

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



Professor Nitasha Sharma moderates a conversation with Roxane Gay. Photo courtesy of @NorthwesternU Twitter Account.

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

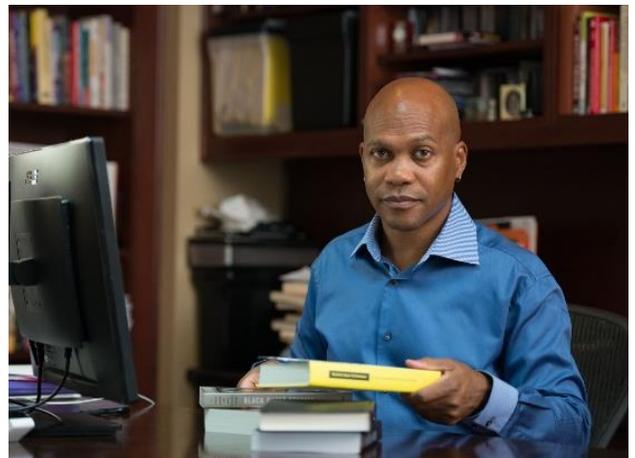
Greetings!

It is hard to believe that another year has already passed, but here we are near the end of the academic year! As usual, our faculty and students have been busy making an impact in the world through their scholarship, teaching and activism—chronicled over the next few pages.

We are also adding new faces to our ranks, with the hiring of tenure-track faculty, postdoctoral fellows and visiting professors. These scholars will bring new ideas to the department and strengthen the already robust conversations we are having about the future of African American Studies.

As we celebrate the 50th Commemoration of the Bursar's Office Takeover, which eventually led to the founding of this department, it is reassuring that the University's commitment to AFAM is unquestionable as compared to those fomenting days of activism in the 1960s. We are indeed bearing the fruits of those students' labor. And it is up to us to pay it forward.

Warmly as ever,
E. Patrick Johnson



*Professor E. Patrick Johnson
Chair, Department of African American Studies*

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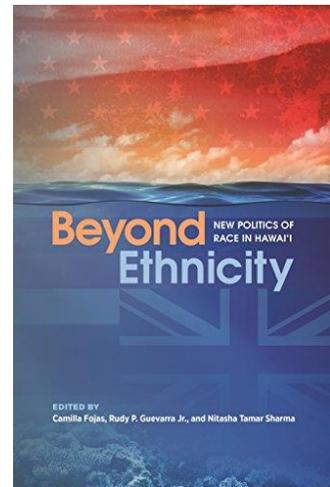
FACULTY NEWS

E. Patrick Johnson

- Was an Annenberg School for Communication Visiting Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania during Fall Quarter 2017, where he was in residence and taught a graduate seminar.
- Recently did a week-long residency at Davidson College, where he conducted workshops and delivered the *Lorenzo Dow Turner Distinguished Africana Lecture*.

Nitasha Sharma

- Professor Sharma's co-edited volume, *Beyond Ethnicity: New Politics of Race in Hawai'i* was just published by the University of Hawai'i Press.
- Contributed to the preface of a special issue of *Scholar and Feminist* online on *Feminist and Queer Afro-Asian Formations*.
- In 2017-2018, Professor Sharma also earned her 12th teaching award, a Faculty Honor Roll award from the Associated Student Government at Northwestern University.
- Currently writing an ethnography, *Hawai'i is my Haven: Race and Indigeneity in the Black Pacific*, for Duke University Press.



Professor Nitasha Sharma's co-edited volume

PROFESSOR CELESTE WATKINS-HAYES NAMED ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Professor Celeste Watkins-Hayes was recently appointed Associate Vice President for Research at Northwestern. As an AVP, Professor Watkins-Hayes oversees several University Research Institutes and Centers, primarily in the social sciences and humanities. She also joins her AVP colleagues as a strategic advisor to the Vice President for Research and spearheads initiatives designed to support the research of faculty working primarily, but not exclusively, in the social sciences and humanities.



Professor Celeste Watkins-Hayes

THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR kihana miraya ross



Professor kihana miraya ross

The department would like to extend a warm welcome to kihana miraya ross, who will be joining our faculty this fall as an assistant professor.

Dr. ross is a Ford Foundation postdoctoral fellow in the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis at the University of Texas at Austin. She completed her Ph.D. in the Social and Cultural Studies in Education program at the University of California, Berkeley in 2016. Her program of research draws on critical ethnographic and participatory design methodologies to examine the multiplicity of ways that antiblackness is lived by Black students in what she calls the afterlife of school segregation, a framework that centers the ways in which despite the end of legal segregation of schooling, Black students remain systematically dehumanized and positioned as uneducable. Critically, her work also explores how Black educators and students collectively imagine and resist antiblackness, and racialization processes, more generally.

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Danielle Bainbridge

THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW POSTDOC DANIELLE BAINBRIDGE

The department would also like to extend greetings to Danielle Bainbridge, who will be joining us this fall as our newest postdoc.

Danielle graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a B.A. in English and Theatre Arts. She will receive her PhD in African-American Studies and American Studies, as well as a certificate in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, from Yale University in May.

Danielle's research focuses on comparative work among African American and Caribbean theatre, performance and literature from the 19th century to contemporary. Her ongoing project, *Refinements of Cruelty: Enslavement, Enfreakment, and the Performance Archive*, examines the lives and archives of African-American sideshow and freak show performers who were formerly enslaved.

Her creative writing appears in *Moko Magazine*, *Killens Review of Arts & Letters*, and *The Mechanics' Institute Review Online*. She also hosts, researches and writes a web series about under told histories for PBS Digital Studios titled *Origin of Everything* which you can find on YouTube and Facebook. Her first play, *Curio* (a cabinet of curiosities), will be produced by the Theatre Arts Department at UPenn, first in Philadelphia in April 2018 and then at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2018.

She will be teaching two courses during Spring Quarter 2019: Introduction to African American Studies (236-0-20) and Race and Literature in 19th Century America (335-0-20).

THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES WEINBERG VISITING FELLOW MARLON BAILEY

The department is excited to announce that Professor Marlon M. Bailey is joining us this fall as a Weinberg Visiting Fellow. Professor Bailey is an Associate Professor of Women and Gender Studies in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. He holds a PhD in African Diaspora Studies, with a designated emphasis in Gender, Women and Sexuality from the Department of African American Studies at the University of California-Berkeley.

His book, *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit*, was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2013. In 2014, *Butch Queens Up in Pumps* was awarded the Alan Bray Memorial Book Prize by the GL/Q Caucus of the Modern Language Association and a finalist for the Lambda Literary Book Award in LGBT studies. Dr. Bailey has published in *Signs*, *Feminist Studies*, *Souls*, *Gender, Place, and Culture*, *The Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, *AIDS Patient Care & STDs*, *LGBT Health* and several book collections.

Professor Bailey is also a theatre/performance artist and recently performed his one-man show in progress, *Exploring Black Queer Sex, Love, and Life in the Age of AIDS*, at Concordia University in Montréal.

He will teach two Fall Quarter 2018 courses: Black Feminist Theory (380-0-20) and Queer of Color Critique (480-0-21).



Professor Marlon M. Bailey

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Graduate students Isaac Ginsberg Miller and Ashley Dennis. Photo courtesy of Genie Lemieux.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Ashley Dennis

- Presented research in April at the Organization for American Historians Conference in Sacramento, California.

Theo Foster

- Co-organized a panel titled *Neoliberal Critical Black Studies and Black Study* that he presented with Casey Goonan at Birmingham City University's newly-minted Black Studies program in Birmingham, England.

Chelsea Frazier

- Has been awarded Northwestern University's Presidential Fellowship, the highest honor for graduate students at the university.

Claudia Garcia-Rojas

- Was the recipient of two Diversity and Inclusiveness grants from the American Philosophical Association and was selected to participate in a professionalization workshop by Kathryn Sophia Bell (formerly Kathryn Gines).
- Invited to give a talk on April 15 at Amiens University, France based on her dissertation research that examines how the policing of Blackness operates through the national security paradigm.
- Co-organizing a conference at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle where she'll present findings from her archival research on April 27.

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GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS (CONTINUED)**Isaac Ginsberg Miller**

- Presenting his paper, “*This Thing of Separation*”: Mapping Transnational Black Feminist Poetics at the American Literature in the World Graduate Conference in April at Yale University.
- Was selected to participate in the Summer 2018 Northwestern University - SSRC Dissertation Proposal Development (DPD) Program.

Christine Goding-Doty

- Has accepted a two-year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in affiliation with the English Department and the Center for Humanities. It begins in August 2018.

Casey Goonan

- Co-organized a panel titled *Neoliberal Critical Black Studies and Black Study* that he presented with Theo Foster at Birmingham City University’s newly-minted Black Studies program in Birmingham, England.

Sureshi Jayawardene

- Has accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in Africana Studies at San Diego State University.

Marlon Millner (Affiliate Graduate Student— Department of Religious Studies)

- Recently had an OpEd piece published in the daily newspaper in Memphis, TN about a large Pentecostal Christian denomination and its connection to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Had a book review published in *Pnuema: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 39, Issue 4, 2017, on *The Labor of Faith; Gender and Power in Black Apostolic Pentecostalism* by Judith Casselberry.
- Throughout Winter and Spring quarters, gave presentations – mainly on Pentecostalism – at multiple conferences, including the inaugural Political Theology Network conference at Emory University in February.

Sam Tenorio

- Has accepted a one-year Postdoctoral Fellowship at Penn State University attached to the Africana Research Center and in affiliation with Comparative Literature & Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. They will begin in July 2018.

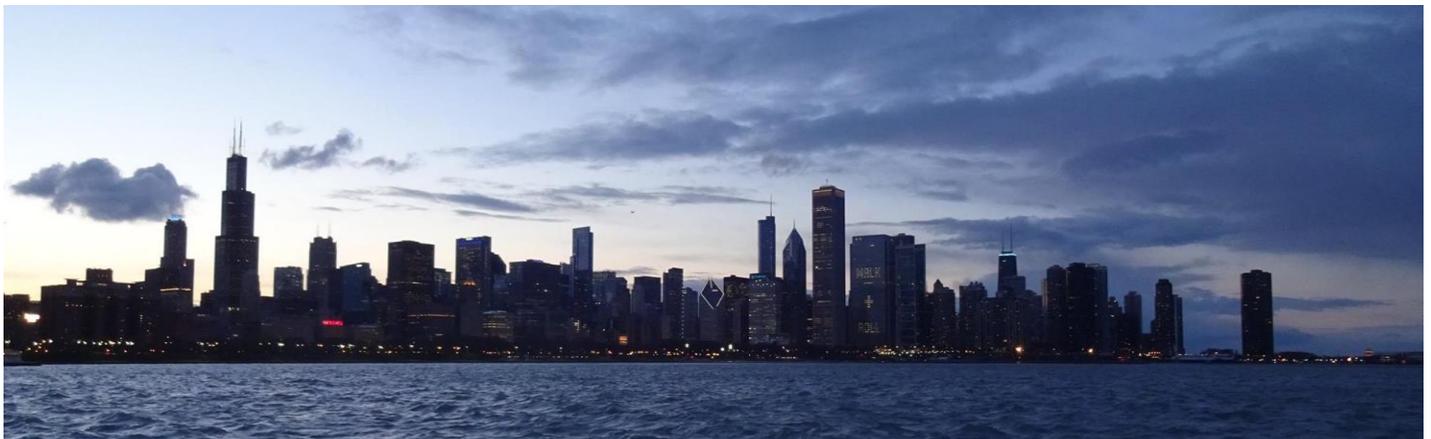
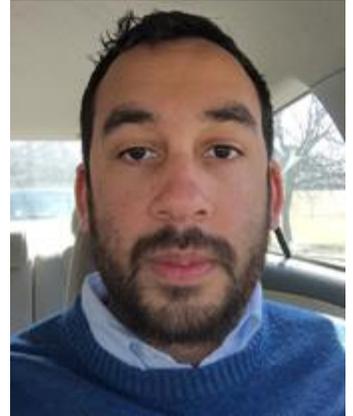


Photo courtesy of Seth Bernstein.

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THEO FOSTER DELIVERS GUEST LECTURE AT VERNON HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

In late February, PhD candidate Theo Foster gave a guest lecture on Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me* for English classes at Vernon Hills High School. Frustrated with her students' engagement with Coates' powerful reckoning with racism, race and white supremacy in America, AP English teacher Tara Nieves reached out to our department for support. Students often lamented that a "suburban bubble" prevented them from understanding the "issue of being Black in America today." Foster challenged the notion of "living in a bubble" through Coates' juxtaposition of the classroom and the library, describing the former as "a jail of other peoples' interests" and the latter as "open, unending, free." In addition, he encouraged students to reflect critically on how "the bubble" of the Chicago suburbs is maintained by the forces, histories and social contexts Coates' intimately details in his text.



Theo Foster

He concluded the lecture with a critical self-reflection on his own confrontation with a suburban high school bubble in Alabama that celebrates racist Confederate iconography through two images. The first image is of a 30-foot Confederate flag banner with the text *The Rebels Are Back* used during a 2004 high school football game. The second image was a social media screenshot of a white classmate's apology and self-reflection ten years later on his silence and absence as an ally during a contentious student-led campaign to remove the flag and mascot. The successful high school lecture demonstrates the importance of African American literature, African American Studies and the discipline's relationship to the broader Chicagoland educational community.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS**Amira Danan**

- Will be performing in the cast of *Ever in the Glades*, a new play written by Laura Schellhardt. It will be performed at Northwestern's Louis Theatre in the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center from May 18-27 and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. this June.

Sarah Evans

- Will be studying abroad in Cape Town this summer, working on social justice advocacy through an internship.



Sarah Evans

Dante Gilmer

- Has been a Mellon Fellow for the last year. His project has been focused on an interrogation of the ways that digitization and celebratory multiculturalism are affecting ideas of authenticity within the commercial underground beat scene. This is a fluid, relatively non-geographic space comprised of music producers who aren't popular in the mainstream, but make enough money to sustain themselves through their music, therefore situating them outside conceptions of the underground.

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UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS (CONTINUED)

Shari Gordon

- Working as a research assistant in the DICE (Diversity of Identities in Cultural Environments) Lab in the psychology department.
- Her group's research was recently accepted to the Society for Research on Adolescence. Along with her co-researchers, Shari received an Undergraduate Travel Grant from the psychology department in order to travel to the conference as representatives of the department.



Sayed Sánchez

Sayed Sánchez

- Working on a Mellon Mays project on Afro-Latinx studies titled *Subverting the Black/White Binary: Afro-Latinidad Identity & Adolescence*. The project looks to the ways in which Afro-Latinidad destabilizes a normative understanding of Latinidad as mutually exclusive from African diaspora.
- Presented his work last Fall at the Mellon Mays Midwest Regional Undergraduate Conference at Carleton College.



Ericka Woods

Ericka Woods

- Elected to be the Secretary of For Members Only (FMO), Northwestern's Black Student Alliance for the 2018-19 year.
- Has also been elected to be Vice-President of the Women's Residential College for the 2018-19 year.
- Selected to be a Research Assistant (RA) for the Social Cognition and Intergroup Processes (SCIP) Lab over the summer through the Institute of Policy Research (IPR) Summer Research Assistant program.
- Earned a spot on the Dean's List for her academic performance in Winter Quarter.



Professor Adrienne D. Davis delivers the 2017 Allison Davis Lecture. Photo courtesy of Genie Lemieux.

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UPCOMING EVENTS (SUMMARIES COURTESY OF PLAN IT PURPLE)***May 1: Opening of They Demanded Courageously: the 1968 Northwestern Bursar's Office Takeover***

Fifty years ago, more than 120 Black students occupied the Bursar's Office to draw attention to a list of 15 demands that would address racial inequalities on campus. In honor of this important anniversary, this exhibition draws upon the holdings of University Archives to remember the historic protest that achieved lasting change at Northwestern.

May 2: Angela Jackson to deliver Forrest Lecture

Angela Jackson is an award-winning poet, playwright and novelist. Born in Greenville, Mississippi, she is the author of numerous collections of poetry, including the National Book Award-nominated *And All These Roads Be Luminous: Poems Selected and New*. Her novel *Where I Must Go* won the American Book Award in 2009. Its sequel, *Roads, Where There Are No Roads*, was published in 2017. In 2017, Jackson also completed the biography of Gwendolyn Brooks, *A Surprised Queenhood in the New Black Sun: The Life & Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks*. Jackson spent her early life in Greenville before moving with her family to Chicago's South Side. Jackson earned a B.A. at Northwestern University, where she received the Academy of American Poets Prize, and earned her M.A. in Latin American and Caribbean studies at the University of Chicago. In Chicago, she became a prominent member of the Organization of Black American Culture.



Award-Winning Poet Angela Jackson. Photo courtesy of the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame.

The Forrest Lecture will be held on Wednesday, May 2 at 4:00 p.m. in Harris 107. It is free and open to the public.

May 4: Staged Reading of Oral Histories of Students involved in the Bursar's Office Takeover

Directed and scripted by Professor E. Patrick Johnson, *My Soul Looks Back and Wonders: A Staged Reading of Voices from the 1968 Bursar's Office Takeover* will be presented as a part of a morning of events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1968 takeover of Bursar's office. The reading and other events will take place in Millar Chapel, beginning at 9 a.m.

HOW TO SUPPORT AFAM

To continue the great work of our students and faculty, please consider contributing directly to the department. With your generous gift, we will be able to fund student travel experiences to conduct important research; support the scholarly production and innovative teaching of our faculty; and produce outstanding programming for the campus, Evanston and Chicago communities. We could not do it without your support.

Please visit our website <http://www.afam.northwestern.edu/community/how-to-support-afam.html> for instructions on how to give directly to the department.