow, volunteer for the Learning Enrichment in the Arts Program, leader in TruThursday and Our Health Matters, Office Assistant, as well as a dancer with the Black Arts Company and DoroBucci African Dance Company.

Senior Thesis

“Now I’m Myself”: How Pat Evans Re-Imagined Herself and Her World Through Style”

Adviser: Wallace D. Best
Brooke Johnson

Phoenix, Arizona

Brooke Johnson is a member of the class of 2022 and concentrated in African American Studies with a certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies. Raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Brooke has always had a passion for reading and writing, which has developed into a desire to connect scholarship to the real lived conditions and experiences of the communities it engages. In her time at Princeton, the African American Studies Department has offered numerous deeply impactful opportunities to wrestle with academia, and Brooke is grateful for all of her time spent here. Brooke's research interests are wide; her junior year independent work focused on Black women's grief as a radical defining force in the face of state narratives of anti-Black violence.

On campus, Brooke served as a Residential College Advisor in First College and a member of Ellipses Slam Poetry, Princeton's oldest slam poetry group. She is a former Fellow for the Carl A. Fields Center as well as a former Dialogue and Differences in Action Orientation leader, and she has also worked as a Research Associate in Prof. Ruha Benjamin's Just Data Lab. After graduating, she hopes to pursue a graduate degree in African American Studies and continue to contribute to scholarly work in the field.

Senior Thesis

“Getting the Dreamhouse: Logics of Domination in Post 9/11 Romantic Comedy”

Adviser: Naomi Murakawa
Ché C. Rogers
Tacoma, Washington

Ché Rogers was drawn to the AAS Department because of its ability to be applied to all aspects of society, whether it be cultural, political, health related, etc. He was a member of the varsity football team and was also an athletic liaison for the Princeton Black Men’s Association. Ché is looking to pair his passions to be of service, with his interests in health and wellness by sharing knowledge and information around being health conscious and more self sufficient when it comes to food production. He wants to empower the Black community in many ways, and feels that this may be an avenue where he can have the biggest impact. He has enjoyed the various perspectives that he has been exposed to in the AAS courses at Princeton and is excited to use them to envision new ways to share his passions and resources with the world. His mix of spirituality and passion for people is the source of his drive to empower others. Ché hopes to be a social entrepreneur post graduation.

Senior Thesis
“Food as Freedom and Oppression: The Role of Food in African American’s Lives and its Effects on Health”
Adviser: Chika O. Okeke-Agulu
Daisy Torres

Queens, New York

Daisy Torres entered Princeton intending to study at the School of Public and International Affairs, though eventually choosing AAS for its dedication to fighting racial injustice on our campus and in our country. Growing up in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood, Daisy recognized the lack of inclusivity and equity in the education, employment, and health sectors of NYC. While taking Professor Ruha Benjamin's class, “Race is Socially Constructed, Now What,” Daisy wrote her first paper on residential segregation and its detrimental effects on the NYC public education system. With her AAS degree, Daisy plans to advocate for the end of nationwide school policing.

Daisy is passionate about connecting low-income, Black and brown families in NYC to fair legal representation. She believes this starts with calling out policing institutions that prevent families from feeling safe in their neighborhoods. At Princeton, she was a co-director for Princeton Students for Immigrant Empowerment, a SHARE Peer, and a former DDA (Difference and Dialogue in Action) Orientation Leader. Over the summer, Daisy was a Legislative Fellow at the Office of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. As an Arthur J. Liman Public Interest Fellow, she interned with Safe Passage Project, a legal organization dedicated to representing refugee children in NYC. She has also interned with the ACLU’s National Prison Project, where she provided campaign and litigation support to incarcerated individuals amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior Thesis

“Who is Protecting the Students?: How NYC Public Schools Empower Policing Systems”

Adviser: Naomi Murakawa
Fedjine Victor

Hamilton, New Jersey

Fedjine Mitchelle Victor is a member of the Class of 2022 from Hamilton, New Jersey. She concentrated in the Department of African American Studies with a certificate in Values and Public Life. Descending from the Caribbean island of Haiti, Fedjine found that the AAS Department allowed her to explore her Blackness through an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning.

With a passion for belonging and inclusion, Fedjine hopes to create, design, and imagine spaces where all can feel at home. With these spaces, she hopes to foster an inclusive, uplifting environment modeling that of OHM and The Standard. She was drawn to the AAS Department as a concentrator after taking “Media, Sex, and the Racialized Body,” taught by Professor Dannelle Gutarra Cordero

Senior Thesis

“Anger as a Spark: An Investigation of Anger as a Radical Act of Love for Black Women at PWIs”

Adviser: Anna Arabindan-Kesson
Priya Vulchi
Princeton, New Jersey

Priya Vulchi is a member of the Class of 2022 and concentrated in African American Studies with a certificate in Cognitive Science. At Princeton, her research focused on political friendship—combining political theory, moral philosophy, history, and sociology to investigate how friendship can be a site of resistance. Previously, her junior year independent research focused on the climate crisis: she made a case for why “climate colonialism” is a more efficacious name, especially for centering the crisis’ context of racial capitalism, and for highlighting its disproportionate impact on people of color globally.

Priya is also the Co-Founder of a non-profit, CHOOSE (chooseorg.org), which aims to equip K-12 schools with the tools for racial literacy. For her work, she was named one of Teen Vogue’s “21 Under 21 Young People Changing the World.” Her first co-written racial literacy textbook, “The Classroom Index” (2016), was funded by the Department of African American Studies with a foreword by Professor Ruha Benjamin. With continued support from the Department, after high school, Priya fundraised and took a gap year with her co-founder to travel to all 50 states, interviewing 500 people for their stories about race. Those stories are featured in her latest book, “Tell Me Who You Are” (Penguin Random House, 2019).

Outside of her academic and non-profit work, Priya was a Residential College Advisor in Mathey College, a Carl A. Fields Center Fellow, and active in the Pace Center for Civic Engagement.

Senior Thesis

“Friendship as Liberatory Practice”

Adviser: Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.
AAS Undergraduate Reflection

The Experience of Julia Chaffers ‘22

The African American Studies department profoundly shaped my time at Princeton. As a prospective student, sitting in on lectures and meeting the professors and students I would learn alongside convinced me that Princeton was the place for me. Even from those brief encounters, I could feel the strength of the intellectual community here. As I look back on my four years at Princeton, the experiences I had as a certificate student within the AAS department both inside and outside the classroom made me the scholar and person I am today.

The diversity of courses I encountered, from Professor Glaude’s “Philosophy of Race” to Professor Guild’s course on global Black freedom movements around the world, introduced me to new material and new ways of thinking about race. Reading novels alongside historical sources in Professor Goldthre’s “Modern Caribbean History” showed me how fiction can fill in gaps in the historical record and complicate how we think about the past. The skills in literary analysis and close reading I gained in Professor Nishikawa’s class on African American literature since the Harlem Renaissance influenced the way I analyzed historical sources in my independent research, giving me an eye towards the significance of language and narrative.

The questions about race, power, and historical memory that we probed in my AAS classes became the focus of my independent work in the History department. I worked with Professor Guild for my spring junior paper uncovering the history behind a Confederate mascot at a high school near my hometown in Massachusetts. My senior thesis built on this research, studying two additional high schools in Colorado and Vermont that also had Confederate mascots. Throughout my junior spring, Professor Guild zoomed with me weekly to discuss my work. This was just one of many examples of how my AAS professors and preceptors worked to keep students engaged in coursework during the pandemic, from virtual office hours to interactive precepts. The AAS department’s dedication to helping students through the challenges of the pandemic was significant during a difficult time.

What makes AAS special goes beyond the classroom as well. During my sophomore and junior years, I worked in the department’s communications office helping write department newsletters and manage the website. Over this time, I came to more deeply appreciate the strength of community here. Whether in Stanhope or now Morrison Hall, the AAS community is unlike any other academic environment I found at Princeton. Working in the department gave me the opportunity to see the accomplishments of faculty and students every day and appreciate the collective work within the department to analyze societal inequities and push us to imagine a more just world. It was a joy to spend those hours reading and amplifying the work of this collection of scholars. I also had the opportunity to write essays for the department website. As a student journalist, it was very meaningful to have the space to write for a public audience.

My AAS experiences also inspired the next step in my academic journey. In September I will move to England for two years of graduate study as a Marshall Scholar. While I focused on American history while at Princeton, my AAS courses encouraged me to think globally about how race and racism structure our societies. I now have the opportunity to continue exploring history within a global context.

The African American Studies department, as a collection of scholars and a collection of people, is unique at Princeton in its care for students and approach to study. I will carry my experiences in AAS with me as I strive to use scholarship to help build a better world.
2022 Senior Prizes

Ruth J. Simmons Thesis Prize
This prize is awarded to the African American Studies senior whose thesis best exhibits excellence in research and writing within the field of African American Studies. Ruth J. Simmons, Prairie View A&M University President, President Emerita of Brown University, and an honorary member of the Department of African American Studies Advisory Council, generously endowed the prize.

Priya Vulchi '22

The Badi Foster Distinguished Senior Prize in African American Studies
Awarded annually to the senior concentrator who has distinguished his or herself academically as well as beyond the classroom, reflecting a commitment to the intellectual, political, and artistic traditions in African American Studies.

Fedjine Victor '22

Outstanding Junior Paper in African American Studies Prize
This prize is awarded to the senior who submitted the most outstanding Junior Paper.

Brooke Johnson '22
Study Abroad Opportunities

Students in the Department have the opportunity to study abroad in programs related to African American Studies for a semester (fall or spring), a full year, or a summer. The Department recommends programs students may enjoy, but there are no restrictions on eligible programs.
AAS Undergraduate Funding Opportunities

Concentrators who require research funding for independent work may apply to the Department of African American Studies for support. Students must provide a full account of their research proposal and a detailed itemized budget. If travel is desired, students must submit a planned itinerary.

**Junior Paper Research Funding**
To assist concentrators in building expertise and a library, the Department of African American Studies provides AAS concentrators funding for books that are essential to their junior independent work.

**Senior Thesis Research Funding**
The Department of African American Studies (AAS) offers Senior Thesis research grants to Princeton students who plan to research in a subject for their Senior Thesis related to the field of African American Studies.

**Concentrators Conference Funding**
This opportunity provides funds to AAS Concentrators to attend relevant academic conferences.

**Summer Research Funding**
Summer awards provide financial support to enable our students to pursue worthy projects that provide important opportunities for research and/or personal growth, foster independence, creativity, and leadership skills, and broaden or deepen their understanding of the subject matter within the field.
Graduate Studies Program in AAS

The Graduate Studies program in African American Studies provides an opportunity for students to complement doctoral studies in their home department with coordinated interdisciplinary training in African American Studies. Students entering the program may come from any department in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Graduate engagement with the Department is not limited to students pursuing requirements of the certificate. Participation in the Faculty-Graduate Seminar, with its annually rotating focus area, is open to all Princeton graduate students seeking to engage in the intellectual community of the Department. Recent seminar topics include “Black Studies in the Digital Age,” “Sexuality in African American Communities and Cultures,” “Black Studies and Biopolitics,” “African/American Diasporic Literature” and “The Politics of Black Families and Intimacies.” The Department also sponsors programming and events throughout the academic year for graduate students at all stages.
Program Requirements

Students wishing to obtain a Graduate Certificate in African American Studies are encouraged to consult, ideally during their first year, with their home department to plan their course of study. Interested students provide an application of their interest to the Department and must complete all requirements listed below.

Earning the Graduate Certificate

The graduate course of study is determined by the graduate student’s home department adviser in consultation with the Curriculum Committee in the Department of African American Studies. Certificate requirements include completion of AAS 500 “African American Intellectual Tradition” and two other courses in the Humanities or Social Sciences:

   a) Whose contents are judged to be devoted primarily to race; or
   b) for which they write research papers devoted to race; or
   c) which are independent study topics tailored to the student’s interests in race.
AAS Faculty-Graduate Seminar

The Faculty-Graduate Seminar is an intimate intellectual community that comes together to discuss work in progress around a common theme across a wide range of disciplines. Our goal is to establish a small but intellectually diverse and committed group of scholars who will attend all meetings and engage in sustained discourse during the year. Each meeting lasts one hour and twenty minutes followed by dinner. Given these goals and the limited meeting space, we accept only twelve (12) graduate students into each semester’s seminar. We encourage graduate students to commit to both semesters, and preference for spring registration is given to students engaged in the fall seminar. Participation in the African American Studies’ Faculty-Graduate Seminar for one academic year or the equivalent (two semesters) fulfills one of the requirements for the AAS Graduate Certificate.

AY22 Topic

Plantation Effects: Visual Ecologies of Race, Place and Labor

Prof. Anna Arabindan-Kesson — Faculty Convener
Shelby Sinclair — Graduate Student Convener

This seminar examines the multiple iterations of the plantation, and to draw from Katherine McKittrick, the kinds of futures it brings forth for us now. The plantation might be, to paraphrase Krista Thompson and Huey Copeland an “afrotrope” – a “recurrent visual form” that has played a key role in the formation of Black Diaspora identity and culture. We will consider its various representational formats, along with its various lives, and afterlives. As an ecological, material and economic intervention in the landscape, the plantation is a site of labor and knowledge production. It is both a form of enclosure and an extremely mobile form, a space where human and commodity flows converged, and an ecology formed through interspecies interaction. By considering these histories of the plantation – an ideological and spatial apparatus – we will think through its implications for practices of labor, experiences of the natural world, the organization of vision and constructions of freedom as they have been formulated in African American Studies. Furthermore, across the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans, the plantation remains a site where alternative constructions of freedom and otherworldly economies of knowledge, resilience and resistance formed.
AY22 Guest Speakers

Fall 2021

SEPTEMBER 28
Dr. Charmaine Nelson, NSCAD University

OCTOBER 12
Dr. JT Roane, Arizona University

OCTOBER 26
Dr. Andil Gosine, York University

NOVEMBER 16
Dr. Sarah Haley, University of California, Los Angeles

DECEMBER 7
Jasmine Togo-Brisby, Artist and Imelda Miller, Curator

Spring 2022

FEBRUARY 1
Dr. Rana Hogarth, Illinois University

FEBRUARY 15
Dr. Dana Byrd, Bowdoin University

MARCH 1
Dr. Mythri Jegathesan, Santa Clara University

MARCH 15
Dr. Krista Thompson, Northwestern University

MARCH 29
Dr. Tao Leigh Goffe, Cornell University

APRIL 12
Professor Deborah Thomas, University of Pennsylvania
Annalee Davis, Artist
African American Studies is an intellectual and political community unmatched by any other at Princeton.

I feel incredibly lucky to have been welcomed into it as a historian of science finding my way toward a project that harmonizes the critiques and methods I’ve learned (and am always learning) with the sort of change I want to see within and outside of the academy. From the faculty-graduate workshop to coursework to mentoring to podcasting, participating in Department life has sustained me throughout the hardest years of graduate school.

Yet, as with most good history, none of it was inevitable. I’m hardly alone among graduate students who have found themselves shaken from self-satisfaction with merely academic pursuits by the events of the last decade, from the rise of Black Lives Matter to the revanchism that brought Donald Trump to power. Professor Naomi Murakawa’s 2018-19 Faculty-Graduate Seminar, “Surveilling Blackness: Race and the Maximum-Security Society,” was exactly the call I was looking for. The series was a combination of the familiar—scholars like Khalil Gibran Muhammad and Virginia Eubanks, who have done foundational work on carceral history and the politics of automation—and the strange (to me) world of prison and police abolition through the eyes of influential activists like Hamid Khan and Mariame Kaba. These wide-ranging discussions shaped my political convictions *and* analytical toolkit, honed further through additional coursework toward the AAS Graduate Certificate.

My dissertation, “Justice in Numbers,” continues these conversations by telling the story of how civil rights lawyers and activists have mobilized statistics and what we might call “data science” in service of racial justice since the 1960s. By highlighting clashes between the pursuit of objectivity and justice, this history offers lessons for efforts to combat algorithmic bias in fields like biomedicine and criminal justice today. Above all, engaging with exciting scholarship in Black studies has helped me to better conceptualize the enduring tension between the oppressive and liberatory uses of science and technology. As I look toward the next stage of my career, I am interested in any role—from academia to policy and pretty much anywhere else—that will allow me to advocate for the interests and epistemologies of communities too often excluded from deliberation among so-called experts.

Equally important to my intellectual journey have been my work as both a Junior Paper and Senior Thesis mentor, and as Associate Producer for the revamped AAS Podcast. As a former Princeton Writing Center Fellow, it is a privilege to work with students over the course of an entire project. My mentees consistently helped remind me why I do what I do, even in the worst depths of COVID isolation. Collaborating on the podcast with Elio Lleo and Anthony Gibbons, as well as hosts Mélena Laudig, Ebun Ajayi, and Collin Riggins, provided me with the chance to explore the nexus of scholarship and public engagement. Above all, they reminded me how much I love being part of a team.

From Stanhope to Zoom™land to Morrison, the faculty, staff, and students in Princeton’s Department of African American Studies have provided the kind of home I didn’t even know I needed. Going forward, I will strive to honor their generosity of mind and spirit wherever this winding academic path leads.
Featured Events and Programs

The Department of African American Studies offered a wide variety of virtual events and programs during the 2021-2022 academic year. Through these thought-provoking topics and bold speakers, we aimed to educate and empower students, the Princeton campus, and our local community.

AUGUST 11 & 18
Virtual Academic Expo

OCTOBER 5, 2021
Just Data Lab Event: Mimi Onouha Artist Talk

OCTOBER 12, 2021
Just Data Lab Event: Nettrice Gaskins’ Virtual Book Panel

DECEMBER 1, 2021
AAS Speaker Series “Accounting for Inequality”

DECEMBER 2, 2021
Undergraduate Board of Advisors (UBA) Dinner

JANUARY 11, 2022
Sarah Bloom in Conversation with Imani Perry

JANUARY 21, 2022
Unexpected Conversations with Eddie S. Glaude Jr., Joe Scarbough and Mika Brzezinski

JANUARY 18, 2022
Virtual Certificate Expo

JANUARY 18, 2022
Graduate Affairs “Writing Freedom: Everything You Want to Know About Turning Your Dissertation into a Book”

JANUARY 19, 2022
AAS Speaker Series “Queering Black Studies”

MARCH 2, 2022
Postdoctoral Research Associate Lecture “U.S. Empire, Counterrevolution, and the Racial Bonds of Liberalism and Fascism” with Navid Farnia

MARCH 16, 2022
Undergraduate Board of Advisors (UBA) Dinner

MARCH 18, 2022
Sophomore Open House

MARCH 23, 2022
Virtual Reflections on AAS with Hazel Carby “Silos, Silences, Solidarities and the (Im)possibilities of Thinking Pasts/Futures Otherwise”

APRIL 12 & 19
Princeton Preview

APRIL 27, 2022
New Concentrator Luncheon

APRIL 28, 2022

MAY 20, 2022
AAS Mix and Mingle Reunions Reception

MAY 23, 2022
AAS Class Day and Reception
AAS 2022 CLASS DAY AND RECEPTION

This year, the Department proudly graduated 10 Concentrators and 38 Undergraduate Certificate Students in African American Studies.
Our Faculty

The Department holds many of the most prolific and notable African American Studies scholars in the world.

### Core Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna Arabindan-Kesson</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy L. Belcher</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruha Benjamin</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace D. Best</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie S. Glaude Jr.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reena N. Goldthree</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua B. Guild</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tera W. Hunter</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naomi Murakawa</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinohi Nishikawa</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chika O. Okeke-Agulu</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imani Perry</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn M. Womack</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anna Arabindan-Kesson
Associate Professor, Department of Art and Archaeology and Department of African American Studies

Professor Anna Arabindan-Kesson is an Associate Professor of African American and Black Diasporic art with a joint appointment in the Department of Art and Archaeology. Born in Sri Lanka, she completed undergraduate degrees in New Zealand and Australia, and worked as a Registered Nurse in the UK before completing her Ph.D. in African American Studies and Art History at Yale University.

Professor Arabindan-Kesson’s research and teaching focus on Black Diaspora Art, with an emphasis on histories of race, empire, and medicine in the long 19th century. She also has interests in British, South Asian and Australian art. Her first book “Black Bodies, White Gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World,” is available from Duke University Press. She is also writing a book, supported by an ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowship, with Professor Mia Bagneris (Tulane University) called “Beyond Recovery: Reframing the Dialogues of Nineteenth-Century Black Diaspora Art.” Her second monograph is called “An Empire State of Mind: Plantation Imaginaries, Colonial Medicine and Ways of Seeing.” She is the director of Art Hx, a digital humanities project and object database that addresses the intersections of art, race and medicine in the British empire. She is currently a Visiting Fellow in the Center for the Study of Social Difference at Columbia University and a 2021 Center for Digital Humanities Data Fellow at Princeton University. Professor Arabindan-Kesson is a board member of several arts organisations, continues to curate exhibitions and works closely with contemporary artists internationally.

In her teaching, Professor Arabindan-Kesson is committed to expanding and amplifying the spaces, and narratives, of art history. Her courses include survey classes on African American and Caribbean Art, and more specialized undergraduate and graduate seminars such as “Seeing to Remember: Representing Slavery Across the Black Atlantic and Art of the British Empire” and “Pathologies of Difference: Art, Race and Medicine in the British Empire.”
Wendy L. Belcher
Professor, Department of Comparative Literature and Department of African American Studies

Professor Wendy Laura Belcher is Professor of African literature with a joint appointment in the Department for African American Studies and the Department of Comparative Literature. Working at the intersection of diaspora, postcolonial, medieval, and early modern studies, she has a special interest in the literatures of Ethiopia and Ghana and is working to bring attention to early African literature (written between 1300 and 1900), particularly that in African languages, through her research and translation.


These scholarly interests emerge from her life experiences growing up in East and West Africa, where she became fascinated with the richness of Ghanaian and Ethiopian intellectual traditions.

Her teaching focuses on how non-Western literature has participated in a global traffic in invention, pairing texts across national and continental boundaries in order to debunk stereotypes of Africans as peoples without history, texts, or influence until the 1950s.
Ruha Benjamin

Professor & Director of Graduate Affairs (DGA),
Department of African American Studies

Ruha Benjamin specializes in the interdisciplinary study of science, medicine, and technology; race-ethnicity and gender; knowledge and power. She is the author of “People’s Science: Bodies and Rights on the Stem Cell Frontier” (Stanford University Press, 2013), “Race After Technology” (Polity, 2019), and editor of “Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life” (Duke University Press, 2019), as well as numerous articles and book chapters.

Professor Benjamin received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Anthropology from Spelman College, Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology from UC Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral fellowships at UCLA’s Institute for Society and Genetics and Harvard University’s Science, Technology, and Society Program. She has been awarded fellowships and grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, and Institute for Advanced Study. In 2017, she received the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching at Princeton, and she was selected as one of the first Freedom Scholars.
Wallace D. Best

Hughes Rogers Professor, Department of Religion and Department of African American Studies
Director, Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies

Wallace D. Best specializes in 19th and 20th century African American religious history. His research and teaching focus on the areas of African American religion, religion and literature, Pentecostalism, and Womanist theology. He has held fellowships at Princeton's Center for the Study of Religion and the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University.

One of the nation’s most prominent scholars, Dr. Eddie S. Glaude Jr., is a passionate educator, author, political commentator, and public intellectual who examines the complex dynamics of the American experience. His writings, including “Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul” (Crown, 2016), “In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America” (University of Chicago Press, 2007), and his most recent, the New York Times bestseller, “Begin Again: James Baldwin’s America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own” (Crown, 2020), takes an exhaustive look at Black communities, the difficulties of race in the United States and the challenges we face as a democracy. Of Baldwin, Glaude writes, “Baldwin’s writing does not bear witness to the glory of America. It reveals the country’s sins and the illusion of innocence that blinds us to the reality of others. Baldwin’s vision requires a confrontation with our history (with slavery, Jim Crow segregation, with whiteness) to overcome its hold on us. Not to posit the greatness of America, but to establish the ground upon which to imagine the country anew.”

Glaude is the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor and Chair of the Department of African American Studies, a program he first became involved with shaping as a doctoral candidate in Religion at Princeton. He is also on the Morehouse College Board of Trustees. He frequently appears in the media, as a columnist for TIME Magazine and as an MSNBC contributor on programs like Morning Joe and Deadline Whitehouse with Nicolle Wallace. He also regularly appears on Meet the Press on Sundays. Combining a scholar’s knowledge of history, a political commentator’s take on the latest events, and an activist’s passion for social justice, Glaude challenges all of us to examine our collective American conscience.
Reena N. Goldthree
Assistant Professor, Department of African American Studies

Reena Goldthree specializes in the history of Latin America and the Caribbean. Her research and teaching focus on social movements; political theory; labor and migration; and Caribbean feminisms. She earned her bachelor’s degree in History-Sociology (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa) from Columbia University and her master’s degree and doctoral degree in History from Duke University. Her current book project, “Democracy Shall be no Empty Romance: War and the Politics of Empire in the Greater Caribbean,” examines how the crisis of World War I transformed Afro-Caribbeans’ understanding of, and engagements with, the British Empire.

Beyond the book manuscript, her work has appeared in The Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History, Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas, The American Historian, and Radical Teacher. She is the co-editor of a special issue of the Caribbean Review “Gender Studies” (December 2018). She has also published essays in “New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition” (Northwestern University Press, 2018), “Caribbean Military Encounters” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), and “Global Circuits of Blackness: Interrogating the African Diasporas” (University of Illinois Press, 2010). Her research has been supported by fellowships and grants from the American Historical Association, Coordinating Council for Women in History, Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Social Science Research Council, and Fulbright.

Professor Goldthree is an Associated Faculty Member in the Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies and in the Program in Latin American Studies (PLAS).
Joshua B. Guild

Associate Professor, Department of History and Department of African American Studies

Joshua Guild specializes in 20th century African American social and cultural history, urban history, and the making of the modern African Diaspora, with particular interests in migration, Black internationalism, Black popular music, and the Black radical tradition. A graduate of Wesleyan University, where he was a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, he received his doctoral degree in History and African American Studies from Yale. His research has been supported by fellowships and awards from a number of institutions, including the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and Harvard University’s Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History. In 2012, he was a fellow at Harvard’s W.E.B. Du Bois Institute of African and African American Research.

Guild is currently completing his book, “In the Shadows of the Metropolis: Cultural Politics and Black Communities in Postwar New York and London,” which will be published by Oxford University Press. The book examines African American and Afro-Caribbean migration and community formation in central Brooklyn and west London from the 1930s through the 1970s. He has published essays on topics ranging from the pioneering Brooklyn politician Shirley Chisholm, the politics of calypso in the age of decolonization and civil rights, and Black Power in diasporic perspective. His next book project, tentatively entitled “The City Lives in You: The Black Freedom Struggle and the Futures of New Orleans”, will focus on struggles for racial and economic justice in New Orleans from the mid 20th century Black freedom movement through the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil disaster. Professor Guild’s interests in digital humanities, new media, and public engagement are reflected in the 2014-15 African American Studies Faculty-Graduate Seminar that he organized, “Black Studies in the Digital Age.” He serves on the Executive Committee of Princeton’s Center for Digital Humanities. He is also an Associated Faculty member in the Program in Urban Studies.
Tera W. Hunter

Edwards Professor of American History, Department of History and Department of African American Studies

Tera W. Hunter is Professor of History and African American Studies at Princeton University. She is a scholar of labor, gender, race, and Southern history.

A native of Miami, Professor Hunter attended Duke University where she graduated with distinction in History. She received a MPhil in History from Yale University and a doctoral degree from Yale. Professor Hunter previously taught at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She joined Princeton faculty in the fall of 2007.


Professor Hunter is also co-authoring “The Making of People: A History of African Americans” with Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis under contract with W. W. Norton Press.
Naomi Murakawa is an associate professor of African American Studies at Princeton University. She studies the reproduction of racial inequality in 20th and 21st century American politics, with specialization in crime policy and the carceral state. She is the author of “The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America” (Oxford University Press, 2014), and her work has appeared in Law & Society Review, Theoretical Criminology, Du Bois Review, and several edited volumes. She has received fellowships from Columbia Law School’s Center for the Study of Law and Culture, as well as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Health Policy Research Program.

Prior to joining African American Studies at Princeton, she taught in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington. Professor Murakawa received her bachelor’s degree in women’s studies from Columbia University, her master’s degree in social policy from the London School of Economics, and her doctoral degree in political science from Yale University.
Kinohi Nishikawa

Associate Professor, Department of English and Department of African American Studies

Professor Nishikawa specializes in 20th century African American literature, book history, and popular culture. He earned his bachelor’s degree in English from Dartmouth College and his doctoral degree in Literature from Duke University. Nishikawa teaches courses on African American humor, African American authors and Afro-Asian studies.


Chika O. Okeke-Agulu

Professor, Department of Art and Archaeology and Department of African American Studies

Director, Program in African Studies


Okeke-Agulu serves on the board of directors of College Art Association, the advisory board of the Center for the Study of Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, the executive board of Princeton in Africa, and editorial board of African Studies Review.
Imani Perry

Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies, Department of African American Studies

The Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies and faculty associate in the Program in Law and Public Affairs and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Princeton, Perry has written and taught on a number of topics regarding race and African American culture. Using methods of discussion and analysis from various fields of study—including law, literary and cultural studies, music, and the social sciences—Perry’s work often focuses on multifaceted issues such as the influence of race on law, literature and music.


Perry received a bachelor’s degree from Yale University. From there, she went on to obtain a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School and a doctoral degree in the history of American civilization from Harvard University.
Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
Professor, Department of African American Studies

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor is the author of “From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation” (Haymarket Books, 2016), an examination of the history and politics of Black America and the development of the social movement Black Lives Matter in response to police violence in the United States. Taylor has received the Lannan Foundation’s Cultural Freedom Award for an Especially Notable Book. She was also selected as one of the first Freedom Scholars.


Taylor’s research examines race and public policy including American housing policies. Professor Taylor’s most recent book titled “Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership” (The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), looks at the federal government’s promotion of single-family homeownership in Black communities after the urban rebellions of the 1960s. Taylor looks at how the federal government’s turn to market-based solutions in its low-income housing programs in the 1970s impacted Black neighborhoods, Black women on welfare, and emergent discourses on the urban “underclass.” Taylor is interested in the role of private sector forces, typically hidden in public policy making and execution, in the “urban crisis” of the 1970s.

Taylor’s research has been supported, in part, by a multiyear Northwestern University Presidential Fellowship, the Ford Foundation, and the Lannan Foundation. Taylor was the Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2013-2014. Taylor received her doctoral degree from the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University in 2013.
Autumn M. Womack

Assistant Professor, Department of African American Studies and Department of English

Professor Womack specializes in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century African American literature, with a particular research and teaching focus on the intersection of visual technology, race, and literary culture. She earned her doctoral degree in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University, and from 2015-2016, she was a postdoctoral fellow in Rutgers University’s Department of English. Most recently, Professor Womack was a 2016-2017 faculty fellow at Penn State University’s Center for the History of Information (CHI).


Like her research, Professor Womack’s teaching is interdisciplinary in its scope. In addition to regularly teaching courses in the area of 19th century African American literary culture, she has taught and developed courses on race and visual culture, literature and surveillance, as well as a single author course on Toni Morrison.
“Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within.”

– Ruha Benjamin
Professor
Associated Faculty

Dannelle Gutarra-Cordero
Lecturer, Department of African American Studies

Jacob S. Dlamini
Assistant Professor, Department of History

Paul Frymer
Professor, Department of Politics

Hanna Garth
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology

Simon Gikandi
Robert Schirmer Professor, Department of English

William A. Gleason
Hughes-Rogers Professor, Department of English

Dan-El Padilla Peralta
Associate Professor of Classics, Department of Classics

Laurence Ralph
Professor of Anthropology and Director of Center on Transnational Policing, Department of Anthropology
J. Nicole Shelton  
*Stuart Professor, Department of Psychology*

Stacey A. Sinclair  
*Professor, Department of Psychology and School of Public and International Affairs*

Keith A. Wailoo  
*Henry Putnam University Professor, Department of History and Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and Chair, Department of History*

Leonard Wantchekon  
*Professor of Department of Politics*

Judith Weisenfeld  
*Agate Brown and George L. Collard Professor, Department of Religion*

Frederick Wherry  
*Professor of Sociology and Director of the Dignity and Debt Network, Department of Sociology*
Faculty Emeritus

Kwame Anthony Appiah
Laurance S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy and the University Center for Human Values, Emeritus.

Toni Morrison
Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities, Emerita
In Memoriam (1931 - 2019)

Nell Painter
Edwards Professor of American History, Emeritus

Albert Raboteau
Henry Putnam Professor of Religion, Emerita
In Memoriam (1943 - 2021)

Valerie Smith
Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature, Emeritus. Professor of English and African American Studies, Emeritus

Claudia Tate
Professor of English and African American Studies
In Memoriam (1946 - 2002)

Howard Taylor
Professor of Sociology, Emeritus

Cornel West
Class of 1943 University Professor in the Center for African American Studies, Emeritus
Visiting Faculty

Navid Farnia
Postdoctoral Research Associate, Term 2021-2022

Navid Farnia obtained a Ph.D. in African American and African Studies from Ohio State University in 2019. His research broadly explores the relationship between racial oppression in the United States and U.S. imperialism. Farina’s book manuscript, “National Liberation in an Imperialist World: Race and the Modern U.S. National Security State,” traces the national security state’s evolution by examining how U.S. officials responded to national liberation movements at home and abroad between 1959 and 1980. The book looks at several cases, including the Cuban Revolution, the 1960s Black urban rebellions, the Vietnam War, the Black Panther Party, and Zimbabwe’s independence struggle. In doing so, it highlights the interrelated strategies the U.S. used to export racial oppression while simultaneously importing the violent machinations of its global empire. Ultimately, the project makes sense of the national security state’s historical evolution by illuminating how the strategies and tactics used against liberation movements triggered modern forms of policing and warfare. These strategies and tactics culminated in the national security state’s present configuration.

Navid joined Princeton from Wake Forest University, where he taught in the Department of History. He has taught courses on African American, African, U.S., and Atlantic history. His past courses include the “Civil Rights and Black Power Movements,” “Contemporary America,” “U.S. Interventions in the Long Twentieth Century,” and “Race, Policing, and Warfare,” among others. In addition to Wake Forest, Navid has taught at Eastern Illinois University, Portland State University, and Ohio State. In December 2019, he organized an event at Eastern Illinois on the fiftieth anniversary of the assassinations of the Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. As part of the event, Stan McKinney and Henry Nesbitt, Panther members from the Party’s Illinois chapter, visited campus, shared their experiences with students, and spoke about Fred Hampton.
Philip V. McHarris

Presidential Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Term 2021-2023

Dr. Philip V. McHarris is a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at Princeton University in the Department of African American Studies and the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab. McHarris’ main areas of research include racial inequality, housing, and policing. His current research focuses on the experiences of residents of a high-rise public housing development in Brooklyn, NY as they navigate concerns surrounding safety, policing, building conditions, and cycles of poverty.

In another line of research, McHarris examines the causes and consequences of the large-scale expansion of policing in the United States since 1965 and the strategies that communities employ to challenge police expansion and end police violence. McHarris draws on qualitative and quantitative methods throughout his research.

McHarris completed his Ph.D. in Sociology and African American Studies at Yale University in 2021, and was a recipient of the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship and the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. He received his B.A. in Sociology from Boston College. In addition to his scholarly work, Philip has written for outlets that include The New York Times, Washington Post, Slate, The Guardian, MTV, and Nickelodeon. He has been featured on HBO, CNN, TIME, PBS, and other media outlets. In 2020, McHarris was selected as one of the Root 100 Most Influential African Americans.
Ayah Nuriddin has a Ph.D. in the History of Medicine from Johns Hopkins University. She also holds an M.A. in History and an MLS from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a B.A. in International Relations and History from American University. Her work examines how African Americans navigated questions of racial science, eugenics, and hereditarianism in relation to struggles for racial justice in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is also interested in how race and scientific racism shaped African American discourses and activism around health inequality.

While at Princeton, Nuriddin will be working on her book manuscript tentatively entitled “Seed and Soil: Black Eugenic Thought in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.” Building from her dissertation, the book manuscript will consider how slavery, emancipation, and empire shape discourses of race, health, and heredity. It examines the complex and often paradoxical ways in which African Americans imagined the utility of racial science and eugenics for challenging scientific racism and advocating for racial equality. It will also trace how the ongoing legacies of racial science continue to shape African American articulations of racial formation and health disparities.

Nuriddin’s research has been supported by the Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (CHSTM) and the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute (AGHI) at Johns Hopkins University. She was an inaugural inductee of the Johns Hopkins University chapter of the Edward Bouchet Graduate Honor Society. Her work has been published in Historical Studies of Natural Science, the Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, and The Lancet. She has appeared on the Disability History Association podcast and American History TV on C-Span.
FEBRUARY 24, 2022

When the Fro Talks, Listen
by Collin Riggins ’24, AAS Concentrator

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s). They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the Department of Africa American Studies or its personnel, faculty, and staff.

As a Black man, I am real particular about who I let touch my head. I reckon that is because for Black people, our hair has always spoken in well-oiled tongues.

On the plantation, plaited braids bound loc to loc. More, they connected Black bodies to a continent from which they had been pillaged. These heads cried out in throaty defiance against the suffocating conditions of slavery. By the dawn of the 20th century, chemicals seared our ancestors’ curls straight—a deed enforced by the imposing hand of Western beauty. Our flat hair questioned: how do we find space in a society supposedly free of shackles? Eventually, our hair would erect towards the heavens, transcending gravity with afros that exulted Black is beautiful. And damn beautiful at that.

If you pay attention, our hair is alive and composed of didactic material. History sprouts from our very scalps—an emblem of yesterday and harbinger of tomorrow.

This reality has framed my own relationship with hair throughout the past twenty years. I have transitioned from loose curls to buzzcuts, and then to fades etched with flashy designs. Throughout this evolution, I graduated from shoddy haircuts in the garage by my father to ones in a barber shop owned by a man nicknamed TL—someone I would come to trust with my head every other week. And man, he could cut.

Every transition marked an important development in my understanding of self. Just by peeping my hair, or lack thereof, one could understand what iteration of Collin lied below.

With a buzz, I found myself subconsciously suppressing my Blackness. My curls embodied something that I felt made me less. Hailing from the sea of whiteness that Missouri is, I simply wanted to reflect those who surrounded me. Nevertheless, as I became increasingly conscious of my identities, a close taper was my statement that I was Black and proud. My self-confidence became synonymous with the sharp lines in a clean fade.

However, when COVID-19 shut barber shops across the country down, all my progress in self discovery was lost. I was separated from TL who kept my head so fresh, and as a result, the style that gave me validation as a Black man.

During this isolating period, my hair quickly took on a life of its own. A summer of quarantine—the summer leading up to my freshman year of college—gave way to the most growth it had seen. So, by the time my (virtual) freshman year of college commenced, a baby afro adorned my little box on Zoom. For the first time, my hair refused to convey messages of perfection. Instead, in this new community, I was perceived as a dude with a fro: an image replete with connotations of its own. In a way, my head began speaking for itself. To my surprise, I came to fall in love with those connotations. No matter where I traveled, my hair refused...
to be silent. When I finally stepped on Princeton's campus for the first
time, eyes darted above my own, scanning all the texture that flourished
in spherical abundance. On a weekend trip to catch jazz at Minton's
Playhouse in Harlem, a shout of “young brother, you look good” called
out to me from the night. And, of course, when I made my long awaited
return home to Missouri, “let me put some clippers on that thang” rang
from the kitchen as my Grandpa wrestled with sizzling bacon on the
stove.

The responses always differed, but the message emanating from my
head remained constant. My hair was perfectly imperfect, and that
is precisely what I came to adore about it. It sprang in any and all
directions. The volume at which it spoke was the message. I was finally
comfortable in my hair, proud of its voice, and I would be damned if I let
anybody or anything mute it even slightly.

So, when the world started to open back up, I found myself facing a
dilemma. Do I reunite with TL and reclaim my former swagger? Or
instead, do I continue to let my hair speak under its own volition?

I ultimately chose the latter, afraid that going under clippers would erase
the growth atop my head and resultantly, in myself. That is until my
Grandpa heaved a deteriorating cardboard box before me one day that
teemed with relics of his past. Folded magazines, scrawled notes, past
bills that I pray were paid. Amidst its endless contents, out came an old
polaroid like a phoenix from the ash. Between its white borders, a smile
beamed at me, brandishing a fro bigger than my own. It was my Grandpa
in the flesh, circa pre-balding.

Although he had never cut a fro per se, I figured there was some validity
to his statement. After Lord knows how many years he spent in a
barber seat, having his hair sculpted to the melodious thrum of clippers,
hearsay, and laughter, you learn a thing or two. Just in my modest years
in TL's shop alone, I had come to anticipate his motions. I recognized
that when we reached certain points of my head, we were halfway done.
When I wanted just a smidge off the top, his lip would furl, eyes narrow,
and he would lightly trace the existing shape of my hair, pausing each
stroke to recalibrate.

The practice is art. If you spend enough time observing, you unconsciously
gather the faculties to begin producing. So, against my better judgment,
I conceded. Perched in a dining chair in my Grandpa's bathroom, I turned
my fro over to him for a shape up.

Within a matter of thirty minutes, the deed was done. As if it was he who
had maintained my hair all these years, a perfect orb graced my head.
My look was something reminiscent of “the olds days”—Grandpa's new
favorite talking point for the next week.

My time in that chair, albeit short, spoke for centuries of Black labor. My
Grandpa is one of millions of Black people who radically create beauty—
conjure art—with no other training than their lived experiences brought
about by Black identity. They are the conversations we have with elders
that prepare us to walk through life beyond the safety of our homes. They
are the hours in the kitchen that impart recipes full of enough seasoning
to flavor the Mississippi. It is the need to cultivate healthy hair against a
backdrop that demonizes it that pushes us to latently innovate, even at
the ripe age of 72.

“Still don’t think I can shape you up, son?” Grandpa chided, “I been
rocking fros longer than you been a thought.”

In 1964, a Canadian theorist named Marshall McLuhan coined the
concept: “the medium is the message” in reference to how the media
disseminated ideas. He aptly argued that the forms through which
media is presented convey a message of their own.

Reflecting on my hair today, I find that such a concept is easily
transposable. I used to think that my hairstyle at any given moment was
the only message worth sending to the world; if my fade was not clean,
and my lines were not crisp, I became anxious about what my head said
about me. Nobody but my barber every-other-week touched my head.
Yet, when the pandemic disrupted the normalcy of this maintenance,
forcing me to deeply reconsider how I cultivate that message, I realized
the intimate process through which my hairstyle was achieved was the
most beautiful message worth capturing.

I entrust my Grandpa, a maestro with no training other than lived experience, with my head because the intimate sharing of generational knowledge has and always will be germane to African-American culture. When Grandpa summons those clippers to life and makes art of my hair, I am a student, I am a son, I am a piece in a beautiful mosaic.

My hair whispers its history directly to me, and for now, that feels like enough.

NOVEMBER 30, 2021

Dannelle Gutarra Cordero on her first book, “She Is Weeping”

by Collin Riggins ’24, AAS Concentrator


As described by Cambridge University Press, Cordero’s research incorporates writers, cultural figures and intellectuals from antiquity to the present day to analyze how discourses on emotion serve to create and maintain White supremacy and racism. Professor Cordero’s timely work helps us understand how this racialization of emotion, dating back to the institution of American slavery, has perpetuated the oppression of Blackness into today.

To learn more about “She Is Weeping,” we asked Prof. Cordero a few questions:

First and foremost, what made you embark on this project?

My long-term research about the intellectual history of scientific racism during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century had shown me that scientific anti-Blackness has primarily strived to perpetrate emotional oppression in order to legitimize racialized enslavement and colonial exploitation. The persistence and vast repercussions of these racist discourses of differentiated emotions led me to further study the connections between institutional anti-Blackness and scientific intellectual production.

Could you briefly describe some of the key themes that arose in your research?

“She Is Weeping” first explores the impact of the ancient notion of “slavery to passions” and the medieval concept of “slavery to sin” on the global racialization of slavery. My book then analyzes how, due to these historical precedents, the intellectual history of scientific racism was primarily concerned with emotional criminalization, legitimizing racialized slavery and colonial exploitation in the Atlantic World. These anti-Black scientific discourses of “emotional difference” are essential to the perpetuation of racialized slavery and the expansion of the carceral State.

By publishing “She Is Weeping,” your first book, you have entered into a rich tradition of research into what it means to be Black in America. What are some previous works or thinkers that have influenced your process? What impact do you hope for your book to have within this tradition?

Throughout my research, I have been mostly inspired by the historical intellectual production of the enslaved. This influence is evidenced in the trigger warning of my book and in the way that I communicate my arguments about racialized enslavement. In other words, my priority became making sure that my book was at all times a safe space for the enslaved and descendants of the enslaved. Now, to be honest, I cannot personally imagine or visualize my book impacting the rich tradition of research in African American Studies because I have always felt insecure...
about my own writing and scholarship. I have the highest respect and admiration toward the scholarship of African American Studies, and, even after working on this research project for eight years, I cannot help but feel that my writing did not do the research topic justice.

Oftentimes in African American Studies we talk a lot about the ‘afterlife of slavery,’ which seeks to explain how the enslavement of African Americans continues to influence society. This makes studying the so-called historical institution of slavery integral to understanding contemporary systems of power. What can “She Is Weeping” reveal about America today?

In fact, the last chapter of “She Is Weeping” explores the racialization of emotions in contemporary racialized slavery. Therefore, my book argues that the institution of racialized enslavement persists and is still premised on emotional injustice. While the larger scope of the book is the Atlantic World, my book contextualizes how the expansion of the carceral landscapes of the United States is grounded on long-lived historical discourses of racialized emotional carcerality.

It is quite clear that African American Studies is an incredibly interdisciplinary field. That is evident in the simple fact that you teach in both the Department of African American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Could you explain how you drew from multiple disciplines in order to examine the racialization of emotion?

Indeed, my book engages with sources from multiple disciplines. It explores scientific/medical texts, philosophical treatises, literary works, films, jurisprudence, governmental reports, among other formats. Nonetheless, all sources are analyzed as primary sources of intellectual history through the lenses of both African American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies.

To read Professor Cordero’s first book, check out Cambridge University Press today!

---

**NOVEMBER 16, 2021**

**Historical Fiction Through the Lens of Black, Queer Love**

by Collin Riggins ’24, AAS Concentrator

An event recap of A Conversation with the Son of Baldwin hosted on November 11, 2021 at the Carl A. Fields Center.

On Thursday evening, author Robert Jones Jr. and African American Studies Professor Eddie S. Glaude Jr. sat down to discuss Jones’ new book, “The Prophets.” The material Jones traverses in his novel is formidable to say the least. Set on a slave plantation aptly referred to as “Empty,” two enslaved men named Isaiah and Samuel become unlikely lovers. And as their love faces resistance on the grounds of white supremacy, religion, and western constructions of gender and sexuality, they beautifully shake and transform the harmony of the plantation, nonetheless.

The evening began with a brief, yet moving, book reading by Jones. Pulling from the chapter “Amos,” he conveyed an integral theme of the novel: the tension between queer love and western doctrine. Jones noted that prior to the forced exodus of Africans from the continent, conceptions of gender and sexuality were drastically different than those today; without any categorization denominating so-called straightness and queerness, love is what defined relationships. However, in “Amos,” a character named Amos grapples with understanding Samuel and Isaiah’s deep desire for each other despite the dogmas of western manhood. “He knew it was wrong,” Amos broods. After all, heterosexual love “wasn’t just Christlike, that was sensible, right?” Nevertheless, he reaches a poignant conclusion: “They were bodies. They were in bodies. They just had no authority over theirs.”

Posing these searing questions for listeners to ponder, the audience was
left stunned. Soft hums of resonance and “amens” floated around the venue, culminating in a great round of applause that spoke to Jones’ ingenuity.

Following the book reading, Professor Glaude then took the stage to ask a few questions. Glaude did not waste any time getting into the thick of conversation. Right off the bat, he asked, “Who are your people?” to which Jones traced his genealogy, grounding his work in a tradition much bigger than himself. Jones reflected on how his earliest family had roots in Senegal until being uprooted and transported to England. Then, after the looming abolition of slavery, they were resultantly brought to America. However, one family member, Robert, did not survive the arduous journey. Jones explained that every man in his family thereafter has been named Robert to honor his legacy. To Jones, he not only embodies “his people” in blood, but also all the way down to his name.

Needless to say, the significance of the past, which is to say a collective black memory, seeps into the core of his work. In fact, it explains his reasoning for embarking on this project to begin with. To him, it only makes sense to pay homage to those who made him, a queer black man, being able to write “The Prophets” possible.

The conversation eventually pivoted to discuss some of his literary influences. Jones immediately pointed to the late writer, scholar, and Princeton Emeritus Professor Toni Morrison. With a passionate zeal, Jones spoke on his admiration for Morrison’s ability to take the English language and make it unequivocally black—or as he called it: “blacklish.” This influence rings abundantly true throughout “The Prophets.” As Glaude added, “There are echos of Morrison everywhere.”

Though beyond Morrison, he also mentioned the influence of James Baldwin and, above all, Black women writers in general. From Zora Neale Hurston to Octavia Butler to Ntozake Shange, Jones argued that the work of Black women authors does something that no other tradition has or can do: it speaks a truth that nobody wants to hear. That is precisely what drives Jones’ work and explains his courage to forge a genre of Black historical fiction that is centered in queerness beyond pervasive instances of sexual assault.

Glaude and Jones evidently could have talked until the crack of dawn. After assuring the audience that “this question is my last before opening the floor for Q&A”, Glaude could not seem to resist asking one more question, and then another, and then another. “I’m selfish”, he jokingly chided, to which Jones wittily responded, “He’s a Virgo.” This joyous dynamic that these two cultivated and maintained throughout the duration of the event spoke to them as thinkers, pioneers, and visionaries; just as Jones infused a raw, queer love into a plantation of terror, Glaude and Jones infused love and affection in their discussion of content inherently rooted in a history of pain.

To round out the discussion, Jones talked about what he wants his revolutionary work to do. Despite the complexity of The Prophet, his vision was simple. Jones wants folks to “stop creating artificial barriers to loving one another.” Moreover, he wants readers to understand the continuity of the systems of oppression that his work examines; just as there were mistresses, Jones remarked, “today we have Karens.” Both speak to the endless importance of “The Prophets”—a work that bears the potential to reconstruct ideas of what Black love has been, what Black love is, and what it will inevitably be. Indeed, it is bold, it is multidimensional, and it is queer.

To round out the evening, Jones fielded questions from the audience. After a series of generative exchanges about topics ranging from his religious upbringing to what makes him happy, Jones stuck around to sign and inscribe copies of “The Prophets”. It was only after everyone who wanted a signature got one that Jones left the Carl A. Fields Center.

It goes without saying, an indelible mark was left on the Princeton community following this fruitful discussion. And it is safe to say that Robert Jones was equally moved. As he would later post on his Instagram, “Speaking with Dr. Glaude was an absolute blessing...[s] hout out the Black students of Princeton who in addition to being super-
smart, are the epitome of grace and accomplishment against all odds.”

SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

Welcome to Morrison Hall

by Collin Riggins ’24, AAS Concentrator

As students and faculty enter another semester of learning, AAS looks forward to continuing the rich legacy of African American Studies at Princeton in Morrison Hall—the Department’s new home.

There is an all-encompassing feeling of newness around campus. Both fresh and familiar faces line the sidewalks as the Princeton community is welcomed back to in-person instruction. Classrooms teem with students eager to learn for the first time since the Spring of 2020. Melodious songs ring from under Blair Arch as student organizations have returned to modified programming. However, what may be most exciting for the Department of African American Studies this year is that we have found a new home.

Formerly based out of Stanhope Hall, the Department of African American Studies has transitioned its headquarters to Morrison Hall—a space named in honor of the late Toni Morrison. The name Morrison Hall alone bears great significance to the AAS Department. As an acclaimed writer, Morrison was the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. As a Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, she helped promote the arts and African American Studies by spearheading initiatives like the Princeton Atelier. Therefore, to be housed under a roof named after a Black woman whose legacy has, and continues to, influence Black life at Princeton is a monumental step forward for the Department of African American Studies.

Though beyond the symbolism of Morrison Hall, the space is more functional as well. Department Chair Eddie Glaude Jr. notes in his welcome letter to the Princeton community, “For the first time in the history of our department the majority of our faculty will be in one space.” This increased size brings greater potential for collaboration across faculty, students, and disciplines. In addition, Morrison Hall has been carefully fashioned to be an innovative hub for all things African American Studies.

However, despite being exceedingly eager to push the envelope for the future of AAS at Princeton, we are also excited to celebrate our rich history. Upon entering our space, visitors are met by an ever-growing collection of books that trace the tradition of African American Studies. In addition, the walls have been adorned by Black art and an archive of posters; the posters, taken from Stanhope Hall, beautifully capture the African diaspora. These furnishings make Morrison Hall a place that is both comforting and inspirational.

It goes without saying that we are so excited to begin welcoming students into our new home at Morrison Hall. There are so many fruitful conversations to be had, growth to foster, and knowledge to sow. Whether it is for a class or simply to see what African American Studies is about, we hope that you will stop by and partake in this momentous step forward with us!
By The Numbers

AY22 Facts & Figures

Some quick data points about the growing Department of African American Studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduating Concentrators and Certificate Students</th>
<th>AAS Courses</th>
<th>Declared Undergraduate Concentrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Followers</th>
<th>Website Page Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+17.2K</td>
<td>+250.9K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>