

CUUUMBA

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THE ANNUAL JOURNAL OF WILLIAM & MARY AFRICANA STUDIES

BREAKING NEW GROUND: Shantá D. Hinton and Her Life of Firsts

Senior Essays:

I Have Been Able to Form
a New and More Inclusive
Worldview

This Village Truly Feels Like
Home

A Hero Speaks of Courage

I Have Gained the Ability to
Live Unapologetically

Welcome Home

Learning Your Own Truth

I No Longer Watch My Favorite
Shondaland Thursday Show Without
Pressing Pause





KUUMBA *(creativity)*

the annual journal of William & Mary Africana Studies

Volume 4: May 2016

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



▲ **Artisia Green, MFA**
*Sharpe Associate Professor
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Director of Africana Studies*

2009, 1997, 1991. . .these are historical markers in the continuum of William & Mary, which document the origins and institutional spirit of the Program in Africana Studies. Our tactical reorganization in 2009 allowed us to become both local and global in scope. Almost twenty formal years and 19 core and 16 affiliate faculty later, our vision is expanding, but two things remain consistent. We remain confident in the immense value of the intellectual and cultural history of peoples of African descent and even more so in our current sociopolitical climate. And we are resolutely committed to the holistic development of our students.

Like other Africana Studies programs and departments across the nation, the mortar of our program is formed by the ideals of community and inclusivity. Yet, the uniqueness of our program is our students. They are the bricks. We develop empowered, culturally competent, interdisciplinary scholars, artists and global servant leaders through

our teaching, research, and service and, in turn, the world benefits.

Girded with the confidence and support of my colleagues, I look forward to serving this self-determined program and its constituents. In this transitional moment between the changing administrations, the program continues to strategize on our collective vision for 2016-2019. How can we best support our faculty and students? What are the ideal recourses for enhancing our curriculum and honors research, attracting new majors and minors, and expanding our study abroad program? How can we revitalize the Africana House, our living and learning residence? What types of programming can we offer that will engage our campus and surrounding community? These are the guiding questions that will inform my direction of, advocacy for, and collaborations both within and outside of the program.

Farewell to our 2016 graduates. "You are the wildest dream of your ancestors." Go out into the world and make yourselves come true. To our present and future students, "[you] are the ones we've been waiting for." There is room for you in our intellectual circle. Join us. The impact we seek to make locally and globally begins with you.

BREAKING NEW GROUND: Shantá D. Hinton and Her Life of Firsts

by Amirio Freeman '17

Witty and straightforward, it is easy to see why Dr. Shantá Hinton, professor, leading researcher, and mentor, has been able to achieve such marvelous accomplishments throughout her career. In celebration of her most recent milestone—becoming William & Mary's first ever minority professor to be offered tenure in the natural sciences—KUUMBA delves into Professor Hinton's life of many firsts.

In a world of division based on superficial differences, Dr. Shantá D. Hinton is interested in broadening our understanding of something that we all have in common: cells.

As an assistant biology professor at William & Mary, Professor Hinton currently oversees a lab, consisting mostly of undergraduate researchers, that is dedicated to uncovering more about how cells interact, relate, and communicate. More specifically, she and her team of students are committed to uncovering more about the functional characteristics of MK-STYX—a pseudophosphatase protein that is a part of a family of cellular regulators known as protein tyrosine phosphatases.

And this research is *groundbreaking*, mostly for two reasons: (1) it has the potential to reveal valuable information about certain biological processes and diseases (including diabetes and Alzheimer's), and (2) it is blazing new trails in relatively untouched territory. With the pseudophosphatase field still in its infancy, Professor Hinton and her lab members are leaders in an entire subset of the world of cellular and molecular biology and biochemistry.

When asked to speak on being a vanguard researcher, with her lab participants, she noted, "As people are beginning to want to learn more about pseudophosphatases, they will cite our work. So imagine how undergraduates will go down in history as being cited as some of the leaders in this field. I've had five students so far who've completed honors theses, and all five of them are coauthors on various papers that have been published by my lab. That for me is very significant."

Before becoming a pioneering force in the realm of cells, the



▲ Patrick Christian '17 and Dr. Shantá D. Hinton analyze the success of his transfer of proteins on a polyvinylidene difluoride membrane. Behind them, Hinton Lab novelist Andrew (Andy) Mattei '18 contributes to lab chores, filling boxes with pipet tips to be autoclaved (sterilized) later.

Professor first became a leader of sorts within her own family.

Born to "blue-collar hard workers" in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, the Professor, as a young girl, became enchanted with the sciences after attempting to piece together the puzzle that was her uncle Earl's cerebral palsy. Describing her curiosity with her uncle's condition, she said, "My grandmother nor my granddad could not answer why our uncle—who was so cool and who we had fun with every day—could not walk or feed himself. He was dependent on our family every day of his life."

This instinctual desire to know the "how" and the "why" of things, coupled with an unwavering determination, led the Professor to becoming a first-generation college student.

Materializing her parents' dream of entering the walls and halls of higher education, she earned an undergraduate degree in biology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and, later, a PhD in cellular and developmental biology from Howard University.

Following the completion of a postdoc at Long Island's Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and after an assistant professorship at Hampton University, Professor Hinton arrived at William & Mary in 2010, becoming the university's first minority hire in the natural sciences. Six years later in February of 2016, she also became the university's first minority professor to be offered tenure in the natural sciences.

First a scholar at the forefront of an entire field and a first-generation college student, Professor Hinton is now also



▲ Dr. Shantá D. Hinton and Veronica (Roni) Nagle '16 leisurely converse as Roni completes preparing glassware for autoclaving (sterilizing). Behind them is another Hinton Lab member, Adom Whitaker '17, weighing agarose.

an instructor who is contributing to William & Mary's long-term goal of diversifying its faculty and staff.

At a university that is steeped in a history of colonialism and slavery, that is currently navigating how to better its racial climate, and whose home for its biology department—Millington Hall—is named after a former professor who terrorized Black youth via “experiments” in the 1800s, Dr. Hinton's status as William & Mary's first minority professor to be granted tenureship in the natural sciences could be thought of as historic. Or even as groundbreaking as her work with MK-STYX.

However, the Professor believes that what has been regarded as a landmark achievement for herself and the university should not be considered as such. For Professor Hinton, becoming a tenured professor was not something that might happen, but rather something that was always going to happen. “Being granted tenureship was what I expected. I knew what my CV looked like, I knew six years ago what I expected it to look like. I am grateful, but I worked hard.”

With her educational background, research achievements, and other professional credentials, Hinton's tenureship was hard-earned and, in a sense, inevitable.

Still, Professor Hinton acknowledges

the larger significance of what it means for her—someone who is maneuvering the STEM world as a Black woman with a legible Southernness—to receive tenureship at William & Mary. While discussing the on-campus response to her becoming tenured, she said, “I stepped back and reassessed everything because the day I was tenured, housekeepers and administrative assistants came and said to me, ‘We are proud of you.’ Plus, with the students in my lab, I saw the excitement in them. I then said to myself, ‘Whoa! Let me pay attention to what

this means.’ Me becoming tenured at William & Mary is bigger than me!”

What Professor Hinton has achieved from a place of loving science has become heavy with political implications.

When asked about her thoughts on why the faculty and staff of science departments of institutions across the nation are not as diverse as they could ideally be, the Professor mentioned personal sacrifice as a possible hindrance to better minority representation. Reflecting back on her own academic career, she described how taking the professorship route may require forfeiting other career paths that offer better pay and more stable funding for research projects.

Also, there is the sacrifice of time that comes with pursuing a career in teaching and research. “It took me six and a half years to receive my PhD, and I spent another five years completing my postdoc. Then I spent three years at Hampton University and then six years here at William & Mary. While it was my personal choice to leave Hampton University to start over here, I went through nine years before knowing whether or not I had a stable job or career.”

So how did she stay determined for over a decade to get to where she is

today? By adopting a self-described “naive” attitude that emboldened her to achieve the loftiest of goals. “If someone else can do it, why can't I? That's my attitude. If they can do it, why can't I do it? It doesn't mean I have to do it as fast as they can, but I definitely believe I can do it just as well.”

Professor Hinton's “can-do” mentality has propelled her through her career, which is, ultimately, less about her many accomplishments and more about her research. Her dedication to what she does is made apparent when speaking about her with her students, who have, in many cases, been able to achieve their own firsts while under her tutelage.

Brittany Flowers '13, a former student and current graduate student in Stanford University's Cancer Biology program, describes the Professor as a “fantastic research mentor” who inspired her to consider pursuing a career in research. Dallas Banks '15, who is also pursuing a PhD, credits Dr. Hinton's “uncanny talent for coaxing the potential out of all her students” for awakening his own passion for the sciences. Also, current student Patrick Christian '17 recalls how Hinton helped him discover his interest in pursuing research: “I remember coming into lab pretty unsure of my ability to contribute to scientific research. However, after finishing the summer doing her bootcamp-style training, I felt that not only did I have the skills needed to have my own project but also that my voice mattered on the subject. She really likes to see her lab members succeed.”

Beyond continuing to mold and cultivate her students, Professor Hinton plans on accomplishing even more in the future. “Becoming tenured? That's what I've done, so what's the next thing I need to do? I need to become a full professor and I need to make sure my MK-STYX research is pushed and is doing well.” With those goals in mind, Dr. Shantá D. Hinton is sure to break even more new ground.

Photos by Stephen Salpukas

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Updates from Africana Studies Alumni



KELLEY DEETZ '02

Dr. Kelley Fanto Deetz received her B.A. in Black Studies from William & Mary in 2002, where she established the Black Studies Club and wrote the first honors thesis in Black Studies at William & Mary. Deetz then earned a M.A. in African American Studies and, from the University of California at Berkeley, a Ph.D. in African Diaspora Studies. She specializes in 19th-century African-American culture, African Diaspora archaeology, and public history. Deetz established and directed the Public History program at Roanoke College, where she was also an Assistant Professor of History. Deetz is the former Vice President and current Board Member of the Legacy Museum of African American History in Lynchburg, Virginia and also the Co-Editor of the African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter. Her manuscript entitled *Bound to the Fire: Virginia's Enslaved Cooks and their Kitchens* (University of South Carolina Press) is due out in 2016, and she is co-producing a documentary with actor and director Nate Parker on the life and legacy of Nat Turner (Tiny Giant Entertainment). As the Research Associate for the University of Virginia's President's Commission on Slavery and the University, she spearheads research efforts to uncover the history of enslaved laborers at UVA.



SYDNEY LESTER '06

In 2010, Sydney Lester earned a Masters in Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University as well as a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary. In the middle of all of that, she also met and married her husband. After graduation, Sydney secured a job as a program director for a mental health organization. Currently, she is working in marketing and community engagement for a mental health and substance abuse organization as well as providing freelance grant writing services for nonprofits. She also expresses her creative side through personal styling with clients and writing for a sustainable fashion, style, and travel blog, Chic Stripes. She and her husband own a home in Forest Hill, on the Southside of Richmond. They love exploring the James River Trail System and spending their free time outdoors. Camping, hiking, and rock climbing are their favorite pastimes.



CRYSTAL MORRISON '09

Crystal Morrison is owner and founder of PsycYourMind, a private practice geared toward creative mental health solutions serving the D.C. metropolitan area. She is also a mentor for the G.I.R.L.S. Club of Hampton, Virginia. Previously, she worked closely with Georgetown University's Department of Psychiatry as a subject matter expert for a white paper on case management, community mental health, and the trajectory of technology that can facilitate wellness. In her spare time she loves to cook, travel, and play with her Teacup Yorkie. Visit PsycYourMind.com to learn more about Crystal's work.

TEACHING IS MY PURPOSE: Life A Year After Graduation

By Nia Ladson '15

Photo courtesy Nia Ladson



▲ Nia Ladson with her students at KIPP Harmony School in Baltimore, MD.

To say that the past year has been a journey that I never expected to embark on would still not say enough about the incredible growth and change that has happened recently in my life. So, let's rewind to the end of my junior year at William & Mary and retrace the steps that got me to where I am now.

As the spring of my junior year came to a close, I began to ask myself a question familiar to most college students: What am I going to do with my life once I graduate? It was then when I began to search for my dream job. As a Sociology and Africana Studies double major at William & Mary, I was in love with all things African Diaspora and was interested in the plight of African Americans in American society. As I became more passionate about social justice and advocacy, I also loved studying all types of injustices. So, especially after long summers of rigorous work and after semesters of mentoring with the Pearls of Great Price program, performing sociological research, and working with the Center for Student Diversity, I started to consider teaching as a career.

This wasn't a new idea for me. In fact, it was an idea I was very familiar with. My mother has run child development centers my whole life and has always prioritized education within our family. Also, the joy of teaching was something I had experienced during past stints with volunteering and

working with children. Therefore, while still in the beginning phases of figuring out my post-graduation plans, I began to look for teacher preparation programs. With my "pay it forward" mentality and interest in social injustices, I knew I wanted to pursue a career that would offer an opportunity to address the "school-to-prison pipeline" trend that plagues many urban, highly populated, and low-income areas in America.

At the time, I had never imagined entering the public school system. However, as a someone living in a nation where there are high teacher turnover rates, incidents of brutality against Black bodies, low expectations for Black and Brown children, and prisons constructed based on literacy rates, I began to imagine myself teaching as a way to invest in, build up, and nurture Black and Brown communities.

So, I applied and researched and called and visited until I was accepted into the Teach For America and Urban Teachers (formerly the Urban Teacher Center) programs. Their models are similar but also fundamentally different. Ultimately, I wanted to be involved with a program that would teach me

and prepare me to teach urban youth in America.. Therefore, I accepted my offer from Urban Teachers. After graduating in May of 2015, I set out for Baltimore, Maryland, where my world would begin to immensely change.

Shortly after arriving, I began my doing my master's coursework, teaching summer school in a classroom, and planning hours of lessons for students. It wasn't easy. I was tasked with an incredible amount of work, but after undergoing the rigor of William & Mary, I knew I could make it through. I was prepared by the institution, especially the university's Sociology Department and Africana Studies program. They changed me and forced me to consider myself, my identity, how I see the world, and what impact I will have in this life. I am a proud alumna of William & Mary, and soon I will be a proud alumna of Lesley University with a Masters in Special Education and a Masters in Elementary Education. With these educational experiences, I have gained the skills needed to enter any classroom and be a great teacher to kids who need to see educators of color in order to have a shot at lifelong success.

Overall, I love my job. I love my students that I currently work with as a kindergarten teacher at KIPP Harmony in Baltimore. Being in Maryland has been an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. The love I receive from and the growth I see in my students are incredible. I have been able to give these little geniuses so much knowledge, so much empowerment, and so much necessary care. I will not say it has been easy, and I will not say I know everything. But I will say that I am willing to do the work, for I firmly believe that teaching is my purpose. It is not just a job: it is a lifelong career and passion I intend to nurture.

I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FORM A NEW AND MORE INCLUSIVE WORLDVIEW

by Jillian Bates '16



My name is Jillian Bates and I am an English and Africana Studies double major. I declared my Africana Studies major the fall semester of my senior year. Instead of this additional major prompting a sudden shift in the direction of my education, it allowed me to acknowledge and succumb to the direction my education has always been heading in throughout my entire four years at William & Mary. As an English major, I have been allowed a lot of freedom in choosing my classes. Most of the time, I found myself choosing classes about African-American literature and history. What I originally perceived as a case of having preferences turned into me adopting a second major. During my small amount of time as an official part of the Africana Studies program, I have discovered my passion for expanding my knowledge about my African-American roots in order to better understand my people's past and present. Ultimately, with that newfound passion, the guidance of inspirational professors, and also my introduction to life-changing works, I have been able to form a new and more inclusive worldview that allows me to better understand the world around me and, thus, also myself.

THIS VILLAGE TRULY FEELS LIKE HOME

by Brielle Welch '16

I never intended to be an Africana Studies major. As an 18-year-old, I was, at first, fully prepared to double major in Psychology and Elementary Education. I was on the fast track to becoming a child psychologist, but I am now incredibly thankful for the roadside distraction that was Professor Artisia Green. Her wisdom, her grace, and her palpable care for the spirit of each of her students allowed for me to take my eyes off the road long enough to discover a new path—a path tailor-made for me and everything that I am.

Since changing majors after completing Professor Green's class, I have never looked back. There is no major like Africana Studies. There are no professors like the ones in this discipline. Instructors like Professor Green, who pushed my



creative mind to see the world in a completely different manner and who gave me a platform from which to tell my story to the world. Or instructors like Professor Charity Hudley, who dreams bigger for me than I could ever dream for myself and who provided support as I took the steps toward making the most of my potential. There is no other major that allows you to feel as though you are constantly surrounded by love, strength, and motivational pushes toward greatness. A recognition of Black excellence, of the past and future, permeates throughout the program.

In all, I have been truly blessed by my experience in the Africana Studies program at William & Mary. It has been said that it takes a village to raise an Africana Studies major, and this village truly feels like home.

A HERO SPEAKS OF COURAGE

by Ebony Lambert '16

“Having courage does not mean that we are unafraid. Having courage and showing courage mean we face our fears. We are able to say, ‘I have fallen, but I will get up.’” –Maya Angelou

Many students come to William & Mary and initially struggle with adapting, either academically, socially, or culturally. They typically then become better adjusted and fall first in love with the fast-paced, community-based atmosphere of “the Alma Mater of a Nation.” My experience here, however, has been markedly different.

I came to William & Mary and had little to no problems settling in my freshman and sophomore years. I loved my roommate and my classes. I found campus life much more vibrant and exciting than my life at home. Everywhere I turned, I found somewhere to thrive and someone to help me along on my journey. Aside from a few issues with adjusting to the racial climate on campus, things went well until the beginning of my junior year.

The above quote by Dr. Maya Angelou speaks of falling, and I—the almond-skinned daughter of a warehouse manager and a janitorial worker, and an individual born and raised in what used to be the capital of the Confederacy—am not a stranger to it. Falling, breaking, finding oneself with too much to bear—these experiences are commonplace in life. There is no shortage of these moments, and this I have known since I was a very little girl. Even with that knowledge, I was surprised when, in the Fall 2014 semester, I found myself fragile and feeling as though William & Mary would break me. I found myself falling, but was blessed to have the Africana Studies program to aid me in believing that I could get up.

I became an Africana Studies major after I realized that penning papers for my previous double major had begun to feel more like carving words into my own tombstone; after being told too many times that I was surprisingly articulate; and after I began to wonder if invisibility was a superpower of mine, since I couldn’t see myself, or people who looked like me, in my coursework or classes. Once I made the switch to Africana Studies, there was no room or need to ever look back.

Only as recently as this past Spring Break have I really been able to process how filling Africana Studies has been for my soul and to understand the impact the program and its faculty have had on my life. I can trace so much of the strength and real-world knowledge that I have gained during



my time at William & Mary back to specific lessons—moments, even—with professors in the Africana Studies program.

While the stress I began to experience as a Black woman at William & Mary (very painfully) taught me about the importance of having and being among people who care for me, the Africana Studies program emphasized the lesson by showing me the significance of community. Professor Robert Trent Vinson taught me that my Black breath had meaning outside of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the current era of mass incarceration—outside of a marginalized identity.

Graduate student and instructor James Padilioni spoke to me about the importance of honoring the ordinary and of valuing my Black body as a site of performative resistance and as a vehicle through which Black culture and identity may continue to move through the world, creating both reality and space. Professor Jody Allen discussed the importance of women in the Civil Rights Movement and helped me understand my own #blackgirlmagic as inherited from Black warrior women who lived, loved, and fought before me. Additionally, Professor Artisia Green has continuously taught me about the importance of personal integration, or the process of taking the many facets of myself and synthesizing them in a way that will allow me to live more and love better. Professor Monica Gosin taught me about the multifariousness of Black experiences and social realities and shared with me the importance of moving beyond the superficial in critical inquiry. Professor Hermine Pinson showed me the significance of honoring the ancestors and reminded me that no matter how often I may displace my poetry and potential, they are never far beneath the surface. Finally, Professor Anne Charity Hudley, in the style of my foremother Toni Morrison, taught me that the things I am toiling with in my present can only have value if they lead to new freedoms and opportunities in the future. All of these experiences have formed a sort of curriculum, if you will, for a larger life lesson on courage.

Courage, I have found, lies at the heart of my #blackgirlmagic and is the foundation of my #blackgirlgenius. I say this

because courage has allowed me to dare to dream of a better future for myself, despite all the obstacles and disadvantages I have faced. Courage has allowed me to get out of bed every morning, despite the abject fear I feel just before my feet hit the ground. Courage has allowed me to pursue dreams and goals when people have flat out told me that I would be better off lowering my expectations. And my courage—my #blackgirlmagic—has allowed me to trust myself and the universe within me—to believe that I will end up exactly where I need to if I allow my heart to guide me.

This courage has led me to the understanding that I am,

in fact, a hero. Not because I have pipe dreams of saving the world, but because every step I take towards building a better future for myself and my community, despite the many obstacles working against me, is an act of pure heroism. After all, not all heroes wear capes. And many don't save the world either. Some, like myself, are able to acknowledge that their lives matter, too, and are content with simply saving themselves. And I am immensely grateful to the Africana Studies faculty and program for helping me develop the tools, skillsets, and courage to do just that.

I HAVE GAINED THE ABILITY TO LIVE UNAPOLOGETICALLY

by Jasmine Leeward '16



Gye Nyame is a West African Adinkra symbol ubiquitous to Ghana. This symbol is quite literally near and dear to my heart for a few reasons: one, I have it tattooed on my back, and two, its meaning, “fear none except God”, is a testament to my time at William & Mary.

I was eighteen when I begged my brother, who is an amazing artist, to put this symbol on me. At the time, I had no idea the weight it would carry or how much I would need to be reminded of its message throughout my time at William & Mary. During a period of so much uncertainty, the symbol has helped me redirect my thoughts and actions. When my tendency to be practical generated feelings of anxiety and self-doubt, the beautiful, black badge on my back reminded me time and time again that I have nothing in this world to be afraid of. Also, the symbol encouraged me to become a major in Africana Studies, instead of something more “safe” or something I knew I was not passionate about. Alongside Gye Nyame, I have had my astounding Africana Studies faculty, staff, and fellow majors to lead and guide me.

The Africana Studies program forced me to take advantage of my liberal arts education. I acquired in-depth knowledge of the history of the Black Diaspora. I have taken courses cross-listed with Sociology, providing insight on what it means to be Black in America and also the structural disadvantages in place that impact the Black community. I have learned about the complexities of African and African-derived religions. I have analyzed the linguistic features of Creole languages. I have studied facets of a resilient people—my people—worthy of examination. Most importantly, over the past four years as an Africana Studies major, I have gained the ability to live unapologetically. I have learned how to not see my own race, gender, abilities, and interests—my true identity—as being contradictions. I am grateful because I know it takes some people a lifetime to get to a point where they truly know themselves.

With Africana Studies, my best work did not take place during my hours of reading and researching and writing. My best work took place during arguments and debates in class, while voicing my sometimes unpopular opinions, and during my drives home, when I would find myself analyzing and critiquing my own ideologies and worldviews. The way I have described my journey may seem unrelated to my studies, but my personal journey is a direct reflection of the knowledge I have gained and also the critical thinking and analysis skills that I have acquired over the course of the past four years. Africana Studies, like my tattoo, has inspired me to relinquish my fears and do the important work of helping other people tell their stories. Not many people can say that.



WELCOME HOME

by Felicia Bowins '16

In his short story *Sonny's Blues*, James Baldwin states, "For while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard. There isn't any other tale to tell, it's the only light we've got in all this darkness." The knowledge I gained from my Africana courses here at William & Mary have greatly contributed to not only my academic growth, but also my personal development as a human being navigating a world that so often rejects the beauty of my people, my history, and my culture. The narratives, principles, and histories presented to me through Africana Studies courses have been a major source of "light" in my life, challenging me to think in ways I never have before.

Upon finalizing the paperwork to officially declare my Africana Studies major, my advisor, Professor Tanglao-Aguas, told me, "Welcome home". Today, his words ring with truth, as I have found a home within the Africana Studies program. Originally, I did not intend to major in Africana Studies, but as I started taking Africana courses, I found myself longing for more and eagerly registered for Africana courses where my schedule would allow. Upon the fall semester of my senior year, unbeknownst to me, I had taken enough credits to double major in English and Africana Studies. By taking courses I enjoyed and found intriguing and meaningful to my life, the Africana Studies program has become a place I can truly call home and a place where faculty members exposed me to knowledge that has changed how I view myself and the world around me.

LEARNING YOUR OWN TRUTH

by Phenan Kidane '16

I wanted to pursue this major because I feel connected to Africana Studies and I wanted to develop more of an understanding about how to study Africa and its history. Additionally, I am also a Government major. Since I have always aimed to have a government career related to the African continent, I have always known that acquiring a more in-depth understanding of African history and politics would be necessary. I have been able to obtain such an understanding with Africana Studies.

I also decided that majoring in Africana Studies was necessary because I honestly felt Africana Studies allowed me to learn about topics I was interested in. Though I have enjoyed taking classes in other departments and programs, this major has given me the type of academic satisfaction I have not gotten from other disciplines.

Africana Studies, therefore, has not only fed my brain, but it has also fed my life and has given me a broader perspective on things. Overall, I know that this major will impact my future because it has given me the information I need to know the truth about the past and present, it has given me the confidence to learn more, and it has taught me I can create change if I take the right steps.

My favorite moment as a student in Africana Studies was when I was discussing my senior project with Professor Tanglao-Aguas and he encouraged me to do the type of research that most interested me. I was hesitant to research what I wanted at first because I did not think that my topic would be interesting enough and because I thought my area of interest was too unoriginal. However, after encouragement from Professor Tanglao-Aguas, I learned that I should never devalue my own perspective. I will take that lesson regarding valuing my own ideas with me as I continue on in life, especially because it reminds me to trust my abilities and have confidence in my ideas. This major has not only taught me about the subject of Africana Studies, but it has also taught me about what it means to be invested in a subject and love it just for the sake of learning your own truth.



I NO LONGER WATCH MY FAVORITE SHONDALAND THURSDAY SHOW WITHOUT PRESSING PAUSE

by Korkor Koppoe '16

This essay is supposed to be about what I gained from majoring in Africana Studies. Now, I have taken a lot of time to think of the perfect, most accurate response and, in the simplest terms, I have gained a lot of headaches. Because of the Africana Studies program, I can no longer casually watch television shows for entertainment purposes. I find myself constantly analyzing the content and thinking about why the writers and directors chose to tell the stories they told, why they picked certain actors to tell those stories, and I also find myself considering the impact of their decisions on certain communities. I can no longer sit back and watch my favorite Shondaland Thursday shows without pressing pause to stir up a conversation with whoever made the mistake of watching TV with me (this is my formal apology to anyone who has ever experienced this).

The Africana Studies program offers a wide variety of courses, from Professor Tanglao-Aguas' Sex & Race in Plays & Films to Professor Green's New Bl*ck Math to Professor Sanford's Arts in Africa. All of these courses have forced me to think about people of color and their cultures and their experiences in ways that have been new for me. As a Ghanaian American who grew up in predominantly White areas, I have constantly dealt with people judging me based on my race and making assumptions about my ability to perform in school. After my first day at William & Mary, I knew that my time confronting these issues of race and identity was far from over.

When interacting with classmates and professors, I would notice little things about people's body language toward me or how they would sometimes take small jabs at me. Currently, there is only one other African American senior chemistry major. Just imagine how that alone has affected my time here. Also during my

time on campus, I have had lab partners who would insist on re-checking my work just to make sure it was correct; study groups who would lie and say they weren't studying just so I would not show up; and the list goes on and on. There were times when I began to think that science was just not for me, because I was tired of having to not only deal with the normal struggles of being a chemistry major, but also the struggles of being a chemistry major who is black and female. That was when I began taking more Africana courses. I found that the Africana Studies program allowed me to finally give a name to all the things I had been experiencing: microaggressions. Taking just a few courses in Africana Studies gave me the scholarly backing to things I had always felt and witnessed. It is sometimes hard to explain to a student during a class discussion that racism still exists when, to them, all of your evidence is just "biased" personal experience. Africana Studies provided me with the confidence and tools to begin to dismantle systems of oppression.

I'll say that I can thank the Africana Studies program for giving me many sleepless nights, not only from staying up to do readings for class, but also from just thinking about why the world is the way it is. I've spent many nights worrying about my future children and how they will learn to navigate a world that may never accept them for who they are. I think about the fears many parents of children of color face each morning as their children leave the house. I think about whether there's really any hope for the future. I think about what can be done to create a lasting change. I think about what I can do, starting in my own community. At the end of the day, I'll say that sleepless nights and headaches are mere side effects of gaining an understanding of African and African American histories and also being able to look at the world through a new lens.





ON THE EVERYDAY RELEVANCE OF AFRICANA STUDIES WITH SETH OPOKEYE '16

WHAT LED YOU TO PURSUE A DEGREE IN AFRICANA STUDIES?

I knew I was going to be a Government major, but I was undecided on what my secondary major or minor was going to be. It wasn't until taking an Africana class with Professor Vinson and having a conversation with now-graduated Africana Studies major Nadia Ilunga '15 that I decided to pursue the major.

HAS BEING IMMERSSED IN THE AFRICANA STUDIES CURRICULUM HAD ANY IMPACT ON HOW YOU PERCEIVE YOUR BLACKNESS, YOUR MALENESS, OR THE INTERSECTION OF BOTH?

I'm a first-generation Ghanaian American, so I did not have parents to lean on in terms of understanding American racial dynamics. However, I was still always aware of them. I think you couple Africana Studies courses with national events and you have a heightened sense of awareness of your existence and your identity. It's given me a fuller picture of who I am.

Also, being involved with Africana Studies has definitely made me more introspective and better able to understand how to have certain types of conversations with friends of color and my siblings. They often don't have the necessary toolkit to be introspective and reflective with their history, so taking Africana Studies courses has definitely given me the means to help them start their own journeys.

WOULD YOU CONSIDER PURSUING A DEGREE IN AFRICANA STUDIES A NECESSITY FOR MEN OF COLOR AND/OR PEOPLE OF COLOR IN GENERAL?

I think college is supposed to provide some level of introspection and Africana Studies courses provide space for formal, informative conversations on topics of race and class, so I would say it is important for people of color to at least take a class or two. I would even extend this beyond a racial barrier and say a basic Africana course can be very helpful in understanding the historical manifestation of current racial and class issues. These courses do help in providing a context to understand why these issues are still unresolved.

RECENTLY, A NUMBER OF CASES INVOLVING POLICE BRUTALITY AGAINST BLACK WOMEN, BLACK TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS, AND BLACK MEN HAVE BEEN GIVEN HEAVY MEDIA ATTENTION. HOW HAS AFRICANA STUDIES INFORMED YOUR ANALYSIS OF AND REACTION TO THESE EVENTS?

What we see now is no different than what was reported on 30 years ago. Just listen to rap music then versus now: the same themes continue to play out. That's how I first began to understand these issues. I don't think Africana has necessarily done anything for me when it comes to understanding these cases. It's always something I've been aware of.

MAJOR QUESTIONS FOR A MINOR: FAVEN RUSSOM '16

WHY DID YOU MINOR IN AFRICANA STUDIES?

As an incoming pre-med student at William & Mary, I had no plans for minoring Africana Studies. If anything, I thought I would take one or two classes in the Program out of pure interest. Over time, however, Africana Studies has truly come to impact my education. For instance, Africana Studies classes have provided a safe place in which I have been able to discuss my personal experiences and stories while also listening to and learning from others. Also, they have given me the opportunity to take parts of my own life and analyze them through a different lens. I have been able to explore the experience of being a first-generation African American, to think about why my home is decorated the way it is, and I have been able to pose W.E.B Du Bois' question "How does it feel to be a problem?" to African-American professors and students at William & Mary. As a Neuroscience major, the freedom to choose and explore topics that I am interested in is limited. My Africana Studies minor, however, has given me the freedom to learn more about ideas I am interested in and I am grateful for that.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE THAT MINORING IN AFRICANA STUDIES WAS NECESSARY FOR YOUR EDUCATION?

In my Africana Studies classes, I have sometimes found myself learning about important moments or figures in history for the first time ever in my educational career. Or, even more frustratingly, I have sometimes realized that information previously taught to me had been incorrectly portrayed. It was during times like those when I saw the importance of Africana classes.

For the first time in college, through Africana Studies, I have finally been able to take courses and learn about topics on African cultures that have been unavailable to me before. I have been allowed to enter a space where discussions on recent events and current issues are encouraged and integrated into my learning. Also, the program has allowed me to become more creative in expressing what I have learned. Disregarding typical essay requirements, many professors in Africana Studies have supported students who have chosen to present information in all types of forms, including documentaries, poems, and dance. For me, Africana assignments have been the most memorable.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR MINOR IN AFRICANA STUDIES IMPACTING YOUR FUTURE?

My Africana Studies minor has taught me how to consider different perspectives and then apply them to my daily life. Through Africana courses, my understanding of cultures, individuals, and societal structures has grown immensely. To my surprise, I have also discovered that my science and Africana Studies can intersect. As a Neuroscience major who hopes of one day earning an M.D., I have grown to understand the importance of being educated in both the strict sciences and cultural backgrounds. In my future career as a physician, my goal will be to treat the patient, not just their illness. The underlying issues that may bring a patient to the doctor are just as important as the physical problems that can be treated. My minor will instruct me on how to apply an understanding of others and their backgrounds to my medical decisions. While my major has educated me on the fundamentals of biology, chemistry, and psychology,



the ideas and lessons that I have gained through my Africana Studies minor are among the most valuable.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT AS A STUDENT IN AFRICANA STUDIES?

There is nothing more impactful as a student than being able to watch and listen to the people you learn about in the classroom. Taking Africana Studies courses has allowed me to attend events with fascinating speakers, including Marc Lamont Hill, Ntozake Shange, and Nikki Giovanni. Overall, it is difficult to choose my favorite moment, but listening to Lynn Briley, Karen Ely, and Janet Strafer—the first three African-American residential students at William & Mary—speak on integrating William & Mary at a recent Lemon Project Symposium event is definitely a highlight. After hearing about those women numerous times during my four years at William & Mary, listening, firsthand, to their experiences and stories of being African-American students on campus was incredible. As an African-American female student at William & Mary, being around the women who paved the way for me was a unique experience.

JAMM AK JAMM: VIGNETTES FROM MY TIME IN SENEGAL

by Francesca Maestas '17

Over the Summer of 2015, I traveled to Senegal for my study-abroad experience. Since then, I find that I often get asked, “Why Senegal?” Well, I wanted to discover unfamiliar histories, record distant narratives, and learn new lessons. During my trip, I was able to collect, in the form of a written journal, not just my own stories, but also the stories of the people who made my adventure a substantive one. The next couple of vignettes are rewritten versions of what I had quickly jotted down in my journal. I present to you, reader, three of the most influential interactions I had during my time in one of the most beautiful countries I have ever visited.

I would like to thank KUUMBA for allowing me to present my stories. I always think about the prayer callings in Tivaouane, the arid ocean breeze of Dakar, or the protective shade of the baobabs, and so being offered to recount my experiences makes me one of the happiest *toubabs* at William & Mary.

“Kumba Castel lives there.”
“Who?”
“Kumba Castel,” said thirteen-year-old Fatou while we were waiting for the ferry to Gorée Island. “She’s the mermaid that lives in the ocean. She ate those who were thrown into the water from the Door of No Return. Sometimes she sunbathes on the rocks.”
“Oh. That’s a little scary,” I said.

Fatou was silent for a little bit before she replied, “I think she’s misunderstood. She’s seen a lot of tragedy, having lived in the waters of Gorée. She witnessed some of the most brutal moments of Senegalese history.”

When the doors of the station opened upon the arrival of the ferry, a multitude of people rushed in, purses and backpacks colliding with one another. Tourists, artisans, and young students squeezed into the single door in a battle to reach the ferry and secure a comfortable spot on the top floor. The six American students accompanied by four Senegalese mentors (some of whom were also university students) made up the study-abroad program that I was participating in. Fatou was the younger sister of Pape, one of the mentors. My group ended up on the top floor next to the balcony overlooking the ocean, caught between a large Senegalese woman asking us to visit

her shop and a box of life vests. In front of us was a pair of two French women accompanied by two French men, all looking as if they walked right out of a Polo commercial, with their sienna-colored sunglasses and thin gold chains that glinted under white v-neck shirts.

Once my group and I arrived at Gorée Island, we immediately went to the Maison des Esclaves—“The House of Slaves”—where many African individuals were kept under horrid conditions before enduring the Middle Passage to either enslavement or death. While we listened to the tour guide talk about the inhumane living conditions and brutal punishments that African persons were subjected to, we couldn’t help but feel disturbed by two girls from another study-abroad group who were loudly discussing where they would be going out to that night. Fortunately, they left before we got to the discussion about the Door of No Return.

On our way out of the Maison des Esclaves, I found Fatou wiping tears off her face. She looked at me and said, “I can’t help but feel sad for the poor children that experienced



▲ **Les Enfants:** A haunting picture of the chamber where slave children were kept at Gorée.

so much pain. Some of them weren’t much younger than me!”

I was surprised not only by her profound empathy at such a young age, but also by the fact that she was so knowledgeable about both African and African-American history. Fatou knew about the plantations, the lynchings, and the American Civil Rights Movement. She knew about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. It was remarkable to me. I later talked to one of our mentors, Ousmane, about it, asking him about what is learned in Senegalese schools in general.

“Well, it depends on what school

you go to. You can go to a school under a bridge, where there are no buildings or resources. You could go to public school, you could go to an expensive private school, or you could go to an Islamic school or become a *talibe*. We sometimes learn about slavery. We learn about colonialism as well. It is mixed depending on if you go to a French school or a Wolof school. Most schools are French.”

“Do you learn about African-American history?”

“Sometimes. It really depends on what type of education you get. What surprises me is that we don’t see very many of our African-American brothers and sisters coming to Gorée Island. You would think they would want to come see it, but we only see White-American students. Most African Americans who come are professors and researchers. And Obama. *Les senegalais aiment Obama*. We love Obama here.”

“That’s interesting because he’s not your president.”

“He’s an African brother to us. Half his roots will always be in Kenya, although you will hear people say he is secretly Wolof or Serer,” Ousmane chuckled. “If the Americans don’t want him, he is welcome to be our president. I bet he could do a better job than Macky Sall.”



After a thrilling and rather hasty sept-
place ride through rural Senegal, we finally arrived at the Djidjack Hotel, a bungalow-style bed and breakfast owned by a Swiss-French couple. This is where my study-abroad group would be staying for a week. Our goal, since it was our downtime, was mainly to relax on the beach and see wild birds, so this place was perfect. The owners came out to greet us with their two dogs as we walked up the dirt road to the main lobby.

“Hello! Welcome! *Bienvenue!* Ah, you guys speak very good French. Are you students here in Senegal? Oh, Americans! *Oui*, we don’t get many Americans around here. Usually French.” After their warm welcome, we talked about payment procedures and how to use the showers and then toured the grounds. Once we were done, we



▲ **One Wild Ride:** On our way to le Désert du Lompoul, in northern Senegal, near the border of Mauritania.

asked them what was the best way to get around and if they had any suggestions for attractions or things to do.

While he caressed one of his dogs, the man replied, “Well, there isn’t much. The beach is our main attraction. We have a private path to the beach right from your tent. Nobody will bother you there. If a vendor comes around to bother you, let us know. We also have a guy that can take you around the wildlife refuge and the bird sanctuary. He’s trustworthy.”

Suddenly the woman added, “Yes, you girls especially have to be very careful around here. The villagers are not to be trusted. They steal, lie, and they can even get violent. *Mon Dieu*, God knows what else they could do to you. They aren’t good people.”

My study-abroad group and I wanted to see the local village, so we kept their information in the back of our minds. We were after all here in Senegal to experience it. Also, by that point, we had already spent a month in the country and the people we had met so far had been friendly. Therefore, we figured it was only right to find out on our own whether or not the villagers were trustworthy. Since my study-abroad companions were African Studies majors, we were well aware of the common misconceptions that outsiders have of Africa and its people.

When we got to the village, its edifices were made of gray stones and connected

by colorful clothing lines decorated with garments tie-dyed with hues of yellow, red, and green. The village’s sandy streets, void of any sort of vehicle besides donkey and horse carts, glistened a menacing fuchsia under the hot sun. I started to think that the odd fuchsia color was just a result of my feeble eyes being assaulted by the sun rays, especially as the gray stones started to look blue. Unable to keep walking in the heat after a while, my group pathetically sat in a small blue-and-white gazebo riddled with several crushed soda cans and crumpled napkins.

Within a few minutes of sitting down, two young men in colorful patterned shirts approached us.

“*Salaamaleikum*,” we said tiredly.

One of the men laughed. “You’re in a Christian Serer village! Here we say *nanga def*. You can also say *bonjour*, but there are few here who speak French. Honestly, we tolerate all religions, even Paganism. Here in Gounamane, we only speak of peace. *Jamm rekk*, peace only.”

“Oh! This is the first Christian village we’ve been to.”

“We would be glad to show you around! Mid-afternoon mass will finish in 20 minutes, so we can walk around before we go see the church. It’s our proudest building.”

After our tour around the village and the church, we were invited to drink *ataya* (tea) with our local guides. We soon became so distracted with learning Serer and teaching English to the villagers that we didn’t notice when the sky began to darken. We began to worry about finding our way home. The village men honorably volunteered to walk us home, which we were somewhat reluctant about. The Swiss-French woman’s words rang in our heads, but we carried on.

However, soon there was nothing to worry about. As soon as the “Djidjack” sign appeared, our impromptu guides stopped and one said, “We cannot go beyond here.” When we expressed our confusion they said, “The owners of your hotel, that Swiss-French couple, they don’t like us very much.” We asked why and one of the men, with melancholic reminiscence, replied,

“Because a few years ago we noticed that the man was taking dolphins from our ocean and keeping them in his pool at the hotel. He would then sell them to buyers from other countries. Sometimes dead, sometimes alive. We told the police, with the help of other villagers, and he went to prison for a few years. Now the couple has reopened their hotel and they don’t like us.” I was amazed. I pictured the pool, now dry and decrepit, and tried to imagine a dolphin in it. It was certainly feasible.

“That’s crazy,” I said.

“Perhaps. Some say *they* are crazy, so be careful. We were just trying to protect our land. Nature is very important in our culture and we take it very seriously when foreigners try to put a price on it.”

On that ending note, they invited us to dinner the following day and bid us goodnight.

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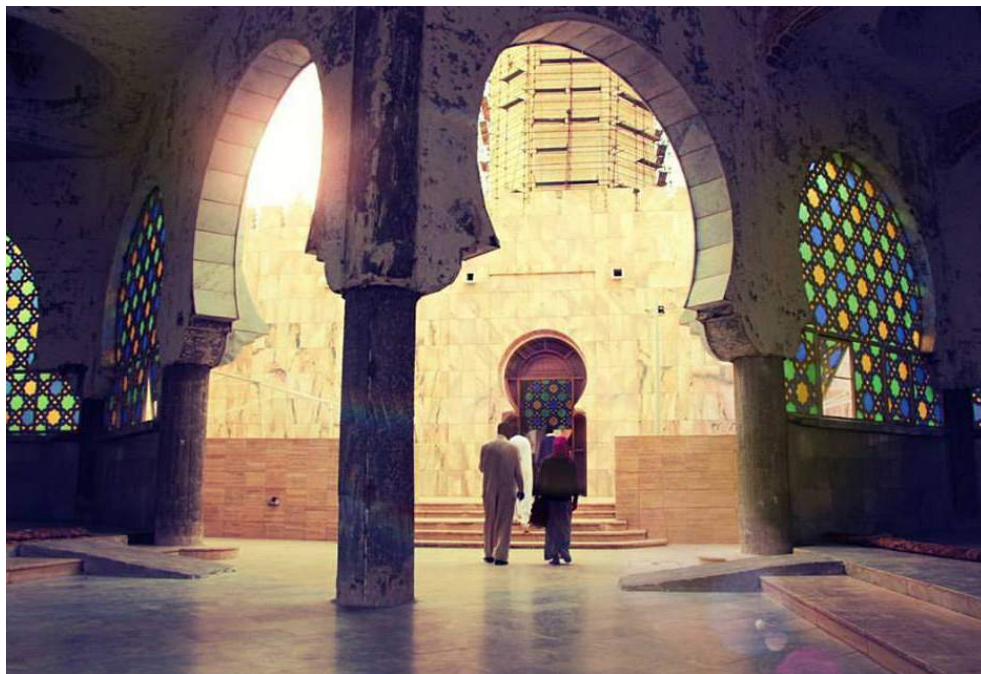
One of my favorite Wolof phrases is *jamm rekk*. It can be used as a reply to nearly anything, and when you do use it, people immediately want to befriend you. They know you’ll be a good person, somebody they can trust.

If someone asks *nanga def?*—“How are you?”—you can reply with *jamm rekk*.

If someone asks *nanga fanaane?*—“How was your evening?”—you can reply with *jamm rekk*.

If someone says *na la yalla aar!*—“Take care of yourself!”—you can say *jamm ak jamm*.

“*Jamm* is the essence of Islam, hence its name. But not just Islam: it is the essence of Senegal. We are tolerant of all religions. You see Muslims and Christians living side by side, working together, playing together, even marrying each other. We just want to dance. We are peaceful,” said my History of Islam professor, Cheikh Sène, of *jamm* during my stay in Senegal. His thoughts were reaffirmed by the fact that there is very little violence in the country. Knowing the country’s generally peaceful nature, the Senegalese, and even some foreigners, often scoffed at my study-abroad group when we told them we weren’t allowed to go to southern Senegal,



▲ **A Beautiful Soul:** Cheikh Sène and I discussing spirituality in a mosque in Touba.

where some say a “violent” secession army is waging a civil war against the Senegalese government because of ethnic and religious differences. The people of the Casamance region established a resistance army called the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance in order to push for secession and independence, but most of the violence ended around 2001, with few occurrences of conflict happening thereafter. Since 2014, there has been a ceasefire. “There are dangerous people all over the world,” the Senegalese say. “This army is no longer dangerous. The war is essentially over. As long as you stay away from lonely roads you will be fine. Also, we aren’t the ones with mass shootings of children at public schools. That is only in America. We have *jamm rekk*.”

Cheikh Sène also told us of his first experience in the United States, in Chicago: “I accompanied my African-American friend to his Baptist mass. It was wonderful! I am Muslim, but I am also Senegalese, and in Senegal we are open to all religions. There was clapping and happiness! After that, I told my friend that we should go to a mosque, so that we could both experience new things. We walked to the closest mosque. I was firstly disappointed to see that we had to sit on benches! In Islam, we sit on the floor in order to fully

submit to Allah. After, I was shocked to hear that there was no praying or submission. There were only speeches about racism in America. I wanted to cry! There were speeches on killing Whites. On Whites killing Blacks. On Blacks killing Blacks and Whites killing Whites. There was so much anger and sadness. This is not Islam, I thought. This was the tragedy of America. Racism. Discrimination. There I was, in a mosque in Chicago, hoping to hear praise of Allah, of God, of anything that represents peace, and I only heard of death. I love America, but I was deeply disappointed. Right then, I just wanted to be back in Senegal. Here we have *jamm rekk*. Here we have peace only.”

Since then, Cheikh Sène has returned to America to temporarily visit New York City, where there is a large population of Senegalese citizens. Following the suggestion of some of his colleagues, he visited Harlem and loved it. After his visit, he claimed to have felt *jamm*—peace.

Photos courtesy Francesca Maestas

I DID NOT WANT ANY OTHER STUDENT TO FEEL ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES

by Nadia Ross '17

In late 2015, student-led hunger strikes, rallies, and sit-ins erupted on college campuses across the country, all triggered by University of Missouri students who mobilized in response to a series of racist Mizzou incidents. In a show of support for these acts of agitation and demands for universities to directly confront race-related issues, Nadia Ross (Africana Studies, Class of 2017) organized a campus-wide solidarity demonstration, which culminated in a group of black-clad students, faculty, and staff marching across campus and calling for change.



Photo by Akshay

When I heard about the racial tension that was steadily rising at the University of Missouri, I couldn't help but wonder when William & Mary would get to that point. Not *if*, but *when*. I began to feel so much sadness about the fact that America is in a supposedly "postracial" era and, yet, students of color across the country are still feeling marginalized because of the way that they look and because of the stereotypes that go along with being a person of color in this country.

I remember during my freshman year here at William & Mary when I was reprimanded by a professor for my poor attendance, even though I had only missed one class before. I soon realized that my professor was confusing me for the only other Black student in the class: a taller, darker, heavier male. I remember feeling so embarrassed. I felt that I had done something wrong, even though it was actually the other student who had made a transgression. I felt as though I was in a situation I could not recover from. The anxiety of wondering whether or not I would have to keep experiencing similar situations in the future—especially on a campus where we claim to be "one Tribe, one family"—was a lot for me to deal with at the time. After that moment, I realized I did not want any other student to

feel ashamed of themselves the way that I did. Especially upon seeing distressing Facebook posts about the strikes going on at Mizzou, I knew that I could not afford to be a bystander to microaggressions or worse. I understood that I had to look for others like myself who wanted to take action.

It was important for me to let the students at Mizzou know that they were not alone. The students of the University of Missouri needed to feel support during a time in which their own administration refused to support them. Also, I felt that students, faculty, and staff at William & Mary needed to communicate that we would not stand for the ignoring of race-based problems on our own campus. Therefore, I contacted several of my friends, including Yussre ElBardicy and Travis Harris, and several organizations on campus about my idea to stage a solidarity demonstration.

After my idea was met with positivity, I created an accompanying Facebook page and asked students to share it. As I set other details in stone, I chose to hold the event at the Wren Building because of its spectacular and problematic history: it is the oldest academic building in use in the United States, and it was also built by slaves. After support for the demonstration continued to swell, I realized that simply taking a

photograph would not be enough. At one point, William & Mary student Korkor Koppoe '16 messaged me and recommended that mutual friend Ebony Lambert '16 draft a letter of support that organizations on campus could sign. The number of organizations that ended up signing the letter was truly amazing to me, and I am so grateful for each and every one of the organizations for speaking out and showing support.

During my time so far at William & Mary, I've been pretty disappointed in the way that our President has handled racial issues. For example, in an office that students of color consider a safe space, graffiti depicting people being lynched was found and described as senseless and not racially motivated. Additionally, racist comments on social-media platforms such as Yik Yak and the Facebook-based Overheard page have constantly gone unaddressed. So, I felt the urge to get President Reveley's attention. Overall, I would like to thank the William & Mary Police Department, the Africana Studies program, and everyone else who helped in some way with the demonstration's success. The President hasn't spoken on the protest yet, but I'll be waiting for him in the Africana House when he decides he's ready to start that conversation.



IREP AFRICA: 10 YEARS OF COMMUNITY, CULTURE, AND CELEBRATION



▲ (Back) Esther Kallon '17, Kobina Tabiri '17, and Faith Emah '17
(Front) Maimuna Sidibay '18

(Top, L to R) Olivia Awaté '16, Phenan Kidane '16, Edith Amponsah '16, Aliyah Wooten '18, Abou Kamara '18, Camilla Renner '17, Meron Begashaw '18, and Salina Natnael '17

Huddles of individuals taking selfies while wearing their best African garb. A dance routine set to music by Nigerian super duo PSquare. A roaring applause following a particularly moving spoken-word performance. These are a few of the things you may encounter at some point during IREP Africa, a weekend-long series of events (lectures, workshops, a talent showcase, etc.) dedicated to educating the William & Mary community about the continent of Africa. First brought to campus by William & Mary's African Cultural Society (ACS) in 2005, the tenth IREP Africa took place last October, marking ten years of community-building, cultural exchange, and outright fun. In celebration of this event that holds a unique and valued space amongst the traditions of William & Mary, KUUMBA asked members of the African Cultural Society to reflect back on their own IREP experiences and memories.

KORKOR KOPPOE '16 *African Cultural Society Member*

There are really not enough words to explain my profound love for the African Cultural Society's annual IREP Africa Weekend. I have had the distinct pleasure of attending and participating in IREP since my freshman year at William & Mary.

As a new undergraduate student, I remember hearing older ACS members talk about their excitement for IREP Weekend. At first, I did not understand why they were so hyped up for the upcoming events. However, as IREP got closer and closer, I began to share in their excitement, because I would soon finally experience what was said to be one of the main weekends to look forward to each year.

Over the past four years, I have watched IREP Weekend morph into one of the most highly anticipated events on campus! It is absolutely incredible how much both ACS and IREP have grown. Throughout all this growth, one thing has not changed: the ACS love factor. IREP Weekend is about students coming together to share and spread love for the beautiful continent of Africa with the William & Mary community and beyond. Every aspect of IREP Weekend, from the lectures to the dance workshops to the showcase, is founded on love. It is hard to describe what that love is like, but I guarantee you know exactly how it feels if you have attended any of the IREP Africa events. If you have not, you are definitely missing out!

EDITH AMPONSAH '16 *African Cultural Society Member*

I would like to start off this piece by congratulating every member of the African Cultural Society for putting on such an amazing show. Last year's showcase was the biggest yet and more spectacular than I could have ever imagined. I remember my first ever IREP Africa, held in Sadler's Tidewater rooms back in the fall of 2012. Looking back now, I have a new appreciation for ACS and all the work we do on campus to educate our peers and community on the diverse cultures found on the beautiful continent of Africa.

Over time, IREP has gotten bigger and bigger every year, reaching new audiences and requiring roomier spaces and grander performances. For the tenth anniversary of IREP last October, ACS centered the event around the theme of *sankofa*. From the Akan language, the word literally translates to "go back and get it," metaphorically referring to the act of remembering one's roots. To truly represent this idea in the show, myself and my fellow ACS members had to remember the first IREP Africa Showcase and reflect on why it was created and why it was brought to students at William & Mary. This was done, in part, by reaching out to and bringing back ACS alumni to the campus. This was our Homecoming.

With the return of alumni and their incorporation into the IREP showcase, ACS was able to share stories of our history—our "roots"—with everyone in the IREP audience. To have the Commonwealth Auditorium overflowing with past, current, and future students created such an amazing feeling and experience. I could not have asked for a better way to celebrate my last IREP Africa as an undergrad.

Thank you to all who made it possible.



PHENAN KIDANE '16 *African Cultural Society President*

Last year's IREP Africa was definitely one to remember. Anxiously awaited all throughout last semester, the magnitude of the event had to be bigger and better than ever. Being the tenth anniversary of IREP, ACS wanted everyone to remember it as the best IREP yet.

Historically, IREP Africa has been a very special occasion for the African Cultural Society. It is something that is unique to William & Mary because it was born here. Thanks to ACS alumni, the event has been able to grow.

With the most recent IREP showcase, I was happy to contribute to that growth by bringing together great and diverse performers. Aside from helping with the wonderful exhibition of culture, I can honestly say that my favorite part of the event was the energy. I could feel so much love at the show, which was great because I wanted the attending alumni to really enjoy themselves and see what all their hard work had amounted to.

Until the day of the show arrived, I was always worried about specific details or the possibility of something going wrong. But once the day came and went, I was happy. Not just because IREP had gone well, but because so many alumni had come back and it was made sure that they had a great weekend. When actually speaking to the alumni about their ACS experiences and what they



▲ IREP performers

had done while at William & Mary, I felt this incredible sense of love. They really made IREP for me. While I had never met some of them, I felt, somehow, like we were connected. Overall, it was so cool to hear about ACS in the past and the stories and friendships made in the organization. Essentially, that is the beauty of IREP: it brings people together.

In addition, IREP Weekend works to celebrate African culture. It is important to ACS to raise awareness of and create excitement for events that aim to educate the William & Mary campus about African life and history. However, IREP Africa is meant to be more than an educational tool. In all, I think that last year's IREP surpassed IREPs of the past because the love for ACS and the organization's purpose made the show beam with pride. I am so proud of ACS for the work that it put in. I hope that IREP will always attract people because of the sense of community it creates and the excitement it generates. I also hope it inspires people to express themselves creatively, because it is important to preserve one's identity and culture. I cannot wait to see what IREP will be like in the future, especially when I return to enjoy it as an alumna. Regardless of any new changes that may come, I know that the ACS love will always be the same!

Africana Scrapbook: A VISIT FROM NTOZAKE SHANGE

Last fall, ntozake shange, a renowned Black poet/playwright/novelist/essayist visited our campus to participate in multiple conversations and a staged reading of works from her canon. The event, ***“lost in language & sound or how I found my way to the arts”: conversations and a reading with ntozake shange***, was sponsored by the Patrick Hayes Writers Series, the Dean for Educational Policy, the Office of Diversity & Equal Opportunity (through an IDEA Grant), the Center for Student Diversity, the Africana Studies program, Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Latin American Studies, the Department of Theatre, Speech and Dance, Africana House LLC, and the Nu Chi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



▲ (Front) Korkor Koppoe '16, Kayla Sharpe '17, ntozake shange, and Kiara Earle '16; (Middle) Professor Artisia Green, Jada Short '17, Ebony Lambert '16, Imani Duck '17, Felicia Bowins '16, Brielle Welch '16, Meronne Teklu '17; (Back) Jasmine Leeward '16 and RAE-Mischel Thompson-Cooper '16

► shange discussing and workshoping her pieces with students.



Perhaps most known for her choreopoem *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* (1976), the program’s purpose was to educate the community on the fuller range of shange’s body of work, to discuss her dramaturgical influences—how she found her way to the arts—and to learn about her current artistic life, which includes revisions to *A Photograph: Lovers in Motion* and her newest piece, *Lost in Language and Sound* (directed by Rhodessa Jones, who visited our campus this semester). Shange read excerpts from *Lost in Language and Sound*, including “Lizard One,”

which was interpreted through dance by Professor Leah Glenn. Shange also discussed a range of topics including mental health and career preparation. The two-day event concluded with a public staged reading titled, *“my job as an artist is to say what i see”*: painting the worlds of ntozake shange onstage. Twelve of shange’s pieces were workshoped by shange and Professor Artisia Green and performed by Kiara Earle '16, Korkor Koppoe '16, Jada Short '17, Ebony Lambert '16, Meronne Teklu '17, RAE-Mischel Thompson-Cooper '16, Kayla Sharpe '17, Imani Duck '17, Felicia Bowins '16, Jasmine Leeward '16, and Brielle Welch '16. The reading also featured live painting by talented local artists Mahari Chabwera, Sage, and A. Valid.

The structure of the co-curricular program contained multiple opportunities for student-faculty-artist interaction. A community of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds and academic disciplines engaged in creative and intellectual interaction inside of the classroom and outside its walls, around meals and rehearsals. The program also spoke to the idea behind COLL 300: *In the World*, in that it connected our students with a notable, but largely unfamiliar to them, artist who deepened the way they saw themselves in the world as artists, writers, and humans.



1. Staged reading cast.
 2. (Front) Professor Hermine Pinson, ntozake shange; (Back) Professor Artisia Green, Professor Leah Glenn.
 3. (L to R) Jasmine Leeward '16, Felicia Bowins '16, RAE-Mischel Thompson-Cooper '16 at the Africana House Tea Talk with ntozake shange.
 4. (L to R) Professor Francis Tanglao-Aguas, ntozake shange, Amirio Freeman '17.
 5-6. Mahari Chabwera (Left) and Sage (Right), artists who performed during the staged reading.

PROFESSOR TALK: WITH PATRICIA LOTT

For Dr. Patricia Lott, the act of reckoning with the past is essential for making sense of the present. In her research—which deals with ideas of racial slavery and collective memory—and in her classes that blend English methodologies with Africana Studies themes, Professor Lott centralizes this idea that understanding the modern involves comprehending the historical. Recently, KUUMBA sat down the professor to discuss her own academic past and how she uses remembrance as an educational tool.



▲ Professor Patricia Lott (second from left) with Professors Braxton, McLendon, and Tanglao-Aguas.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHERE YOU WERE IN YOUR ACADEMIC CAREER BEFORE ARRIVING HERE AT WILLIAM & MARY?

I came here following a postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University, where I was the inaugural Ruth J. Simmons postdoctoral fellow at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. The center was begun by Brown to address its historical involvement with slavery and the slave trade, and the center was also created to think about racial slavery and its afterlife in the United States and in the Atlantic world more broadly. I was very honored to be the inaugural fellow. It was an amazing opportunity and an amazing experience. I had great mentorship and support.

The logic for me being at the center was that my own research addresses questions of racial slavery and its afterlife in the contemporary world. In particular, I use some of the recent archaeological and other discoveries about racial slavery in the U.S. North: I look at the public discourse around these contemporary moments of rediscovery and I try to investigate how and why people are surprised that slavery happened in the North.

WHAT LED TO YOUR INTEREST IN RACIAL SLAVERY AND ITS AFTERLIFE, PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES?

Two things. First, when I was an undergraduate student I went to Dillard University, a historically Black university in New Orleans, and one of the classes I took was taught by former poet-laureate of Louisiana Brenda Marie Osbey. The class was called The City of New Orleans. For the class,

many of the sessions involved going to different historic parts of the city and talking about the landscape. My peers and I would go to Black Catholic churches. We would go the Faubourg Tremé, which is one of the oldest Black neighborhoods in the United States. We would go to Congo Square, which is where enslaved people would go to to sell goods on Sunday or produce music.

Congo Square is situated within the Louis Armstrong Park, where there's a monument dedicated to the great jazz musician Louis Armstrong. At one point the park was named after P.G.T. Beauregard, who was a Confederate general. As an undergraduate student, it was interesting to think about the conflicts that were taking place in the park and Congo Square. On one hand, Congo Square was a space for enslaved people and the park is a space that is giving homage to this great jazz musician. However, the name of the park was once connected to this general who wanted to preserve slavery. I remember thinking, "This is so fascinating".

Second, I began to see stories in the press about people rediscovering slavery in the North. That really

piqued my interest. My interest solidified when I left Louisiana and went to California. I immediately and indisputably experienced California as highly racialized. As a Southerner traveling outside of the South, people would read certain histories onto my body that they thought they were divorced from and not implicated in, particularly histories involving slavery.

So after that conglomeration of things—taking The City of New Orleans, being intrigued by the public discourse about people forgetting slavery in the North, and having personal experiences as a Southerner travelling throughout this country—my research just sort of came together and I thought, "This is important for me to do".

AFTER DEVELOPING YOUR RESEARCH, HOW DID YOU END UP HERE AT WILLIAM & MARY?

In 2013 I finished my Ph.D. and was at Brown University. William & Mary offered one of a few teaching positions that were available and that I wanted to apply for. The fact that it was jointly appointed with Africana was appealing to me because my Ph.D. is in African American Studies, and also because I have been taught by people who do Cultural Studies. In addition, literature is very central, alongside many other things, to my research. So I applied for the position, interviewed, and I got it.

HERE AT WILLIAM & MARY, YOU ARE AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR BOTH FOR ENGLISH AND AFRICANA STUDIES. DO YOU MERGE THOSE TWO DISCIPLINES WHEN TEACHING YOUR COURSES?

The way in which I approach teaching literature involves the critical interrogation of written texts with attentiveness to the socio-historical contexts in which they were produced.

Because many of the texts I'm looking at are from the 19th century, the socio-historical context I have to consider involves racial slavery, colonialism, abolition and emancipation, and even lynching. Therefore, when I'm teaching literature, I'm always using the Africana lens, in the sense that I teach things in a multifaceted way: I have to look towards several disciplines to explain certain things when teaching and I have to present texts from a number of different angles.

For Africana, my classes robustly reflect the nature of this country, in the sense that my students are always reading texts that contend with the social problem of race or the social problem of sexism or that of homophobia from a number of different angles. I always ask students to see connections between what we read and the present world. Overall, I think whenever I teach I'm always navigating the socio-historical contexts and the complex nature under which literature gets produced.

HOW DO YOU SEE ENGLISH AS HELPING TO ACCOMPLISH THE AFRICANA STUDIES GOAL OF HAVING STUDENTS SEE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE VARIED PEOPLE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA?

I think that literature is an important resource. Especially because if you look at the texts that I teach, a lot of the texts circulated beyond American borders after they were first printed. So whenever I teach, for example, Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life* or Olaudah Equiano's very interesting narrative, students are often shocked to learn that these works were translated into different languages and sent to spaces like the Netherlands or London. So literature often becomes a tool through which Black people connect with other Black people that aren't in their immediate space. When looking at the circulation life of particular texts, that becomes very apparent. I also think that literature is an interesting way to look at the ways in which Black people in different contexts imagine themselves. It's interesting to look at literature in terms of being a way through which people express visions or hopes for themselves or alternative types of futures.

MY JOURNEY TO WILLIAM & MARY

by Dr. Stephanie J. Blackmon

A recent addition to William & Mary's Higher Education program, Assistant Professor Stephanie Blackmon introduces herself, detailing her academic life, research interests, and the path that led her to joining the William & Mary family.

My entrée into a doctoral program in higher education administration at the University of Alabama began with my desire to answer questions about the complex workings of colleges and universities, but I was allured by technology. Beyond the computer typing and tinkering that was a regular part of my life, even as a little girl, the idea of using technology for teaching and learning in a formal education setting intrigued me. I spent my time as a doctoral student researching and writing about teaching and learning with an emphasis on technology integration. I also spent a significant amount of time researching face-to-face teaching and learning techniques as well, but my primary focus was online teaching and learning. That focus would lead me to an assistant professorship in William & Mary's Higher Education Administration program, but I had to make a stop first.

When I wasn't researching, writing, or editing texts related to technology, I was working part-time in intercollegiate athletics. I had a growing interest in athletics and academics, and I wanted an opportunity to explore that topic (and also explore potential connections between technology, athletics, and academics, of course). That opportunity for exploration came in the form of a tenure-track assistant professorship at the University of Oklahoma in their Intercollegiate Athletics Administration program. I focused on athletics and academics as a research area, but I continued my work with online teaching and learning as well. I was also the coordinator for their College Teaching Certificate program. As



I continued in the role of professor and certificate program coordinator, I realized that I wanted to devote more time to working on research related to technology integration in college/university classrooms and program development.

The tenure-track assistant professorship in the Higher Education Administration program at William & Mary was kismet. The program was launching a fully online College Teaching Certificate program and discussing the development of a hybrid Executive Ed.D. program. William & Mary had also just created an office for the Associate Provost of eLearning, so it seemed that I would have an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute in the area of technology integration, and possibly program development, in the School of Education and across campus as well.

I've been at William & Mary for about eight months now, and although I took the scenic route to this leg of my professional journey, I'm looking forward to what it holds.

AFRICANA STUDIES @ WILLIAM & MARY



▲ Homecoming 2015 celebration at the Africana House.

MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary major that explores the scholarship on the history and cultural traditions, and the political and economic circumstances which together define over 1.2 billion people of African descent. Students take a common set of core courses, and may select one of three tracks in which to concentrate:

African American Studies

African Studies

African-Diaspora Studies

The central mission of the program is to prepare students for lifelong learning, graduate study in various fields, and careers in private and public organizations worldwide. Africana studies seeks to develop a habit of thinking that is inter-disciplinarily analytical and a habit of heart that is cross-culturally empathetic. Embracing more than the centrality of race, it is designed to apply a comparative lens to the study of imperial, national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious currents and intersections in Africa, and its far-flung Diaspora in North America, the Caribbean Basin, Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, and Western Europe.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH

Students are supported by over thirty affiliated faculty. Majors are expected to engage in research in various forms, including independent study, Honors, and structured internships. Majors and Minors are encouraged to combine their scholarly study with service learning, study away in the U.S., and study abroad, especially in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The program is a lead sponsor of the William & Mary summer program in Cape Town, South Africa. In the near future, we hope to add summer programs in the Caribbean and Brazil. The student-run African Cultural Society, Black Studies Club, and Africana House are open to all members of the William & Mary community.

CAREERS AND GRADUATE STUDY

Students with a major in Africana Studies (or its predecessors, African Studies and Black Studies) have attended graduate programs in various disciplines and professions. Several alumni have joined the public sector at all levels, while others work for a variety of private employers. Many served as Peace Corps volunteers or joined a variety of non-profit organizations in the U.S. The analytical skills and broad perspectives acquired in life-long learning or to prepare for myriad occupational opportunities.

SUPPORT AFRICANA STUDIES

Ways to Contribute

To directly support student and faculty needs in Africana Studies, you can contribute online now with your credit card, using our secure web server. Go to the William & Mary website www.wm.edu/giving. Click on the 'Give Now' button and select ARTS-SCIENCES from the 'Schools & Units' menu. Then select Africana Studies (2965) from the menu of Funds. Enter the amount of your contribution and click on the 'Add to Cart' button.

To contribute by mail, make your check payable to The College of William & Mary Foundation. Please be sure to enter Africana Studies (2965) in your check's memo area and mail your contribution to:

William & Mary
P.O. Box 1693
Williamsburg, VA 23187-1693

You may also choose to make a contribution to the Jacquelyn McLendon Prize (3754).

For more Information

To further explore giving options that will be meaningful and beneficial to you, please contact Arts & Sciences Development at (757) 221-3712.

CURRICULUM: MAJOR AND MINOR

Disciplines Studied:

Anthropology
Art and Art History
Economics
English
Government
History
Modern Languages and Literatures
Music
Philosophy
Religious Studies
Sociology
Theatre, Speech, and Dance

Distinguishing Features:

Foreign Languages
Research Methods
Core and capstone
Interdisciplinary
Globally comparative
Melds the Local with the Diasporic
Study away
Study abroad
Internships
Community Engagement

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

Your News and Contact Information

For your convenience, we have provided an online form (www.wm.edu/as/africanastudies/alumni/sendusyournews) for your news and contact information. As always, we look forward to your visit to campus.

Alumni Career Connections

One of the most helpful and popular resources provided by the Office of Career Services is Alumni Career Connections—a searchable database of alumni who have volunteered to support students and fellow alumni by sharing information about their career field, internships and job search strategies

CONTACT

Program Director:

Artisia V. Green,
*Director of Africana Studies,
Associate Professor of Theatre
and Africana Studies*

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avgreen@wm.edu

Website:

www.wm.edu/africanastudies

- ▶ Africana majors and minors join Professors Pinson and Green in the opening acquaintance lunch.

PURSuing A MAJOR IN AFRICANA STUDIES

36 CREDITS NEEDED TO GRADUATE

COMMON CORE (MINIMUM 12 CREDITS)

- 1. Major Gateway (3 credits)**
 - AFST 150: Introduction to Africana Studies OR
 - AFST 205: Introduction to Africana Studies
- 2. Methods (3 credits)**
 - AFST 399 Research Methods in Africana Studies
- 3. Coll 400 Senior Capstone (3 credits)**
 - AFST 495/496 Honors OR
 - AFST 499 Senior Project in Africana Studies
- 4. Language (3 credits)**
 - AFST 250 African American English OR
 - AFST 251 Caribbean Languages OR
 - One course beyond the 202-level OR
 - 202-level proficiency in 2 languages OR
 - Off-campus study

ELECTIVES (MINIMUM 18 CREDITS, SELECTED WITH FACULTY ADVISOR)

1. Students are required to complete at least 18 credits through recognized AFST courses in the social sciences and arts & humanities within their chosen area of concentration.
2. Students must take at least one three-credit course in one field if they are more inclined to take the majority of their electives in another. For instance, a student more interested in the arts & humanities must take at least one three-credit course in the social sciences in order to complete the degree.
3. Students are also strongly encouraged to take one elective in a concentration outside of their own.
4. The program publishes recognized and accepted electives for each of the concentrations in the online catalog of the university.
5. Other courses may also be credited towards the electives after approval by the major advisor and program director.
6. Courses credited towards the major and concentration core may not be credited as electives. There is no double crediting within the Africana Studies major.

The list of electives under all three concentrations remains the same.

MINOR IN AFRICANA STUDIES (MINIMUM 21 CREDITS)

- 1. Major Gateway (3 credits)**
 - AFST 150: Introduction to Africana Studies OR
 - AFST 205: Introduction to Africana Studies
- 2. Methods (3 credits)**
 - AFST 399: Research Methods in Africana Studies
- 3. Concentration (3 credits)**
 - AFST 302: Introduction to African Studies OR
 - AFST 303: Introduction to African American Studies OR
 - AFST 304: Intro to African Diaspora OR
 - AFST 305: African Diaspora Since 1808



CONCENTRATION (MINIMUM 6 CREDITS)

AFRICAN STUDIES

- 1. Concentration Gateway (3 credits)**
 - AFST 302 Introduction to African Studies
- 2. 400 level Seminar (3 credits)**
 - AFST 406 Advanced African Studies Topics OR
 - AFST 426 The Rise and Fall of Apartheid OR
 - AFST 427 History of Modern South Africa

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

- 1. Concentration Gateway (3 credits)**
 - AFST 303 Introduction to African American Studies
- 2. 400 level Seminar (3 credits)**
 - AFST 406 Advanced African American Studies Topics OR
 - AFST 414 Major African American Women Writers OR
 - AFST 417 Harlem in Vogue OR
 - AFST 425 Blacks in American Society

AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDIES

- 1. Concentration Gateway (3 credits)**
 - AFST 304 Intro to African Diaspora OR
 - AFST 305 African Diaspora Since 1808
- 2. 400 level Seminar (3 credits)**
 - AFST 406 Advanced African Diaspora Studies Topics OR
 - AFST 418 Anthropological Reflections of the African Diaspora OR
 - AFST 458 Caribbean Archaeology

4. Electives (12 credits)

- Students are required to complete at least 12 credits through recognized AFST courses in the social sciences and arts & humanities within their chosen area of concentration.
- Courses fulfilling the student's major cannot be counted toward the minor.
- Major electives policies #2-6 also apply to the minor.

2015-2016 AFRICANA EVENTS

September 4, 2015

"Reading and Writing Poems for the Spirit and the Flesh"

Professor Hermine Pinson,
Africana Studies and English

October 2, 2015

"Putin' On for DaLou: Hip-Hop's Fight Against Racism in St. Louis, Missouri"

Travis Harris, Ph.D. Candidate,
American Studies

October 5, 2015

Dr. Terri Babineau

Dean of students at EVMS

October 2015

iREP Africa

10th annual showcase

October 16-18, 2015

"Emerging Histories of the Early Modern French Atlantic"

Hiliary Jones, Omohundro Institute

November 4, 2015

"Blaxploitalian: 100 Years of Blackness in Italian Cinema"

Fred Kuwornu

November 6, 2015

"Lost in Language & Sound, or How I Found My Way to the Arts"

A reading and conversation
with ntozake shange

November 19, 2015

Alhaji Papa Susso, Gambian Jali (Praise Singer)

Music department

November 20, 2015

"Community-Based Research in Maternal and Child Nutrition in East Africa"

Assistant Professor Scott Ickes,
Kinesiology and Health Sciences

February 5, 2016

"Rethinking Data: An Exploration of Arts-Based Qualitative Research"

Stephanie Blackmon, Assistant
Professor of Higher Education

February 18, 2016

"On Faust and The Souls of Black Folk: Goethe, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the Ethics of Progress"

Michael Saman, German
Studies guest speaker

March 4, 2016

"Tarell McCraney's The Brothers Size and the Queerness of 'Doing Time'"

Isaiah Wooden, Assistant Professor of
Performing Arts at American University

March 30, 2016

Guest Speaker: Toni Wynn, Arts Educator, Poet, and Museum Consultant

English Department

April 1, 2016

"Illuminating a Shared, Hidden History: Buffalo Soldiers and the Philippines"

Aprilfaye T. Manalang, Ph.D., Assistant
Professor of History & Interdisciplinary
Studies at Norfolk State University

April 8, 2016

William & Mary Pride 2016

Lambda Alliance

April 17, 2016

Performance Artist Kristina Wong: "The Wong Street Journal"

Filmmaker Marissa Aroy: "Delano Manongs" and "Sikhs in America"

*Asian & Pacific Islander
American Heritage Month*



- ▲ (Top) His excellency, former President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, with students of Africana Studies in November, 2016. (Bottom) Professors Tanglao-Aguas, Vinson, Ferrao, and Chouin celebrate the successful visit of President Jonathan of Nigeria.

A special thank you to our supporters who make possible our funding sponsorship of the following events: Dean Joel Schwartz and the Charles Center. Vice Provost Steve Hanson and the Reves Center. Provost Michael Halleran. Dean of Arts and Sciences Kate Conley.



An Open Letter to Students & Faculty of Color in the United States

Ebony A. Lambert '16

We—students, faculty, administrators of color, and allies—at the College of William & Mary, stand with you in solidarity. We stand with you in outrage, and to let you know that you are not—are never—alone. We stand with you in resistance because you are our brothers and sisters, and also because we know that distance does not and cannot quell our fight for justice. We stand with you because the continued oppression, degradation, and marginalization you experience on your campuses plague us as well. We stand because we know that our oppressors depend on our silence, and that the only way to seek the equality we were promised is to demand it, fiercely, with our every breath.

Institutional and individualized acts of racism. Lack of administrators, faculty, students of color. Curriculums that paints our cultures and our histories as other, as extra, as additive. Microaggressions and racist comments that roll like amber waves of grain off the tongues of the general populace and out of the mouths of people with whom we work, learn, sleep, and share intimate time and space. Commodification of our bodies, our presence, our culture—the constant consciousness of what it means to be hypervisible and invisible all at the same time. These are our realities, what it truly means to be students of color on campuses built on the backs of our ancestors—campuses that seem to prioritize their reputation and political clout over our needs. These are the themes that form the bedtime story with which we sleep every night.

The story is old, and we are tired. Outraged. But in these times we must remember that we are resilient as well. That we will not be silent or complacent. Yes, we were already weary and already afraid, because our Black and brown bodies are inhabiting spaces in which we do not feel safe or know peace. But our ancestors and elders taught us that when we are scared, outraged, broken down—that is when we must speak the loudest. As poet Nayyirah Waheed says: “When I am afraid to speak is when I speak. That is when it is most important.” We must remember our families, our elders, our ancestors did not train us to place lions in our throats so that our voices could be silenced. And they did not teach us to speak with soul and move with purpose so that we could be still while injustice raged around us.

In times like these, when the tangible and pervasive faces of systematic and institutional oppression threaten our very existence, we must remember the work of the kings and queens who fought before us. We must remember that our speech should always be singed with smoke so our words may carry the warning that as long as there is a spark of life within us, we will not turn a blind eye to the injustices that face us.

We write to you— students, faculty, administrators of color, and allies at William & Mary— to embody all of this. To send the message to our family at institutions across the nation that you are not alone. To say that we stand with you and demand justice and equality on your campuses as well as our own, even as we know this road, this work, is not easy. We write to you to let you know that we know the value of speaking. Resisting. We stand with you, align our bodies and voices in solidarity with you, our family at Mizzou, Yale, and other institutions, to let the world know that an attack on our brothers and sisters of color is an affront to us—one that we will not stand for. To those who would threaten your sense of safety, of community, of humanity, of the right to your very existence—we are watching. We have been fighting all our lives. It would be foolish to think that we'll stop now.