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Spring 2024

Africana Studies Newsletter, Spring 2024

Connecticut College

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Africana Studies Newsletter

Spring 2024

Check out our Fall 2024 offerings!

- West African Dance
- African American History: 1865-Present
- African History Since 1800
- Inquiry in Black
- Philosophy of Race and Racism
- Afro-Diasporic Dance
- New World Black Masculinities
- Race, Gender, and the Mass Media
- Multicultural Psychology
- Intersectional Identities in US Film
- Is Africa Poor?
- Commemoration

Check the Fall 2024 course schedule for more information!



Welcome our new AFR faculty member!

Africana Studies is thrilled to announce our first linked hire, Dr. Shakita Thomas Kpetay! Dr. Thomas Kpetay will be joining the Education Studies department this coming Fall, but will also be linked with Africana Studies, where she will teach two courses per year for Africana, including the introductory course (AFR 237). She is a scholar, educator, and life coach who currently studies Culture and Teaching in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities. A native of Chicago, IL, her research broadly focuses on African American identity and education, racial capitalism, school restructuring/ school closures, culturally relevant pedagogy, and non-formal Black education. Some of her past projects include: African American identity in Cameroon and Ghana, the Young Women Initiative of Minnesota, and (Pp)an Africanism and non-formal Black education. Dr. Thomas Kpetay has presented her work at national and international conferences such as the Critical Race Ethnic Studies Association, American Educational Research Association, and the Comparative and International Education Society. Furthermore, she is a member of Solidarity Twin Cities and Co-Chair of the Nu Skool for Afrikan American Thought. In her free time, she enjoys participating in Afro-beats Zumba, spending time with family and dogs, and taking short walks around the neighborhood. We welcome Dr. Shakita Thomas Kpetay to Connecticut College!



Would you like to become an Africana major or minor? Want to be part of our SAB? Got a programming idea for the Fall? Contact Prof. Harris: charris4@conncoll.edu.

Also in this issue:

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More New Additions to Africana!

WELCOME

Dr. Taylor Desloge



Africana Studies welcomes Dr. Taylor Desloge, a social historian of 19th- and 20th-century African American and urban history. Dr. Desloge is particularly interested in how African Americans defined health and well-being in the context of the industrial city and how those ideas served as a basis for critique and political action. He offers courses ranging from a survey course in African American history to seminars on the Black Freedom Struggle, modern American segregation, race and medical history, and the Great Migration. Dr. Desloge is already a visiting assistant professor in History and has been serving on our Steering Committee. He will now be teaching two dedicated courses every year for Africana Studies. Welcome, Dr. Desloge!

Dr. Kendell Coker



Africana Studies welcomes Dr. Kendell Coker to our Steering Committee! Dr. Coker is a clinical psychologist with a specialization in forensic psychology and is also an attorney! His primary research interests include the study of trauma, substance use, juvenile delinquency, and aggression/violence (e.g., community violence, interpersonal violence, group conflict). His research also explores racial and health-related disparities in the criminal justice system and the contributing impact of systemic bias/discrimination. He emphasizes that we cannot ignore the role of societal bias and discrimination as causal factors in multiple negative outcomes among minoritized populations. Welcome, Dr. Coker!

Africana and CCSRE Go to the NMAAHC!



On Feb. 23-25, AFR affiliated faculty-- Profs. Cherise Harris (SOC), Jennifer Rudolph (SOC), and Carla Parker-Athill (BIO)-- along with senior Africana major, Serena Prince, and several CCSRE students took a Black History Month trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, DC. For Serena, this was actually her second trip to the NMAAHC this year. According to Serena, "Going to the NMAAHC is an extremely meaningful experience . . . It felt like I was walking through time and history, following the footprints of those who came before me." She went on to say, "Majoring in Africana Studies has always been a form of self-determination for me and I was grateful to celebrate my love for Black history in this way!" The trip was also very meaningful for Profs.

(cont. on p. 5)



What is Africana Studies? What Can I Do with a Degree in Africana?



Africana Studies represents a tradition of intellectual inquiry born from the Black freedom struggle and is thus concerned with the issues of slavery, colonialism, racism, and shifting notions of Blackness. It is a dynamic and expansive field that interrogates the philosophies, cultures, and histories of people of African descent, as well as their complex global realities. In addition, the program strives to highlight a multiplicity of experiences, using an intersectional lens that explores the connections between race, ethnicity, nation, class, gender, and sexuality. **A major in Africana Studies can lead you to a wide array of career paths in areas like the arts, business, law, media, medicine, politics, or sports education. See some famous Africana majors and minors below!**

At Connecticut College, Africana Studies uses an interdisciplinary and transnational approach to the study of peoples throughout the African diaspora. The departments of Anthropology, Art History, Dance, Economics, Education, English, Film Studies, French, Government, History, Human Development, Music, Philosophy, Sociology (and more!) contribute courses to this program, covering Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe.

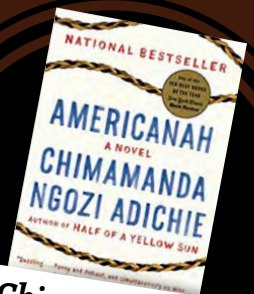
**Check out
our
affiliated
faculty on
the next
page!**



**Dr. Mae Jemison,
physician &
NASA astronaut**



**Michelle Obama,
lawyer &
former First Lady**



**Chimamanda Ngozi
Adichie,
bestselling author**

**Aaron MacGruder,
cartoonist and creator
of *The Boondocks***

**Angela
Bassett**

**Marc Morial, former
mayor of New Orleans &
president of the
National Urban League**

**Angela Bassett,
Golden Globe winning
actress**



**Ava DuVernay,
Oscar-nominated
filmmaker**

**They majored or minored in
Africana Studies and you can, too!**

Africana Affiliated Faculty

In addition to Profs. Coker, Desloge, and Thomas Kpetay, these are our other Africana-affiliated faculty:

Shani Collins

Associate Prof. of Dance

Specializations: West African dance and folklore, dance theory and composition, choreography, cultural arts Study Away experiences.



Hubert Cook

Assistant Prof. of English

Specializations: Black Studies, African American and Caribbean literature & culture, Black sentience, gender studies.



Kate Rushin

Prof. of English & Poet in Residence

Specializations: 20th century Black women writers, the African American poetic tradition, women of color feminisms and intersectionality



Daniel Moak

Assistant Prof. of Government

Specializations: race and ethnic politics, public policy, American political thought, Constitutional law



Carla Parker-Athill

George & Carol Milne Assistant Prof. of Biology

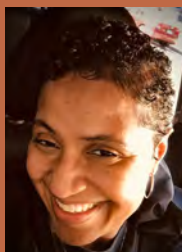
Specializations: molecular neuroscience, neurobiology, immunology



Cherise Harris

Associate Prof. of Sociology and Incoming Interim Director

Specializations: race, class, and gender inequality; intersectionality; sociology of race and ethnicity; race in the mass media; the Black middle class



Isaac Gottesman

Lenore Tingle Howard '42 Associate Prof. of Education Studies

Specializations: critical theories of education; history of education, ideas, and left movements in the U.S.; philosophical and social foundations of educational inquiry



Salma Siddique

Visiting Associate Prof. of Human Development

Specializations: (auto)ethnography; displacement, loss, absence, and search for meaning; ambivalence, ambiguity, and paradox



Sana Abdi

Jacon & Hilda Blaustein Assistant Prof. of French and Francophone Studies

Specializations: North African literature and culture, bilingualism, postcolonial & decolonial studies



Rashelle Litchmore

Assistant Prof. of Human Development

Specializations: ethnic & racial identity, intersectionality, social policy, education, applied social psychology



Matt Swagler

Assistant Prof. of History

Specializations: modern Africa, decolonization, Africa and the U.S., youth and childhood



Jennifer Rudolph

Associate Prof. of Sociology

Specializations: critical race theory, Latino cultural studies, masculinity theory





Africana and CCSRE at the NMAAHC (cont.)



Harris and Parker-Athill. Prof. Parker-Athill noted, "The museum . . . reminds us of how close we are to our collective past, how tenuous the rights we hold are, and the responsibility we all have to learn, remember and preserve historical truths. [It] also, importantly, showcases our joy, our perseverance and our innovation in the midst of the most unimaginable circumstances." For Prof. Harris, this was a culmination of a dream to be able to visit the NMAAHC and take students with her: "Everywhere you looked, there was a stunning, colorful display of Blackness throughout history. I hope to go back soon with more students because there was so much to see!" We look forward to offering more trips in the future in order to continue our exploration of the histories and cultures of people of African descent.

A Tribute to Our Outgoing Director, Andrew Lopez



The Africana Studies faculty and students would like to extend a HUGE thank you to Andrew Lopez for his service as Director of Africana Studies for the last three years. Andrew is the Research Support & Instruction Librarian at Conn. In addition to his work in Africana Studies, he is also the liaison to the Anthropology, English, Government/ International Relations, Music, and Philosophy departments, and is on the Holleran Center steering committee. Andrew also helped establish the annual Connecticut College Prize for Undergraduate Library Research. According to incoming director, Prof. Cherise Harris (SOC), "Andrew's term as interim director was simply invaluable. He took up the mantle at a critical time for our program and we cannot thank him enough for all of his hard work." About his time with Africana, Andrew says: "One of the things that struck me about my encounters with Africana Studies students is that all of them seem motivated by a deep sense of self-direction in terms of why they wanted to pursue a minor or major in Africana Studies. I think it's a distinguishing feature of the program at Connecticut College. The same can be said of the faculty affiliated with the program and, of course, also the staff [both past and present]." Andrew went on to say, "Africana Studies has always felt like a family to me on this campus and I relish the closeness and brutal honesty of our gatherings and deliberations; nothing compares. The history of the field of Africana and/or Black Studies is surprisingly present (and prescient) in our day-to-day trials and tribulations. It has and will continue to serve as an intellectual guide for me as I navigate the predictable and unforeseeable paths ahead." We look forward to Andrew's continued presence in our program and on the Africana steering committee and thank him again for his service.



Congratulations to the Class of 2024 and particularly our extraordinary Africana seniors: Lyndon Inglis, Serena Prince, and Kayla Tavarez. May you experience all the best life has to offer and use your education in Africana Studies toward liberation.