

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



DEPARTMENT OF
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
STUDIES

PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY

Letter from the Chair

June 25, 2021

We made it! This has been a difficult year. Although faculty and staff adjusted admirably to online instruction, over the course of the academic term our students evidenced the wear and tear of these Covid-days. No matter. We made it. And given the circumstances, AY 2020-2021 has been a remarkable year.

We graduated a class of 15 concentrators, and they were joined by twenty-one graduating seniors who completed a certificate in African American Studies. Like last year, we had five Ph.D. students who earned graduate certificates in the field. We are overjoyed by what

is fast becoming a robust graduate certificate program. This year we awarded the Ruth J. Simmons prize to Arianne Rowe for her thesis, "The Discourses of Blanqueamiento: A Multilateral Analysis of 19th Century Racial Ideologies in the Making of Modern Argentina." Her adviser, Reena Goldthree, described the project as "an unusually strong senior thesis" and recommended "that she think about publication." We also decided to award the Simmons Prize retroactively to Nathan Poland of the class of 2020 for his thesis. Kiara



Photo by Sameer A. Khan



Gilbert, recipient of the Marshall scholarship, was also recognized with our Badi Foster Distinguished Senior Prize.

One thousand and fifty-one students enrolled in our classes, representing a 4.37% increase. As we return to campus, our expectation is that this number will rise (although our leave patterns, as expected, continue to impact our numbers). Next year, the department will have ten senior concentrators. Six sophomores have also declared.

The faculty in African American Studies continue to distinguish themselves around the country. Imani Perry and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor received Guggenheim fellowships. Ruha Benjamin and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor were promoted to the rank of Full Professor and both were named among the first cohort of Freedom Scholars.

We are all anxious to return to campus, especially given our anticipated move to Morrison Hall in August. We are sad to leave Stanhope Hall, but the reality is that the majority of AAS faculty have been located elsewhere since our founding. Next year will mark an important shift. The majority of the faculty

will be in one building. This will allow us to deepen the ethos that has defined our unit.

This has been a difficult year. I am, and I know my colleagues are, exhausted. We all need a break and a bit of time to replenish. Despite the difficulty, I have witnessed the extraordinary dedication of my colleagues to our students and the tireless effort of our staff to ensure that we fulfill our mission. Again, we made it. Now we must prepare ourselves to return to campus—to our new home, Morrison Hall—and continue to write, to teach, and to be a transformative presence on campus and a national resource for the country.

Sincerely,

Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

Chair, Department of African American Studies,
James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor



Table of Contents

About the Department

Overview	Page 3
Our Staff	Page 4
Advisory Council	Page 5
Undergraduate Board of Advisers (UBA).....	Page 6
AAS Academic Committees.....	Page 7
Academic Courses.....	Page 9-10
Fall 2020 Courses.....	Page 9
Spring 2021 Courses.....	Page 10

AAS Undergraduate Studies

Overview	Page 11
Course of Study & Subfields.....	Page 12
Undergraduate Certificate Requirements.....	Page 14
Undergraduate Certificate Students	Page 15
Concentration Overview and Requirements.....	Page 17
2021 Concentrators.....	Page 21
2021 Senior Prizes & Winners.....	Page 37
Study Abroad Opportunities.....	Page 39

AAS Graduate Studies

Overview	Page 41
AAS Faculty-Graduate Seminar.....	Page 43
2021 Graduate Certificate Recipients.....	Page 45
Graduate Reflection.....	Page 47

Programming & Highlights

Overview	Page 51
Featured Events and Programs.....	Page 51
2021 Virtual Class Day	Page 52

AAS Faculty

Core Faculty.....	Page 53
Associated Faculty.....	Page 69
Faculty Emeritus	Page 71
Fellows & Visiting Faculty.....	Page 72

Newsroom Articles

100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre of 1921.....	Page 73
Not JUST Data.....	Page 74
Teaching With Collections: 'Reading Toni Morrison' in a Virtual World.....	Page 76

By The Numbers

2020-2021 Facts & Figures

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

36

Graduating Concentrators
and Certificate Students

25

AAS Courses

16

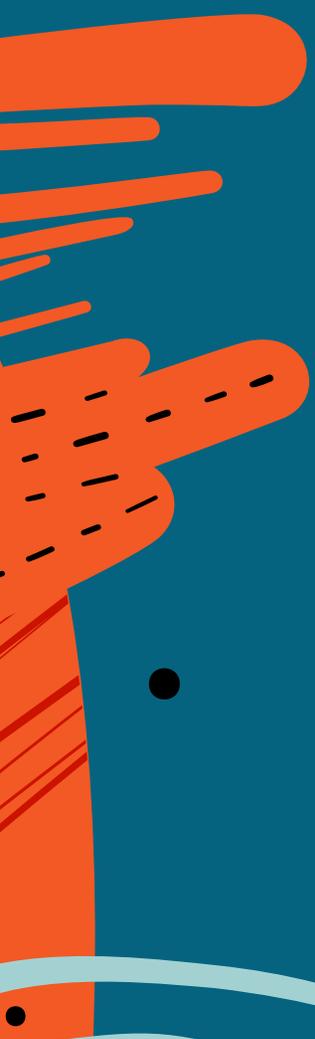
Declared Undergraduate
Concentrators

+16.8k

Social Media Followers

+286k

Website Page Views



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,
Department Assistant

Elio Lleo,
Technical Support Specialist

April Peters,
Manager, Finance & Administration

Dionne Worthy,
Assistant to the Chair & Events Coordinator



Stanhope Hall, Princeton University

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, Hillside Board of Directors

📍 La Cañada Flintridge, California

Brent Henry '69

Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo,
P.C, Partners HealthCare System

📍 Boston, Massachusetts

William B. King Jr. '67

Founder, DirectorCorps, Inc.

📍 Nashville, Tennessee

Henry Von Kohorn '66

Founder, The Princeton Prize in
Race Relations

📍 Princeton, New Jersey

Claudia Mitchell-Kernan

Professor Emerita of Anthropology,
Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences

📍 Los Angeles, California

Wes Moore

Chief Executive Officer, Robin Hood

📍 New York, New York

Laurence Morse '80

Co-Founder & Managing Partner,
Fairview Capital Partners

📍 West Hartford, Connecticut

Ruth J. Simmons

President, Prairie View A&M University

📍 Providence, Rhode Island

HONORARY BOARD MEMBER



Undergraduate Board of Advisers

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.



Payton Elyse Croskey
Class of 2023



Josiah Gouker
Class of 2022



Ashley Hodges
Class of 2021



Masha Miura
Class of 2021

AAS Academic Committees, 2020-2021

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

- **Naomi Murakawa** (Chair)
- **Ruha Benjamin**
- **Wallace Best**
- **Reena Goldthree**
- **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.

Members

- **Eddie Glaude Jr.** (Chair)
- **Naomi Murakawa**
- **Ruha Benjamin**

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

- **Wendy Belcher**
- **Chika Okeke-Agulu** (Chair)
- **Autumn Womack**

Academic Courses

Fall 2020 Courses

AAS 201 / PHI 291 (CD OR EC)

African American Studies and the Philosophy of Race

Eddie S. Glaude Jr., Imani Perry

AAS 300 (SA)

Junior Seminar: Research and Writing In African American Studies

Tera W. Hunter, Naomi Murakawa

AAS 303 / HUM 306 / GSS 406 (HA)

Topics in Global Race and Ethnicity: Scientific Racism Then and Now

Dannelle Gutarra Cordero

AAS 306 / AMS 305 (CD OR HA)

Topics in Race and Public Policy: Race and Inequality in American Democracy

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

AAS 326 / ENG 286 (LA)

Topics in African American Culture & Life: Early African American Literature

Autumn M. Womack

AAS 339 / EGR 339 (CD OR SA)

Black Mirror: Race, Technology, and Justice

Ruha Benjamin

AAS 358 / REL 379 / GSS 359 (CD OR HA)

Sexuality and Religion in America

Wallace D. Best

AAS 367 / HIS 387 (CD OR HA)

African American History Since Emancipation

Joshua B. Guild

AAS 392 / ENG 392 (LA)

Topics in African American Literature: Reading Toni Morrison

Autumn M. Womack

AAS 411 / AFS 411 / ART 371 (CD OR LA)

Art, Apartheid, and South Africa

Chika O. Okeke-Agulu



Spring 2021 Courses

AAS 230 / ENG 231 (LA)

Topics in African American Studies:
The Fire This Time - Reading James
Baldwin

Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

AAS 301 / SOC 367 (CD OR SA)

Black to the Future: Science, Fiction,
and Society

Ruha Benjamin

AAS 302 / SOC 303 / ANT 378 / GHP 302 (CD OR SA)

Political Bodies: The Social Anatomy
of Power & Difference

Ruha Benjamin

AAS 303 / LAS 363 (HA OR SA)

Topics in Global Race and Ethnicity:
From Slave Ship to Cruise Ship:
Empire and Resistance in the
Caribbean

Westenley Alcenat

AAS 306 / GSS 428 (SA)

Topics in Race and Public Policy:
Institutional Anti-Blackness and the
Power of Naming

Dannelle Gutarra Cordero

AAS 313 / HIS 213 / LAS 377 (HA)

Modern Caribbean History

Reena N. Goldthree

AAS 322 / LAS 301 / LAO 322 / AMS 323 (HA)

Afro-Diasporic Dialogues: Black
Activism in Latin America and the
United States

Reena N. Goldthree

AAS 342 / COM 394 / AFS 342 (LA)

Sisters' Voices: African Women
Writers

Wendy L. Belcher

AAS 350 / SOC 362 (HA)

Rats, Riots, and Revolution: Housing
in the Metropolitan United States

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

AAS 351 / GSS 351 (SA)

Law, Social Policy, and African
American Women

Imani Perry

AAS 359 / ENG 366 (LA)

African American Literature: Harlem
Renaissance to Present

Kinohi Nishikawa

AAS 365 / REL 362 (LA)

Migration and the Literary
Imagination

Wallace D. Best

AAS 366 / HIS 386 (HA)

African American History to 1863

Tera W. Hunter

AAS 372 / ART 374 / AMS 372 (CD OR LA)

Postblack - Contemporary African
American Art

Chika O. Okeke-Agulu

AAS 477 / HIS 477 (HA)

The Civil Rights Movement

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

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' in African American Studies. 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, African American Studies Study Abroad opportunities for concentrators, 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 (AACL)

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
2. Non-African descended people of color within the United States.



Bennett
Holmes '22

Morgan
Smith '21



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 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.

2021 Undergraduate Certificate Students



Amna Amin

Politics Department
Mathey College



Ndidi Anekwe

School of Public and
International Affairs
Rockefeller College



Benjamin Ball

Department of English
Butler College



Fergus A. Binnie

Department of History
Mathey College



Emily W. Cheston

School of Public and
International Affairs
First College



Krystal Y. Cohen

Department of Sociology
Mathey College



Nicholas A. Coleburn

School of Public and
International Affairs
Whitman College



Millicent Darko

Department of
Molecular Biology
First College



Sydney Goldman

School of Public and
International Affairs
First College



Tiana M. Graham

School of Public and
International Affairs
Rockefeller College



Olivia Hadley

Department of History
Forbes College



Justin Hinson

Neuroscience
First College



Jared W. Holeman

Politics Department
Whitman College



Alec D. Israeli

Department of History
Forbes College



Rachel Kennedy

Department of History
Mathey College



Alaina G. McGowen

School of Public and
International Affairs
Rockefeller College



Nadin Mukhtar

Department of Near
Eastern Studies
Rockefeller College



MaryAnn B. Placheril

School of Public and
International Affairs
Rockefeller College



Morgan Smith

School of Public and
International Affairs
First College



Lutfah Subair

School of Public and
International Affairs
Rockefeller College



K. Jared Young

Politics Department
First College



The Negro boys and girls who are facing mobs today come out of a long line of improbable aristocrats—the only genuine aristocrats this country has produced."

James Baldwin

The Fire Next Time

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 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 (AACL)**
- **Global Race and Ethnicity (GRE)**
- **Race and Public Policy (RPP)**



Four courses must be taken in the chosen subfield with two additional courses as follows:

- If the chosen subfield is AACL or RPP, then two GRE courses.
- If the chosen subfield is GRE, then one AACL and one RPP.

Students may choose up to two approved cognate courses in other departments. In total, nine courses are required for the concentration.

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

Concentrators are required to participate in the Senior Colloquium, which seeks to provide a space for seniors concentrating in African American Studies to reflect upon their experiences within the Department, and upon how the understanding and insight they have gained here can and should influence their lives beyond graduation. A member of the AAS core faculty leads each colloquium meeting.

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.



IN ORDER LEFT TO RIGHT:

Laura Rodriguez, Aisha Tahir, Faith Iloka,
Sydney Maple, Arianne Rowe, Erica Dugué,
Kiara Gilbert, Runako Campbell, Zhamoyani
McMillan, Ashley Hodges, and Leila Ullmann



2021

AAS Concentrators

Runako Campbell

First College

Runako Iyanla Asa Campbell was ecstatic to be a part of the African American Studies concentration and was immediately drawn to the department's incredible professors and courses. Runako pursued a certificate in Dance and considers the art form to be a huge part of her life and identity. She focused her academic studies around dance. She is curious about the historical and current Black dancing body, body memory, embodied knowledge, dance as activism, and arts inequity.

On campus, Runako served as Artistic Director of the widely acclaimed DiSiac Dance Company and was also a member of Princeton University Ballet, Questbridge Scholars Network, and Princeton Association for Black Women. She worked as a Welcome Desk Attendant at Frist Campus Center, a Movement Research Assistant for Dance Department Director Susan Marshall, and as an Associate Strategy Analyst for More Canvas Consulting, an arts consulting firm founded by a Princeton alumna. Runako was very active in the Lewis Center for the Arts as a Peer Arts Adviser and a consistent performer in Senior Dance Theses productions. Runako was a recipient of the Outstanding Freshman in the Dance Program Award and the Alex Adam '07 Award, which Runako used to travel throughout Europe and participate in world-renowned summer dance programs, and she was fortunate to work with Black dance icons Kyle Abraham and Micaela Taylor, among others.

Senior Thesis

Ballet, Blackness, and Womanhood: Rechoreographing the Classical Through Improvisation to Find Liberation

Adviser: Imani Perry





Erica Dugué

Forbes College

Erica Dugué is incredibly proud to have concentrated in the Department of African American Studies. Through the Race and Public Policy track within the Department, Erica conducted people-centered ethnographic research that both humanized and made visible those whose stories are often relegated to the sidelines; as well as sought a better informed social and public policy to center the systemically disadvantaged. She also pursued certificates in French Language & Culture and Ethnographic Studies, and was excited to bring these three fields together by way of her senior thesis research.

She was a Fellow for the Carl A. Fields (CAF) Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding, and represented this group on both her residential college peer educators' board as well as the Inter Club Council (ICC). She sat on the Student Programming Board for the CAF; was an officer and dancer for the diSiac Dance Company; a mentor in the Big Sibs elementary school program; and a committee leader in the Students for Prison Education and Reform group known as SPEAR. Erica was honored to have been the inaugural recipient of the Peer Educator of the Year Award in Spring 2019.

Senior Thesis

Corporeal Disregard for This Body That Holds Me: A Theoretical Framework for Examining Gender-Race Logics Underlying Police Violence Against Black Women and Femme

Adviser: Naomi Murakawa

Amanda Eisenhour

Forbes College

Amanda Eisenhour is from Alexandria, Virginia, concentrating in African American Studies with certificates in Latin American Studies, Latino Studies, and American Studies. Amanda's research focused on comparative analysis of the relationship between race and state violence across Latin America and the U.S., primarily through studying community-based resistance to the militarization of public security and mass incarceration. Drawn to the Department after taking the class, "Modern Caribbean History", she is interested in studying the entire hemisphere through a critical race perspective, in order to understand the consequences of racial paradigms like "colorblindness" and "racial democracy" for the application of state violence, and the lessons that might hold for anticarceral reformers and prison abolitionists.

As a Co-President of Students for Prison Education and Reform (SPEAR), Amanda worked to lift the voices of those directly affected by the carceral state and empower students to imagine and work towards a world without prisons. Amanda previously rebuilt the Ban the Box campaign on Princeton's campus, fighting against the stigma and institutional barriers formerly incarcerated people face long after their sentence is completed. She also facilitated classes on resume building and interview skills with currently incarcerated people with Princeton Re-Entry and Employment Preparation (PREP). In 2018, she interned in Mexico City with the anticarceral gender-based violence prevention non-profit GENDES. A 2019 Liman fellow, Amanda interned at the Due Process of Law Foundation, researching and writing on police militarization, transitional justice, and environmental justice across Latin America.

Senior Thesis

Quilombo Futurism: Translating Key Concepts in Afro-Brazilian Liberation

Adviser: Eddie S. Glaude Jr





Kiara “KiKi” Gilbert

Mathey College

Kiara “KiKi” Gilbert pursued a certificate in Humanistic Studies alongside her concentration in African American Studies. KiKi’s research focuses on the relationship between Black-American political realities and canonical, western philosophy. She enjoys engaging contemporary discourse on power inequities, morality, and Black American empowerment with tools like Frederick Nietzsche’s master and slave morality, Søren Kierkegaard’s teleological suspension of the ethical, and Aristotle’s notion of “bestly” ethics. KiKi problematizes, nuances, and ultimately enriches canonical theory by imagining it from the perspective of the most disempowered.

For KiKi’s work, she has been awarded the University-wide Adler Prize, the competitive Dale Summer Fellowship, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, and the 2020 Marshall Fellowship. With the Marshall award, KiKi will attend both Cambridge University and London’s School of Oriental and African Studies on full scholarships.

During her time at Princeton, she served as the Co-President of SPEAR (Students for Prison Education, Abolition, and Reform), FLiC (the First-Generation Low-Income Council), and co-chaired the national 1vyG conference. For two years, she served on the trustee board of America’s Promise Alliance – the largest cross-sector nonprofit in the country. She is also a committed student activist, having organized alongside Title IX and Double Sights protesters.

Senior Thesis

“Moral Poverty”: Evaluating Moral Frameworks in the Ghetto

Adviser: Eddie S. Glaude Jr

Ashley N. Hodges

Butler College

Ashley Noel Hodges concentrated in African American Studies with a Teacher's Prep certificate. As a first-year student, Ashley wanted to study politics with the hopes of becoming a politician. Although she isn't sure if the dream of being a politician is completely behind her, she is sure that she has found her home away from home in the Department of African American Studies. Ashley was immediately drawn to the Department because of its small, familial size and the love and support she felt from her professors. Ultimately, she felt as though the Department valued her academic strengths long before she was able to recognize them within herself.

On campus, Ashley was a member of the Undergraduate Board of Advisers for the Department of African American Studies, a Mellon Mays Fellow, an intern at The Carl A. Fields Center, the Editor-in-Chief of The Stripes Magazine, and a tutor for The Petey Greene Project. After Princeton, Ashley hopes to enroll in a graduate program and obtain her Ph.D., ultimately becoming a professor. During her time at Princeton and after, she wants to remain engaged in social justice activism in order to be a part of the larger Black freedom struggle.

Senior Thesis

Reviving New Orleans: Bounce as a Queer Method of Survival/Revival Post-Katrina

Adviser: Joshua Guild





Faith E. Iloka

First College

Faith E. Iloka is a proud concentrator of African American Studies with certificates in Music and Theatre. Faith quickly realized that the Department of African American Studies was the one for her. She determined this will be her approach in pursuing a career in Clinical Psychology, in hopes to encourage mental health awareness among people of color. For her Junior paper, Faith incorporated her love for theatre in her research, analyzing plays written by Black female playwrights that focus on the impact of intersectionality on the mental health of Black women. She used this research to inspire her senior thesis, for which she wrote a play that highlights the role of mental illness within underrepresented households and the ways in which the community responds to such illness.

Faith participated in a variety of extracurricular activities at Princeton, including DoroBucci (Princeton's Premier African Dance Group) for which she was President and Artistic Director, Treasurer for Black Student Union, PASA, Sankofa Fashion Show, and PUMP Mentorship Program. She has also acted in a variety of plays on campus, including Gurls (written by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins), PUP's Evita, Foreign Bodies Workshop, and Mad Dreams (written by Bob Sandberg).

Senior Thesis

Trauma, Grief, And Healing: Analyzing The Mental Health Implications Of Intimate Male Partner Domestic Violence On Black Mothers & Survivors

Adviser: Imani Perry

Lauren Johnson

Mathey College

Lauren Johnson majored in African American Studies with a certificate in French. Originally in the English department, she transitioned to African American Studies as it offered a better lens to read a wide array of words, many of which strayed away from the problematic western canon. She has a strong love of literature, and specifically is interested in contemporary Black writers and expatriate writers who lived all throughout Europe.

On campus, Lauren was a peer academic adviser in Mathey College, a learning consultant at the McGraw Center, a Fields Fellow at the Carl A. Fields Center, volunteered for the suicide hotline CONTACT, and worked at Mendel Music Library. Throughout her time at Princeton, she loved the opportunities to travel to places like Senegal through Princeton's Bridge Year Program, to Detroit through a Breakout Trip that discussed gun violence, to Alabama through a trip organized by the Office of Religious Life that explored lynching, religion, and mass incarceration in the South, to Polyface Farm in Virginia through the Service Focus Program where students discussed food justice and sustainability, and to France through a Princeton course over the summer. She is unsure of her plans post-Princeton but is heavily considering pursuing a Ph.D.

Senior Thesis

Refusing to Forget: Remembering Ann Petry and Lutie Johnson's Arrivals, Receptions, and Departures

Adviser: Autumn Womack





Sydney N. Maple

Mathey College

Sydney Nicole Maple had a consistent desire growing up to explore her Blackness, and the way Black identity shaped the distinct experiences of African American people from the inception of this nation. From the intriguing course material, the limitless, interdisciplinary nature of her work, and the support and gratitude of her professors, she couldn't fathom loving a department more than she loved AAS.

Sydney's interests include studying the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in performance forms, exploring Black feminist literature, and seeing the tangible manifestations of racialized public policy measures. In terms of her independent work, Sydney combined her interest in the arts and her love of dance, exploring what it means for artists to inhabit and create work in spaces where they are often unwelcome – in spaces where policies and social norms often obscure these narratives. Outside of her academics, Sydney was a SHARE Peer (Sexual Harassment/ Assault Advising, Resources, and Education), a Lewis Center for the Arts Peer Arts Adviser, and Treasurer and member of diSiac Dance Company.

Senior Thesis

The Limits of Liberation From the 1990s Through the Present Day: Race, Rebellion and Raunchy Musical Reimaginings of the Politics of Black Women's Bodies

Adviser: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

Asia N. Matthews

Whitman College

Asia Nicole Matthews proudly hails from Jamaica, Queens. As a first-year student, Asia was involved with research on the Princeton & Slavery Project and is deeply interested in how the legacy of slavery shapes the United States, the Middle East, Africa, and South America today. To pursue these academic interests she pursued the Global Race & Ethnicity track.

Asia is passionate about bringing marginalized voices to the fore. To do this she served as a Fellow at the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding, and as the former production manager of the Stripes, a student publication that highlights undervalued narratives. In addition, Asia is devoted to marshaling data science and statistics for social justice. As such, she sought a certificate in Statistics and Machine Learning as well as Latin American Studies.

Asia hopes to follow in the steps of her life inspirations, Michelle Obama and Sonia Sotomayor, and attend law school, in addition to beauty school. She was the founder of a beauty salon on campus. Asia also enjoys ice skating, collecting artwork, and African drumming.

Senior Thesis

A Story of Black Institutional Advocacy: The Journey of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Harlem

Adviser: Tera Hunter





Zhamoyani McMillan

First College

Zhamoyani McMillan is from Queens and Brooklyn, NY. His main interests are screenwriting and film. He quickly gained interest in the Department of African American Studies because of his High School education. His High School essentially deprived him of a curriculum like Princeton's Department of African American Studies. This past summer, he used AAS funding as well as the annual Lewis Center for Arts Mary Quaintance '84 Fund Award to travel to Senegal and Ghana in hopes of learning about Black diasporic art and also to finish writing a feature-length screenplay. He wishes to continue learning about this diasporic welding of cultures, art, and literature, as well as the institutional racism plaguing the United States.

Senior Thesis

Mass Tourism and Alternative Solutions in Barbuda

Adviser: Wendy Belcher

Masha Y. Miura

Whitman College

Masha Yassif Miura entered Princeton initially planning to concentrate in Politics, but was drawn to the Department of African American Studies after taking Professor Benjamin's class, "Race is Socially Constructed, Now What". She also obtained a certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies. At Princeton, Masha was a Co-President of the Students for Prison Education and Reform and a Student Leader for The Petey Greene Program, a volunteer program that allows students to tutor individuals who are currently incarcerated. She wrote with Project Solidarity and was on the Undergraduate Board of Advisers for the Department of African American Studies. She was also a fellow for the Humanities Department's Behrman Society of Fellows. She hopes to continue her work by attending law school, with the goal of advancing impact litigation to change the way the criminal justice system operates.

Senior Thesis

Seeking Safety in Surveillance: The Dangers of Data
Sharing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Adviser: Ruha Benjamin





Laura M. Rodriguez

Whitman College

Laura entered Princeton undecided, but was drawn to the Department of African American Studies after taking Professor Ruha Benjamin's class, "Race is Socially Constructed, Now What?" a course that inspired her future course selections in the Department. She also earned certificates in Latino Studies and Latin American Studies. She is interested in learning more about transformational education policy and Black and Brown youth activism in the United States.

At Princeton, Laura was a co-chair for PLA's Association of Latinx Activism and Service (ALAS) and a tutor for FUTURO, a program that provides first-generation high school students with the tools and knowledge needed to pursue a post-secondary education. Laura's post-graduate plans are yet to be determined, but she is excited, knowing that the possibilities are endless.

Senior Thesis

Property Technology in the Age of Algorithmic Discrimination

Adviser: Ruha Benjamin

Arianne Rowe

First College

Arianne Rowe chose the Global Race and Ethnicity (GRE) track in the Department of African American Studies, because of her heritage from the West Indian island of Montserrat. Interested in studies of Blackness in both anglophone and the Spanish speaking Caribbean and the Americas, Arianne also pursued certificates in the Spanish and Latin American Studies departments. She was drawn to the Department by its dedication to center Blackness and African heritage in the way we conceptualize history – something she never thought about before her first AAS class at Princeton. Through the department, Arianne discovered where her academic interests lie – studies of Blackness in South America. In fact, in the summer of 2019, Arianne awarded funding by various departments to participate in Princeton's study abroad program in Argentina, where she was able to conduct research on Black communities and culture in Buenos Aires.

On campus, Arianne served on the executive board of the Princeton Association of Black Women, the Caribbean Connection, and worked at Frist Campus Center. She was also a mentor with the Big Sibs, Little Sibs program, and was a member of the Fencing Club. Arianne is not entirely sure what she wants to do next, but currently plans to attend law school after her undergraduate degree.

Senior Thesis

The Discourses of Blanqueamiento: A Multilateral Analysis of 19th Century Racial Ideologies in the Making of Modern Argentina

Adviser: Reena Goldthree





Aisha Tahir

First College

Aisha Tahir is from Alexandria, Virginia, concentrating in African American Studies and with certificates in South Asian Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Journalism. Aisha's research focused on comparing American democracy with Indian democracy with critical attention to the role of caste systems. Interested in exploring how both democracies were built and how they thrive with these "undemocratic systems", she hoped to analyze activism in both communities and to draw parallels on the similar challenges their citizens have face in the 21st century. Along with that, she aims to understand how capitalism plays a role in both democracies and their systems of human order.

Aisha was drawn to the Department by experiencing how dedicated it was to understanding oppression and justice through the critical view of race and class. Inspired by those who came before her in the Department, she hopes to continue the long legacy of activism. Aisha hopes to learn how law can be of use to fight these deep-rooted problems and wants to serve her communities after law school. During her time at Princeton, she engaged in activism on campus for it to become a more open and inviting space for poor women of color.

Senior Thesis

Struggling For Freedom An Exploration Of Captive Autobiographies For The Revolutionary Process

Adviser: Naomi Murakawa

Leila Ullmann

First College

Leila Harrison Ullmann was born and raised in San Jose, California. She is honored to be a concentrator in African American Studies and is deeply inspired by the professors, students, and activists that she is surrounded by in the department, as well as by those who have come before her. She entered Princeton intending to study History or Politics. She eventually chose AAS because of its interdisciplinary nature that holds questions of race, class, and power at the center of all of its inquiry. She is interested in studying the ways that grassroots and community-based movements and approaches seek to address and solve new and pre-existing oppressive systems based on racism, classism, misogyny, homophobia, and other ideations of fear and power. In addition to African American Studies, Leila pursued certificates in Latin American Studies and Dance.

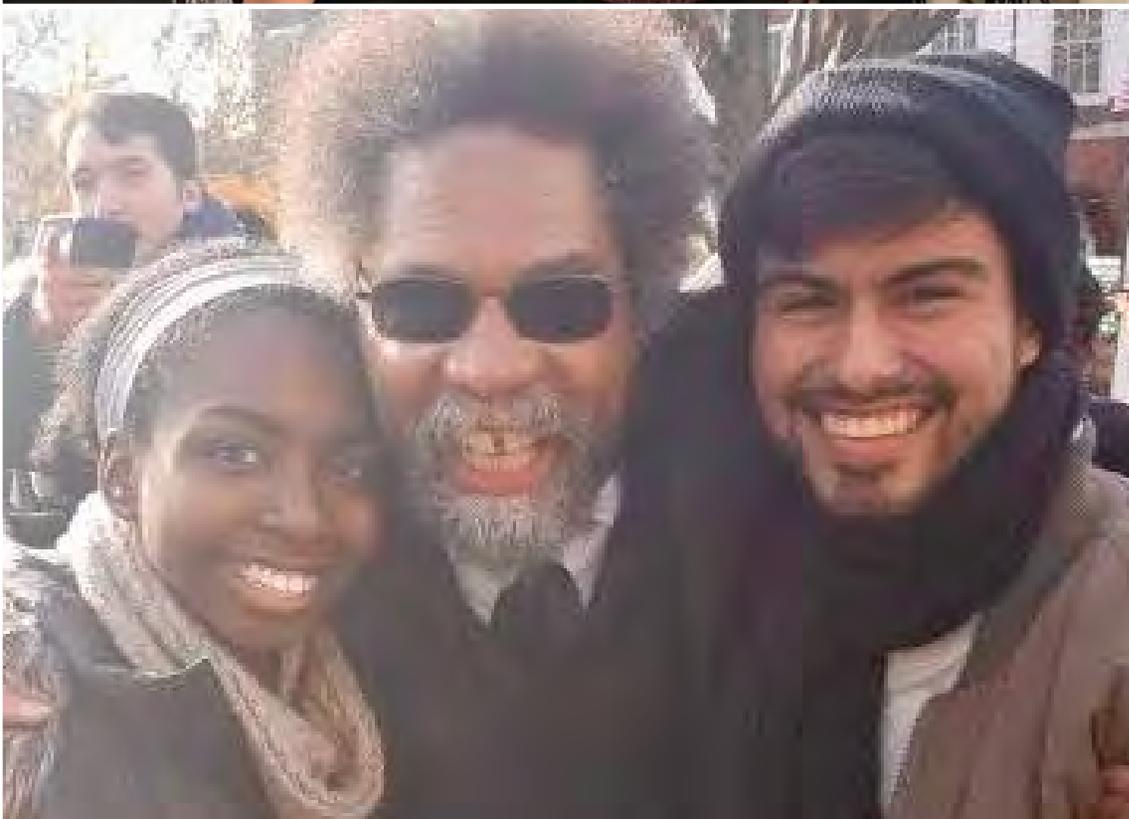
On campus, she was a leader in Students for Prison Education and Reform, a Tutor for The Petey Greene Project, and a member of Expressions Dance Company. Over the summers, she has worked with UnCommon Law as a Bogle Fellow, a legal organization in Oakland that represents lifers in their parole hearings, as well as with the Detroit Justice Center as a Liman Fellow, a movement lawyering organization in Detroit. While she has yet to determine what will be her post-Princeton future, Leila is determined to use her education to contribute to the fight for justice. She is interested in the ways law can be used as a tool for supporting that fight, and is considering attending law school.

Senior Thesis

Shadows of the Silicon Valley: A Critical History of the High-Tech Industry

Adviser: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor





2021 Senior Prizes & Winners

Ruth J. Simmons Thesis Prize, 2021

This prize is awarded to the AAS senior whose senior 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.

Arianne Rowe '21

"The Discourses of Blanqueamiento: A Multilateral Analysis of 19th Century Racial Ideologies in the Making of Modern Argentina"

Adviser: Reena Goldthree

Outstanding Junior Paper in African American Studies Prize

This prize is awarded to the senior who submitted the most outstanding Junior Paper.

Lauren Johnson '21

"Tied by Trauma: Navigating a Black Mother and Daughter's Bond during Enslavement and Reconstruction"

Adviser: Kinohi Nishikawa

The Badi Foster Distinguished Senior Prize in African American Studies

Awarded annually to the senior concentrator who has distinguished themselves academically as well as beyond the classroom, reflecting a commitment to the intellectual, political, and artistic traditions in African American Studies.

Kiara "KiKi" Gilbert '21

AAS Spirit Award

This award is selected by AAS staff and is given to a senior for their positive contributions to the department. It recognizes students who informally assist the faculty, students, and staff.

Faith E. Iloka '21



Arianne Rowe '21



Kiara "KiKi" Gilbert '21



Faith E. Iloka '21



Lauren Johnson '21 38

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.



Aisha Tahir (left) and Frelicia Tucker (right) explore some of the neighborhoods and markets in East London during their downtime.



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 intellectually 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.



2020 - 2021 TOPIC

“Writing the Impossible”: Black Studies and Critical Archival Praxis

Reena N. Goldthree, Faculty Convener

This seminar explores approaches to archival research in the field of African American studies. Archives, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminds us, are not passive repositories of historical materials. Rather, the archive as an institution authorizes particular narratives about the past, while simultaneously rendering other narratives as illegitimate or even “unthinkable”. Working at the intersection of African American studies and critical archival studies, we interrogate the archive as a site of racialized knowledge production and consider how archival sources inform historical and contemporary understandings of Black life. We wrestle with the limitations of the archive—the silences, excesses, and (mis) representations—while also engaging with recent scholarship that addresses the methodological, theoretical, and ethical challenges of archival research in innovative ways. In doing so, we reckon with what Saidiya Hartman characterizes as the “task of writing the impossible,” the effort to reconstruct the stories of Black people from fragmentary traces in the official record. Invited presenters for this yearlong seminar include scholars and archivists working in the fields of literary and cultural studies, anthropology, history, political science, African American studies, and digital humanities.



2020–2021 Guest Speakers

FALL 2020

September 17

Jessica Maria Johnson

October 15

Quito Swan

October 29

Annette Joseph - Gabriel

November 5

Shana Redmond

November 19

**Dr. P Gabrielle Foreman
& Jim Casey**

SPRING 2021

February 11

Minkah Makalani

February 18

Lorgia García Peña

March 4

Erica Williams

March 25

Michelle Moyd

April 8

Matthew J. Smith

April 22

Jorge L. Giovannetti-Torres

Graduate Program Certificate Recipients



Margarita Rosa

DISSERTATION

Wombs of Liberation: The Legislation of Black Maternity and Freedom of the Womb in Brazil

Dissertation Defense: May 3, 2021



Ahmad Greene-Hayes

DISSERTATION

Gods of the Flesh: Religion, Sexuality, and Circum-Caribbean Migration in Black New Orleans, 1900-1940

Dissertation Defense: May 5, 2021



Brittney M. Edmonds

DISSERTATION

Who's Laughing Now?: Black Affective Play and Formalist Innovation in Twenty-First Century Black Literary Satire.

Dissertation Defense: February 5, 2021



Perrin M. Lathrop

DISSERTATION

A "Sublime Art": Akinola Lasekan and Colonial Modernism in Nigeria

Dissertation Defense: May 10, 2021



Nyle Fort

DISSERTATION

Amazing Grief: African American Mourning and Contemporary Black Activism

Dissertation Defense: June 16, 2021

AAS Graduation Reflection

The Experience of Ahmad Greene-Hayes, Ph.D.

While my graduate training is in Religion, the Department of African American Studies was, in many ways, my academic home at Princeton. Intellectual rigor and the soul of the Black experience are at the helm of everything the Department does. There's nothing quite like engaging in deep, engaging, and critical conversations on race, gender, sexuality, empire, and so on and so forth, and then feasting together over soul food and hearty laughs.

It was in Stanhope Hall my first year at Princeton, that I took Professor Wallace Best's "Religion and Sexuality in the Americas" course, which opened my eyes to new ways of studying Black sexuality in the context of the study of American religions. That same year, I also had the opportunity to serve alongside Professor Best as the graduate student coordinator for the African American Studies Faculty-Graduate Seminar, "Sexuality in African American Communities and Cultures" (2016-2017). Coming face-to-face with brilliant senior and junior scholars, and engaging their works-in-progress, was an opportunity that ultimately ignited some of the very questions that I examined in my dissertation.

Other AAS faculty have likewise demonstrated the importance of doing work that challenges systems of domination, and their mentorship in various capacities have only enforced these ideas. I am grateful to Professor Imani Perry who has been so kind to me since I stepped foot on campus and who graciously agreed to do a year-long reading course on the State of Black Studies during my second year. I have also benefitted from being an assistant-in-instruction for Professor Eddie Glaude, whose passion for students is always felt. I am also appreciative of conversations with Professors Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Joshua Guild, Reena Goldthree, Ruha Benjamin, Tera Hunter, Naomi Murakowa

and Kinohi Nishikawa. I am especially thankful for Professor Belcher's "Publishing Articles in Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" course, which helped me learn about translating my academic training to larger audiences. The AAS staff are also exceptional, and I am grateful to Dionne Worthy and April Peters for their unending support, and to my AAS graduate colleagues, who have been true sources of kindness and comradery.

In this spirit of gratitude, I recently revised a paper I wrote in Professor Murakawa's iteration of "AAS 500: African American Intellectual Tradition," and it was published in a special issue in Souls entitled, "Inheriting Black Studies." My article thinks about the intellectual inheritances bequeathed to scholars of African American religions from Black women Christian educators of the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. In many ways, the article is the result of my training in the AAS graduate program. Within it, I reflect on Black women Christian educators as a way of thinking about my own training as a scholar of Black religion. *What does it mean to inherit the tradition of Black Studies within the study of Black religion?* My time in AAS encouraged this kind of introspection and I am certain that I will continue to ruminate on this question for the rest of my academic career. Thank you.



AAS Graduation Reflection

The Experience of Nyle Fort, Ph.D.

Two weeks before I walked into my first class as a doctoral student, I was tear gassed by the St. Louis police while protesting police violence. A year before, on August 9th, 2014, white police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. It was a time of momentous struggle and sorrow. Cities were exploding in protests. Activists were calling for changes in policing. And many students, including those at Princeton, were challenging their school's administrations to demonstrate, in word and deed, that Black lives matter.

During my first semester, the Black Justice League organized a sit-in at Nassau Hall. I joined the protestors who were demanding, among other things, more spaces for Black students, diversity training for faculty, and renaming the Woodrow Wilson School. I did not plan on staying the night, but I am so glad that I did. Those 33 hours of chanting, strategizing, building relationships, and dreaming of a more just campus inspired me. I watched the student protestors share ideas and toothpaste, take silly pictures of each other napping and selfies of themselves with their fists raised to the sky. In the wee hours of the morning, several of them curled up in the corners of President Christopher Eisengruber's office to work on classroom assignments. I saw the tears flow from their eyes when the university dismissed their demands and the smiles on their faces when AAS faculty sent pizza to support our efforts. The Nassau Hall sit-in was a crash course in the value of student activism and the rich legacy of African American studies at Princeton and beyond.

AAS is an incubator of ideas that have the potential to transform the world. The faculty are at the forefront of conversations concerning the world's most pressing issues. Their scholarship spans continents, centuries, and communities. On any given day you can hear one of your

professors on the morning news or their work featured in a mainstream media outlet or them teasing out an idea in seminar that might change the direction of the field.

Certainly, AAS is a rockstar department. But it is also a beloved community of care and generous support. Guest lectures always felt like family reunions where ideas were exchanged and soul food was served. When I experienced the deaths of several loved ones, my adviser, Eddie Glaude, and committee member, Imani Perry, gave me the space to grieve and the encouragement to stay in school. There is no way I would have made it without their support. In the end, Stanhope Hall was a home away from home, a place where I felt loved and supported as an activist-scholar committed to the values of love, study, and struggle.

As I prepare to begin my faculty career in the Society of Fellows at Columbia University, I am left with the words of the late Toni Morrison, who helped develop African American studies from a program to a center to a department. "The very serious function of racism is distraction," she wrote. "It keeps you from doing your work." I am incredibly grateful that AAS not only gave me the space to do my work. But it also helped me understand that my work involves much more than what I do in the classroom. It is about how I show up in the world.



Featured Events and Programs

The Department of African American Studies offered a wide variety of virtual events and programs during the 2020-2021 academic year. Through these thought-provoking topics and bold speakers, we aimed to educate and empower students, the Princeton campus, and our local community.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

AAS Graduate Virtual Open House

OCTOBER 6, 2020

AAS Graduate Affairs Job Market

JANUARY 11 & 18, 2021

Time for Black Studies

MARCH 31, 2021

Mari Crabtree's Lecture: The Long
Afterlife of Lynching in African
American Southern Memory

APRIL 12, 2021

Westenley Alcenat's Lecture: The White
"Asylum for Mankind" and The Black
"Empire of Liberty"

APRIL 27, 2021

Toni Morrison Lectures:
Eddie S. Glaude Jr & Jesmyn Ward

APRIL 27, 2021

AAS Reunion

APRIL 27, 2021

AAS Class Day, Virtual Ceremony

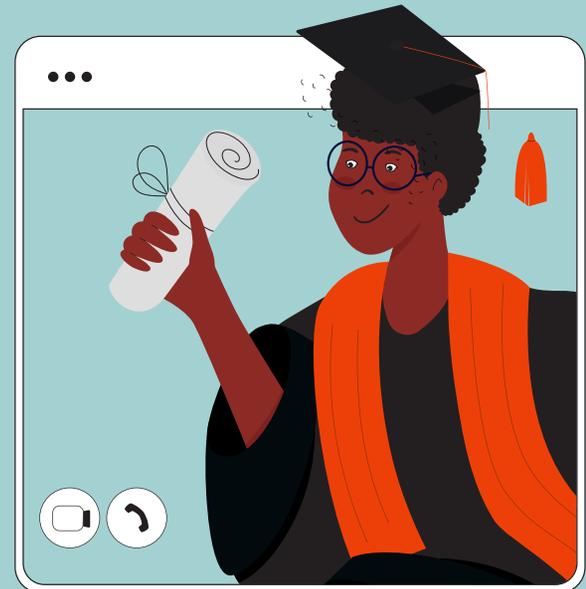


2021

VIRTUAL CEREMONY



Scan Code or Visit
aas.princeton.edu



This year we graduated 15 Concentrators, 21 Undergraduate Certificate Students, and five doctoral degree students who earned graduate certificates 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

Anna Arabindan-Kesson	Page 54	Tera W. Hunter.....	Page 61
Wendy L. Belcher.....	Page 55	Naomi Murakawa.....	Page 62
Ruha Benjamin	Page 56	Kinohi Nishikawa	Page 63
Wallace D. Best.....	Page 57	Chika O. Okeke-Agulu.....	Page 64
Eddie S. Glaude Jr.....	Page 58	Imani Perry.....	Page 65
Reena N. Goldthree.....	Page 59	Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor.....	Page 66
Joshua B. Guild	Page 60	Autumn M. Womack	Page 67



Anna Arabindan-Kesson

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

Professor Arabindan-Kesson is an assistant professor of African American and Black Diasporic art with a joint appointment in the Department of Art and Archaeology and is a faculty fellow at First College. 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 doctoral degree in African American Studies and Art History at Yale University.

Professor Arabindan-Kesson focuses on African American, Caribbean, and British Art, with an emphasis on histories of race, empire, and transatlantic visual culture in the long 19th century.

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."

Her first book, published in 2021 by Duke University Press, is entitled "Black Bodies White Gold: Art, Cotton and Commerce in the Atlantic World".

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.

She is the co-translator with Michael Kleiner of perhaps the first book-length biography of an African woman, originally written in Gəʿəz (classical Ethiopic), “The Life and Struggles of Our Mother Walatta Petros: A Seventeenth-Century African Biography of an Ethiopian Woman” (Princeton University Press, 2015; concise edition, 2018), for which she received the Fulbright US Scholars Award. She and Kleiner also received the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women (SSEMW) award for the best Scholarly Edition in Translation of 2015 and the African Studies Association Paul Hair Award for the Best Critical Edition or Translation of Primary Source Materials on Africa in 2015-2017.

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
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.

Professor Best is the author of "Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion and Culture in Black Chicago, 1915-1952" (Princeton University Press, 2007), and "Langston's Salvation: American Religion and the Bard of Harlem" (New York University Press, 2017).





Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

**Department Chair and James S. McDonnell Professor,
Department of African American Studies**

Eddie S. Glaude Jr.'s most well-known books, "Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul", and "In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America", take a wide look at Black communities and reveal complexities, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for hope.

He is Chair of the Department of African American Studies, a program he first became involved with shaping as a doctoral candidate in Religion at Princeton.

Glaude's most recent book is the award-winning "Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons For Our Own". 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 then requires a confrontation with 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."

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 or has forthcoming 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.

Her first book, “To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War”, was awarded the H. L. Mitchell Award in 1998 from the southern Historical Association, the Letitia Brown Memorial Book Prize in 1997 from the Association of Black Women’s Historians and the Book of the Year Award in 1997 from the International Labor History Association. Most recently, she released, “Bound in Wedlock: Slave and Free Black Marriage in the Nineteenth Century”, winner of the Joan Kelly Memorial Prize and the Littleton-Griswold Prize.

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

**Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS),
Department of African American Studies**

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.

Nishikawa's first book, "Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground", was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2018. His major work in progress, "Black Paratext", is a study of how book design has influenced the production and reception of African American literature from World War II to the present. Nishikawa has published widely on modern African American print culture, with a particular emphasis on newspapers, magazines, and independent publishers.

Recent publications include an essay on Black experimental novelist William Melvin Kelley in *American Literary History* (2018) and an article on Black Arts movement editor Hoyt W. Fuller in *Chicago Review* (2016). Nishikawa has also contributed chapters to the forthcoming collections *Black Cultural Production after Civil Rights* (Illinois), *African American Expression in Print and Digital Culture* (Wisconsin), and *Are You Entertained? New Essays on Black Popular Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (Duke).





Chika O. Okeke-Agulu

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

Professor Okeke-Agulu specializes in indigenous, modern, and contemporary African and African Diaspora art history and theory. He previously taught at The Pennsylvania State University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Yaba College of Technology, Lagos. He is the author of “Obiora Udechukwu: Line, Image, Text” (Skira Editore, 2016); “Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigeria” (Duke, 2015); and (with Okwui Enwezor), “Contemporary African Art Since 1980” (Damiani, 2010). He is coeditor of “Ezumezu: Essays on Contemporary Art and Architecture, a festschrift in Honour of Demas Nwoko” (Goldline & Jacobs, 2012); and “Who Knows Tomorrow” (König, 2010) In 2006, he edited the first ever issue of African Arts dedicated to African Modernism, and his writings have appeared in African Arts, Meridians: Feminism, Race, Internationalism, Artforum International, New York Times, Packett, South Atlantic Quarterly, and October. He is co-editor of Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art, writes for Huffington Post and maintains the blog Qfodunka.

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.

In her work, Perry has taken on complicated and timely issues. In her 2011 book, “More Beautiful and More Terrible: The Embrace and Transcendence of Racial Inequality in the United States”, Perry discusses the ongoing intersection of race and politics in America. In addition to “More Beautiful, More Terrible”, Perry is the author of “Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop and “May We Forever Stand: A History of the Black National Anthem”, a cultural history of the Black national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Her biography of Lorraine Hansberry, “Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant Life of Lorraine Hansberry” was published in September 2018. Her book on patriarchy, “Vexy Thing: On Gender and Liberation” came out later in 2018 as well. Perry’s book “Breathe: A Letter To My Sons” (Beacon Press, 2019) issues an unflinching challenge to society to see Black children as deserving of humanity. And “South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation” is forthcoming in 2022.

Perry received a bachelor’s degree from Yale University. From there, she went on to obtain both her 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 book, “How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective”, also with Haymarket Books (2017) won the 2018 Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ Nonfiction.

Taylor’s research examines race and public policy including American housing policies. Professor Taylor’s most recent book titled “Race for Profit: Black Homeownership and the End of the Urban Crisis”, 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

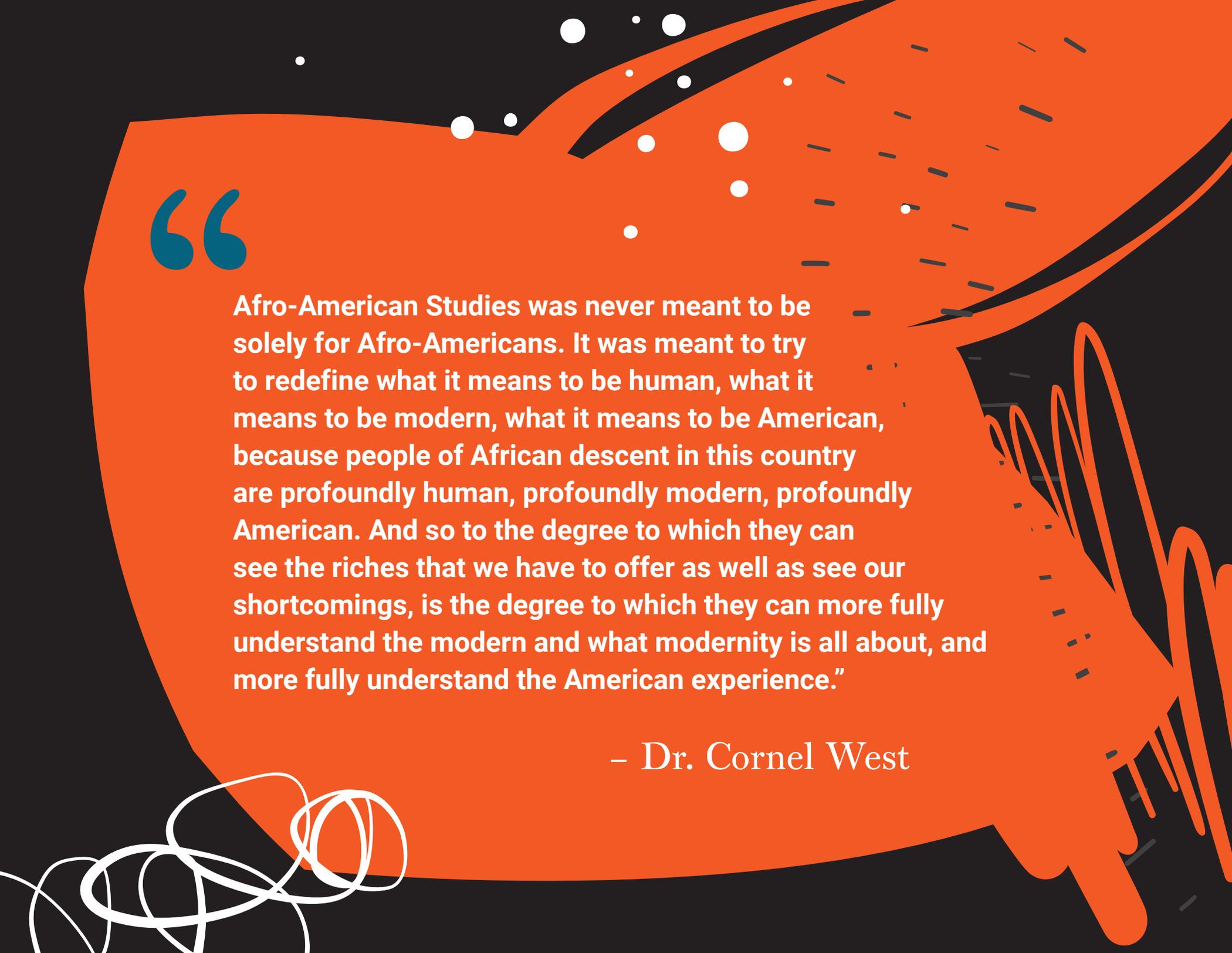
**Assistant Professor, Department of African American Studies
and Department of English**

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).

Professor Womack's forthcoming book, "Reform Visions: Race, Visuality, and Literature in the Progressive Era" (University of Chicago Press, 2022), examines the important formal and technical features of emergent visual technologies such as photography, motion pictures, and social surveys to Black literary culture from the 1880s through the 1920s. She has published on this and other topics in *Black Camera: An International Film Journal*, *Women and Performance*, *American Literary History*, and *SmallAxe Salon*. Her contribution to a published roundtable on "Racism's Afterlives" is forthcoming in *J19: A Journal of 19th Century Americanists* and her exploration of antebellum data visualization in *The Anglo-African Magazine* will appear in *Cambridge University's volume Transitions in African American Literature, 1850-1865*.

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.





“

Afro-American Studies was never meant to be solely for Afro-Americans. It was meant to try to redefine what it means to be human, what it means to be modern, what it means to be American, because people of African descent in this country are profoundly human, profoundly modern, profoundly American. And so to the degree to which they can see the riches that we have to offer as well as see our shortcomings, is the degree to which they can more fully understand the modern and what modernity is all about, and more fully understand the American experience.”

– Dr. Cornel West

Associated Faculty



Dannelle Gutarra-Cordero

Lecturer of African American Studies



Jacob S. Dlamini

*Assistant Professor of
Department of History*



Paul Frymer

Professor of Department of Politics



Simon Gikandi

*Robert Schirmer Professor of English,
Department of English*



William A. Gleason

*Hughes-Rogers Professor of Department
of English*



Desmond D. Jagmohan

*Assistant Professor of
Department of Politics*



J. Nicole Shelton

*Stuart Professor of
Department of Psychology*



Stacey A. Sinclair

*Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs,
Department of Psychology & Woodrow
Wilson School*

OUR FACULTY



Dara Z. Strolovitch

*Associate Professor of Program in
Gender and Sexuality Studies*



Keith A. Wailoo

*Henry Putnam University Professor of
History and Public Affairs, Department
of History*



Leonard Wantchekon

Professor of Department of Politics



Judith Weisenfeld

*Agate Brown and George L. Collord
Professor of Religion, Department of
Religion*



Monica Y. Youn

*Lecturer in Creative Writing of Lewis
Center for the Arts*



Faculty Emeritus



Kwame Anthony Appiah

Laurence S. Rockefeller University Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus



Toni Morrison

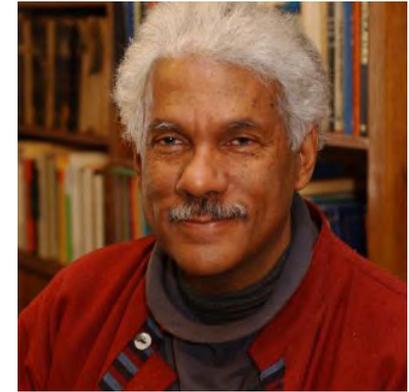
Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities, Emerita

In Memoriam (1931 - 2019)



Nell Painter

Edwards Professor of American History, Emerita



Albert Raboteau

Henry Putnam Professor of Religion, Department of Religion

In Memoriam (1943 - 2021)



Valerie Smith

Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature, and President Swarthmore College



Claudia Tate

Professor of English and African American Studies

In Memoriam (1946 - 2002)



Howard Taylor

Professor of Department of Sociology



Cornel West

Professor of African American Studies



Visiting Faculty



Westenley Alcenat

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Department of History, Fordham University

Wes Alcenat is a historian of the 19th century U.S and Caribbean. His scholarship covers the shared histories of African-Americans and Afro-Caribbean peoples in connection with the wider African Diaspora in the Atlantic World. His manuscript in revision, "Children of Africa, Shall Be Haytians:" Prince Saunders and the Foundations of Black Emigration to Haiti, 1815-1865 is a study of the radicalism and ideologies of African American settlers who emigrated to Haiti in the 19th century.

Wes's academic interests have intersected with public history and equity in higher education to highlight the histories of marginalized groups inside the university and provide critical policy recommendations. Since 2015, he has served as an Academic Director in the Great Books Summer Reading Program at Amherst College. Wes has taught undergraduate courses and seminars on various topics, including "Black Urban Political History", "Merchants and Slaves in Atlantic Capitalism", "The Radical Tradition in U.S History", and the "Modern Caribbean: From Columbus to Castro/From Slave Ships to Cruise Ships."

Wes is a past recipient of the Richard Hofstadter Fellowship from Columbia University. He has been awarded fellowships from the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Hoover Institute's Library and Archives, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC)-Mellon Mays Graduate Initiative Grants, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and the Schomburg Center for Research in African-American Culture. In 2015-16 he was a visiting scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and an associate fellow at the Weatherhead Initiative on Global History (WIGH) at Harvard University. Wes has written or provided commentary for The Nation, The Jacobin Magazine, Theroot.com, and The Immanent Frame. He is also a contributing guest writer for the Black Perspectives Blog, the official publication of the African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS). Wes is a native of Haiti and spent his formative years in the Lyndale neighborhood of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He now lives in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood of Brooklyn with B.B King, his beloved pet rabbit of 8 years.

Newsroom Articles

MAY 29, 2021

100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre of 1921

by Julia Chaffers

What was the Tulsa Massacre?

In June 1921, a white mob targeted the prosperous Black neighborhood of Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, home to the thriving business district known as “Black Wall Street.” A recent project from The New York Times reconstructed Black Wall Street as it was before the massacre, showing the vibrancy of the neighborhood. Greenwood Avenue was home to Black-owned lawyers’ and doctors’ offices, salons, restaurants, tailors, hotels, theatres, and much more. In total, the Greenwood neighborhood spanned 35 blocks, with two schools, several churches, two newspapers, and a hospital in addition to the business district.

The massacre unfolded over two days. The proximate cause of the riot occurred when a Black teenage boy, Dick Rowland, was accused of assaulting a white teenage girl, Sarah Page, in an elevator in downtown Tulsa (authorities later dropped the charges against Rowland as it was determined that Rowland merely tripped and stepped on Page’s foot). The next day, conflict between a white lynch mob that formed at the courthouse to attack Rowland, and the Black Tulsans who gathered to defend him, sparked the broader massacre against Greenwood. The

white mob followed the Black Tulsans as they retreated into Greenwood, and began looting homes and businesses and attacking residents. The violence, including gunfire, aerial bomb attacks, and arson, killed as many as 300 Black Tulsans and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses. It was perpetrated by white rioters, many of whom were armed and deputized by local police. On a broader level, the massacre is seen as a reprisal against the success of the Black neighborhood of Greenwood by resentful white Tulsans.

What was the aftermath?

The entirety of Greenwood was burned to the ground by the white mob, and 10,000 people were left homeless. Numerous obstacles hindered Black Tulsans’ efforts to rebuild. For example, insurance companies declined to pay damage claims, leaving residents on their own to fund the recovery. While some stayed to rebuild, many others left Tulsa to build a new life elsewhere. Nobody was ever held responsible for the destruction of Greenwood. Instead, state and local law enforcement arrested and held Black Tulsans in mass detention centers for weeks, only releasing them when a white resident vouched for them.

Many victims’ bodies were thrown into the river or buried in unmarked mass graves, leaving people unsure exactly how many were killed. Last



Greenwood on fire during the Tulsa Massacre.
Source: Library of Congress



year, archeologists began an effort to unearth some of those sites.

In the absence of state support, the American Red Cross played an important role in providing relief to victims of the massacre.

White Tulsans distributed postcards of the violence. Like postcards depicting lynchings, these “souvenirs” demonstrate the impunity with which whites were able to exploit and attack Black residents.

Why don't most people know about the Tulsa Massacre?

In the decades that followed, Tulsa deliberately silenced the massacre and covered up the truth of the attack. Left out of the school curriculum and erased from the public memory of the city, many descendants of victims only heard about the riot as adults through whispered recountings from family.

The massacre recently gained prominence in popular culture in 2019 when the HBO series *Watchmen* depicted the attacks in its opening scenes. Set in Tulsa, the show featured the generational trauma that the massacre inflicted as a central aspect of the show.

What's happening now?

In September of 2020, the massacre's survivors and their descendents filed a lawsuit against Tulsa seeking compensation for their losses. The call for reparations is not new, however. A 2001 report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 declared reparations as the city's moral obligation.

In May 2021, the three remaining survivors of the massacre—Viola Fletcher, Hughes Van Ellis, and Lessie Benningfield Randle—testified before Congress to recount the violence and how it continues to shape their life a century later. Fletcher said, “I have lived through the massacre every day. Our country may forget this history, but I cannot. I will not. And

other survivors do not. And our descendants do not.”

FEBRUARY. 22, 2021

Not JUST Data

by Jerimiah Oetting, for the Office of the Dean for Research

When Ruha Benjamin was 14, she moved from South Carolina to the South Pacific with her parents, educators tasked with curriculum development and teacher training in Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands. To keep the family entertained, her father brought boxes of VHS tapes filled with “*Star Trek*” episodes.

“It was my only entertainment for nine months,” Benjamin said. “I became a real Trekkie.”

Later, as a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, Benjamin realized that many of the scientists and engineers she met shared her love of science fiction. Shows like “*Star Trek*” weren't just fiction — they were inspirations that led to real innovations and discoveries.

She also noticed that only a small sliver of humanity had the resources and power to translate sci-fi visions into reality — to boldly go where no one has gone before. The rest of the world is forced to “live inside someone else's imagination,” Benjamin said.

“What motivates me is to radically expand that imagination,” she said.

As the novel coronavirus devastated communities of color and protests erupted over the long history of police violence against Black Americans, the nation began to confront how institutions have long failed people of color. Benjamin, professor of African American studies, envisions a path to structural changes and a more equitable future by recognizing the



PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

failures of the past. Those failures, she believes, are written in data.

Evidence of prejudice and racial inequality are baked into the numbers coming from institutions such as banks, hospitals, schools and prisons. But data can be misinterpreted or intentionally twisted through stories and narratives. In this era of misinformation, if data are to be used for justice, Benjamin argues, the data alone are not enough. Researchers need to be “as rigorous about the stories as they are the statistics,” she said.

In 2018, when Benjamin created the Ida B. Wells JUST Data Lab, her goal was to shrink the space between data and interpretation by providing context.

“The concept of JUST Data is to highlight that no data are actually objective,” said Cierra Robson, Class of 2019 and a mentee of Benjamin’s. “Instead we need to find ways to make it just – as in justice. We need to identify ways to use data for the social good.”

The disproportionate number of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19 among people of color, for example, should ideally lead to a greater allocation of resources in those communities to help curb the disparity.

Instead, at a press conference in early April, a government official called for people of color to “step up” and avoid tobacco, alcohol and drugs – placing the blame not on systemic failures, but on the very people who are suffering.

“People likely see those numbers and think, ‘What are those people

doing to get infected at such a high rate?’” Benjamin said. “It becomes even greater fuel for pathologizing and blaming people who are most affected.”

Benjamin’s efforts are not the first attempts to use data to upend racial injustice. The lab’s namesake is Ida B. Wells, the civil rights leader, suffragette and investigative journalist. In 1895, in the midst of intense racial violence targeting African Americans in the post-Reconstruction era, Wells published the *Red Record*, a historic effort to quantify lynchings in the United States after slavery.



Illustration by Matilda Luk, Office of Communications; image of Ida B. Wells circa 1895 by Cihak and Zima, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons; image of Justice from iStock

“This was an early example of using data for anti-racist ends,” Robson said. “It is the tradition from which we come and an exemplar of the work we do.”

Robson is the associate director of the JUST Data Lab’s new Pandemic Portal, which collects, examines and distributes data on the impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. The team formed the portal in response to what Benjamin calls the converging crises of SARS-CoV-2 and police brutality.

“Forty-million-plus people have lost their jobs, but the top millionaires

have made money this year,” Benjamin said. “And we’ve deputized police to manage that powder keg of inequality.”

In summer 2020, about 40 undergraduates worked on the Pandemic Portal with Benjamin, whose goal is to mentor 100 students every year. The students partnered with community organizations working to address racial inequality in the context of the pandemic. They gathered data on the racial dimensions of the pandemic across 10 domains: arts,



mutual aid, mental health, testing and treatments, education, prisons, policing, work, housing, and health care. The resulting data-based tools and resources are available on the Pandemic Portal website.

“One of the beautiful things about the Pandemic Portal has been realizing that each of these categories, which seemed very separate — police violence and prisons on one hand, and education, hospitals and health care on the other — are actually deeply connected,” Robson said.

Masha Miura, Class of 2021, investigated policing for the Pandemic Portal. Her group worked with Stop LAPD Spying, a coalition of community members in Los Angeles, to investigate how government efforts to track COVID-19 cases could feed harmful forms of surveillance, like predictive policing, or lead to deportations of undocumented people.

This practice can erode trust in medical providers, leading people to avoid seeking care. The researchers created data visualizations that showed how some government contractors had misused data in the past, and they provided resources to inform the community about how to protect themselves.

“Ruha has given me a lot of hope for what it means to be a student activist,” Miura said, “and shows how research at Princeton can actually give back to these communities.”

This article was originally published in the University’s annual research magazine Discovery: Research at Princeton.

JANUARY 29, 2021

Teaching With Collections: ‘Reading Toni Morrison’ in a Virtual World

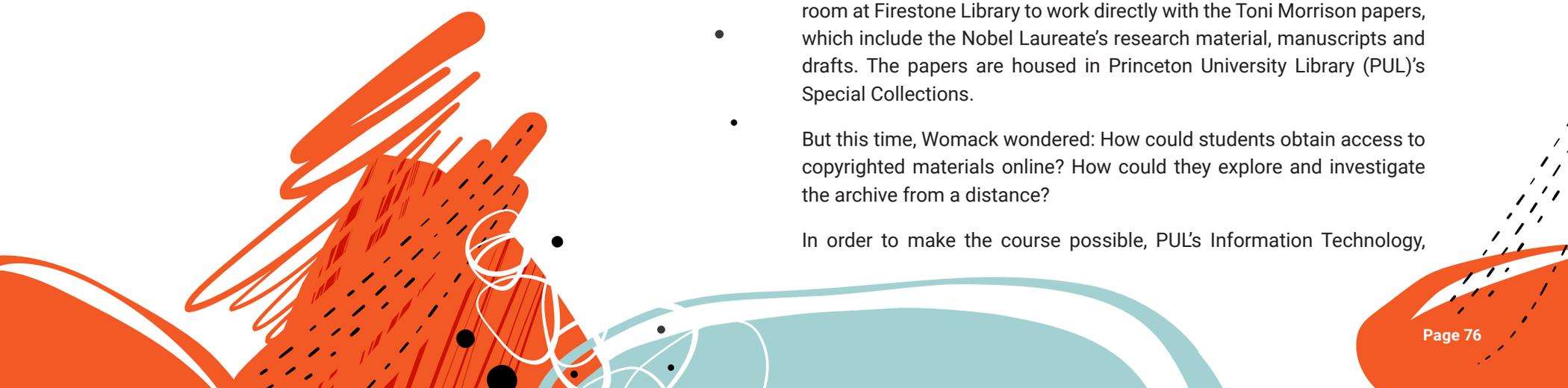
by Emily Judd, Princeton University Library

What is it like to pore over — and even touch — the handwriting of a world-renowned author on the lined notepaper on which she drafted her famous novels? What do you learn about the writing process from reading an author’s handwritten pen and pencil scribbles as she made changes to early drafts of work on typewritten pages? And what happens when access to those literary pages of gold is threatened by the pandemic?

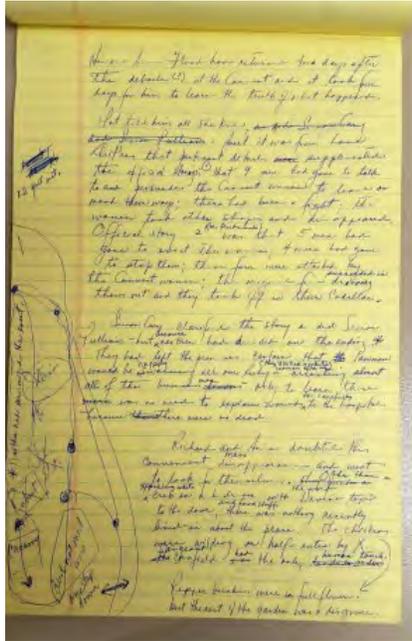
In fall 2020, with classes continuing to be taught virtually due to COVID-19, Assistant Professor of English and African American Studies Autumn Womack faced unique hurdles as she planned her course “Topics in African American Literature: Reading Toni Morrison.” The last time Womack taught the class, in spring 2019 (then titled “Toni Morrison and the Ethics of Reading, her students regularly visited the reading room at Firestone Library to work directly with the Toni Morrison papers, which include the Nobel Laureate’s research material, manuscripts and drafts. The papers are housed in Princeton University Library (PUL)’s Special Collections.

But this time, Womack wondered: How could students obtain access to copyrighted materials online? How could they explore and investigate the archive from a distance?

In order to make the course possible, PUL’s Information Technology,



Imaging and Metadata Services team, including Esmé Cowles and Kate Lynch, designed a custom authentication system for the 11 enrolled students that granted limited access to the digitized materials. The



A draft page of "Paradise" by Toni Morrison. Photo by Don Skemer, Princeton University Library

students also gained firsthand insights into the author's creative process through an online conversation with Morrison's long-time assistant, Rene Boatman, who now serves as a consultant to the collection and is involved in the library's acquisition of African American literature.

"When I learned that we'd be teaching online, I knew that exactly translating the power of hands-on research would be impossible," Womack said. "But I also knew that working online could open students to a wider range of texts and create the context where they could consistently return to or reference the material."

She also discovered unexpected advantages. "What has been really wonderful about teaching online is that we can just stop in the middle of class and turn to a piece of material from the papers," she said. "I can weave in an in-class exercise where students speculate about how a certain file of research material shaped the text."

Morrison joined the University as the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities in 1989. She taught courses in creative writing, African American studies, English and American studies for 17 years until 2006. In 1993, she founded the Princeton Atelier, a unique academic program that brings together professional artists from different disciplines to create new work in the context of a semester-long course. In 2012, she

'returned home' to Princeton to read from her then-new novel "Home," to a packed audience of students, faculty, staff and community members in Richardson Auditorium. She died in 2019 at the age of 88.

Womack's students said the experience of working with the digital archives was meaningful in several ways.

"We were really lucky, as some of the only people with access," said Isabel Griffith-Gorgati, a member of the Class of 2021 who is concentrating in English and has taken previous courses where she has enjoyed hands-on experiences with the Special Collections.

When the class read "Beloved," one group of students gave a presentation on Morrison's sketch of a family tree, which is part of the Morrison papers. The students emphasized how the tree raised new questions about futurity, genealogy and inheritance in the book.

Sophie Garcia, a member of the Class of 2021 and an English major, said she admired Morrison's commitment to research and to revision in her writing process. "We found instances in the archives where Morrison did a lot of name changing to make something more meaningful. We all know there is intentionality with authors, but it's so impressive with Morrison."

Archives and conversations: Studying Morrison at Princeton is 'a gift'

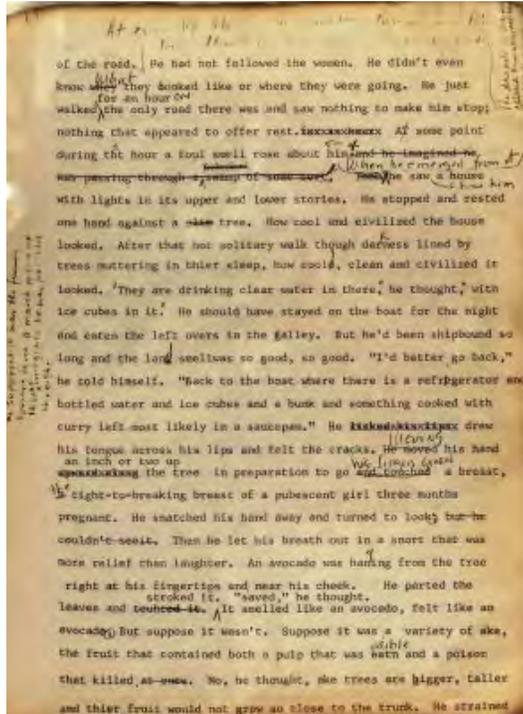
Following a fire in her home in 1993, Toni Morrison began donating her notes, manuscripts and related materials to Princeton University Library. Pictured: A corrected page draft from "Tar Baby." Photo by Don Skemer, Princeton University Library

Boatman joined a class session through Zoom to share her experiences working with the renowned author for over 20 years, who she describes as a prodigious reader and thorough researcher.

Boatman said: "For example, some of the many logistical questions



that had to be answered during the writing of 'Home' were: What were the conditions in Korea? Due to redlining, where could Black folks live in 1950s Portland? By what means is a Black man able to travel from Portland, Oregon, to Lotus, Georgia, where could he eat, stay the night? When were public services such as water and sewer available to rural Georgians?"



Following a fire in her home in 1993, Toni Morrison began donating her notes, manuscripts and related materials to Princeton University Library. Pictured: A corrected page draft from "Tar Baby." Photo by Don Skemer, Princeton University Library

Morrison loved the research involved in a project and admitted that it was sometimes difficult to know when to stop, Boatman told the students. "When you read her books, you realize how seamlessly she wove her discoveries into the creative fabric of her work," she said.

When asked what she admired most about Morrison, Boatman said: "Ms. Morrison knew what she wanted. Nothing got in the way of her work. She was not distracted by things she didn't want to be distracted by. I admired that focus."

Griffith-Gorgati said she appreciated learning about the trajectory of Morrison's career

and her impact not only as a writer, but also as an editor at Random House.

Garcia said: "This has been the highlight of my semester. It was the class I looked forward to each week. It was the closest to what it could have been in person, a credit to Professor Womack."

"Studying Morrison's literature at Princeton is really such a gift," said

Womack. "Because she taught at Princeton for so many years and was so deeply connected to the campus and community, there is a special feeling of proximity to the work and students are consistently amazed by the idea that they are studying her work in a place that was so important to her. More than that, we have the privilege of having access to her papers in Special Collections."

To learn more about Morrison, read the University's story on her life and legacy and the Humanities Council's Memorial Resolution.

Editor's note: This story is part of PUL's Teaching with Collections series.

[Originally published on January 28, 2021 via the Princeton University Library]

