

The GRIOT



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Africana Studies
Department

A griot is a storyteller, historian, genealogist, teacher, musician, warrior, singer, diplomat and more...but above all, a griot remembers.

KARIBU!

Welcome

During this academic year, Africana Studies has experienced a number of transitions. We welcomed Dr. Liseli Fitzpatrick, the first Ph.D in African American and African Studies from The Ohio State University as a Visiting Lecturer in Africana Studies. She has taught courses on 'New World Afro-Atlantic Religions' and 'Africans of the Diaspora' in the fall. She is currently teaching 'African Civilizations to 1700s', 'Caribbean Cultural Expressions and the Diaspora' and 'The Black Church' this spring term. We also conducted a search for a tenure-track position and hired Professor Chipo Dendere, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science at Amherst College. She received her doctorate in political science from Georgia State University.

Our faculty has been productive in their research and publications. Professor Selwyn Cudjoe published a new book titled: *The Slave Master of Trinidad* and Professor Kellie Carter Jackson published her first book titled: *Force and Freedom*. All continue to publish articles and present papers at national and international conferences, symposia and so forth. Professor Selwyn Cudjoe is on a one-year sabbatical from 2018-2019. We wish him well in his research and other scholarly pursuits.

We have had productive relationships with the administration and our president, Dr. Paula Johnson and Provost, Andrew Shennan are committed to strengthening Africana Studies and supporting its mission to promote excellence in teaching and research. They are interested in expanding the Africa dimension of the curriculum and values the role of the department in teaching and researching on Africa and the African Diaspora.

We co-sponsored a number of events in the fall including The Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Lecture on Thursday, October 4th by writer Nic Stone on "Wrisistence: The Written Word as a Vehicle for Social Awareness and Change."



In addition, we were honored to host Sope Aluko, an actor in the movie, *The Black Panther*, who gave an electrifying talk and discussion to the delight of a large crowd of students, staff, faculty and alums. The title of her talk was: "What Does Black Panther Symbolize for our Young Girls/Youth." Our newest faculty member, Dr. Liseli Fitzpatrick mesmerized the students and faculty at our Africana Colloquium on November 15th when she eloquently and captivatingly spoke on the subject of: "African Cosmological Thought and Identity: Cultivating a Culture of Consciousness and Community." We are proud of our offerings in the Swahili language and hope to strengthen and expand it as the only indigenous language taught in the College representing five million speakers. We continue to attract a diverse range of students in our courses reflecting a wide demographic spread, all class levels and a range of majors and minors from all disciplines. The number of our majors and minors continues to increase and our students have been performing well in their courses at Wellesley and in Study Abroad programs. As the college embarks on its preparation for accreditation, we would like to reiterate the goals for our majors in Africana Studies as stated in our course catalog.

Goals for the major in Africana Studies

- To ensure an understanding of the concepts, theories, knowledge, research methodologies and skills in Africana Studies from a multidisciplinary perspective, through a series of required, core, elective and experiential courses and a mandatory colloquium;
- To develop students' ability to understand and communicate specialized and general knowledge in the field of Africana Studies that includes Africa and the African Diaspora in the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, Oceania and Australia.
- To provide students with a representational and wide-ranging multidisciplinary education and an ability to apply knowledge to critical thinking that is also rational, creative, persuasive, linked to problem solving and reflective of the Africana perspective.
- To develop skills and abilities necessary to conduct high quality library and field research; apply methodological tools and use modern technology for discovering information and interpreting investigative data;
- To attend the compulsory 'Africana Colloquium: The Common Intellectual Experience' and provide students with an understanding of the discourses of the Africana Diaspora through a variety of disciplines that culminate in a common intellectual experience;
- To develop skills that will be essential for a range of careers and leadership roles in an increasingly global and diverse world.
- We thank everyone for a good year and wish our department, its faculty, staff and students the best for the next academic year.



Filomina C. Steady,
Professor/Chair, Africana Studies.

2018-19 Events

Africana Studies Department Presents

SOPE ALUKO

Actress **(Black Panther)**

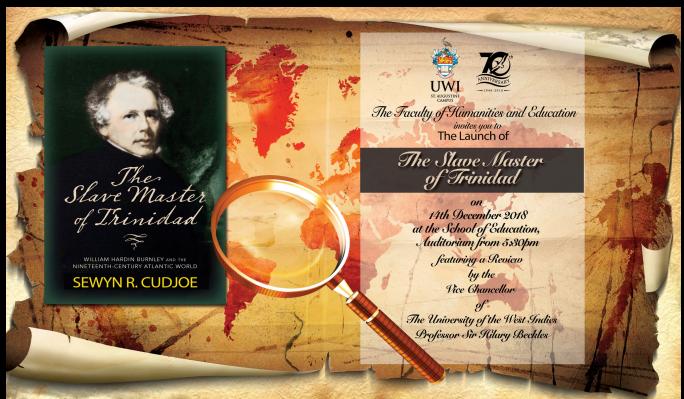
What does Black Panther symbolize for our young girls/youth

Interactive Lecture
Thursday, Sept. 20
Library Lecture Room | 7pm
Reception to follow

WELLESLEY 

Cosponsors:
Anthropology, Art, East Asian Studies, Education, Harambee House, History, Italian Studies, Philosophy, Physics, The Freedom Project, Theater Studies, WCC, WGST, Wilson Lecture Fund

Disability accommodations @ [disabilityservices](#)



AFRICANA STUDIES COLLOQUIUM PRESENTS

AFRICAN COSMOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND IDENTITY: CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND COMMUNITY

PROFESSOR LISELI FITZPATRICK

4:30 - 6:00 PM | THURSDAY, NOV. 15
HARAMBEE HOUSE
FOOD WILL BE SERVED.

WELLESLEY 

Disability Services @[disabilityaccommodations](#)

AFRICANA STUDIES COLLOQUIUM PRESENTS

BLACK BLACK

ZADI ZAKOU

A documentary exploring the relationship between African Americans and African immigrants.

4:00 - 6:00 PM | THURSDAY, FEB 28
LIBRARY LECTURE ROOM
FOOD WILL BE SERVED.

WELLESLEY 

Cosponsors:
American Studies, Harambee House and Peace & Justice Studies

Disability Services @[disabilityaccommodations](#)

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL LECTURE

WRISISTENCE: THE WRITTEN WORD AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL AWARENESS AND CHANGE

10/4 THUR 7:00 P.M. TISHMAN COMMONS

 WRITER SPEAKER NIC STONE

The MLK, Jr. Memorial lecture is an annual Wellesley event that pays tribute to the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and his enormous contribution to advancing civil rights in the United States by leading and inspiring legislative, administrative, behavioral, and attitudinal changes.

The 2018 MLK, Jr. Lecture will be given by Nic Stone, bestselling author of the young adult novel *Dear Martin* (2018). Stone wrote this moving and timely novel to explore Dr. King's work through contemporary issues. Her lecture will explore this topic and why she chose to write her book about it, and the process of engaging with Dr. King's teachings in this way.

SYMPPOSIUM

AFRICAN(A) FEMINISM AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL CONTEXT: HONORING

THE WORK OF PROFESSOR FIOMINA STEADY



Friday, April 26 2019
From 9.30am-5.00pm in Collins
Lunch And Reception

In Honor of the Retirement of Professor Filomina C. Steady

Featuring:

- Keynote Address
- Faculty Panel
- Alumnae Panel
- Student Roundtable

Sponsors:

AFRICANA STUDIES DEPARTMENT, WELLESLEY CENTER FOR WOMEN, the Departments of Anthropology, Art, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Education, English, French, History, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, Sociology, Spanish, Women and Gender Studies, Dean of Students, Harambee House, Slater International Center, the Black Task Force, and CLCE.

WELLESLEY 

"Radical simply means 'grasping things at the root'."

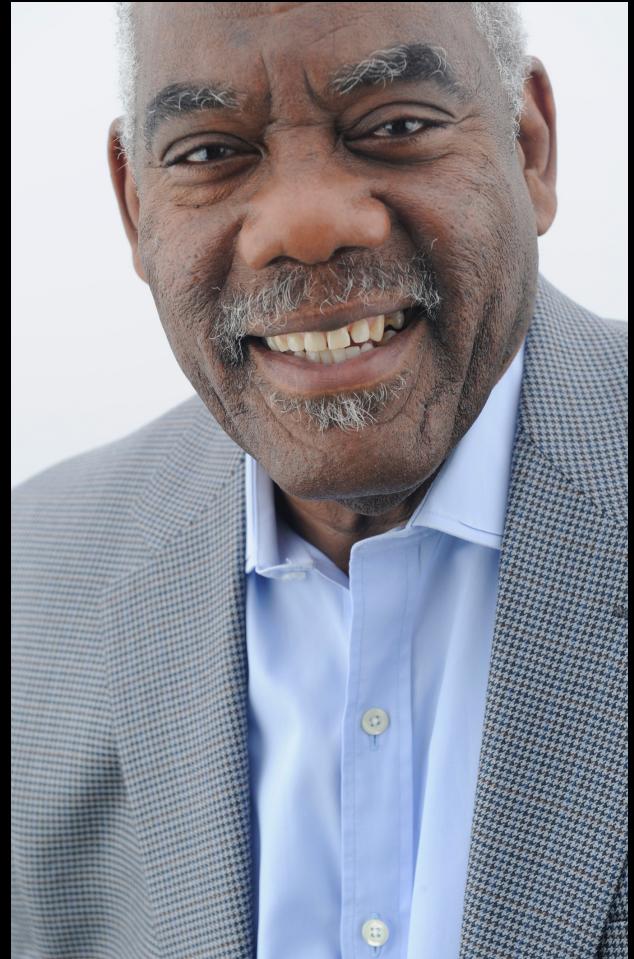
- Angela Davis

INTERVIEW: PROFESSOR SELWYN CUDJOE

Q: What are the themes that you like to explore in your writings and why are they relevant to readers today?

SC: I grew up during colonialism when we did not rule ourselves. We were ruled by Britain. Before 1962, we were a colony of Britain, and as a result, a lot of foreigners owned and controlled the wealth of our country. I grew up on sugar plantation, and so did my great grandfather and grandmother, but I did not know that at the time. As I got older, I became curious about who owned the houses in Tacarigua, a remote island. On this island lived one of the richest slave owners. This is a much more intimate biography of someone, more importantly, a white man who was part of the slave ruling class. If you want to understand the past, understand slavery. I launched this at Amherst a few weeks ago and one of the professors made the point I didn't think about. Slavery is a relationship between a slave and a master, It's a dialectical relationship.

If you want to understand where you are coming from and your behavior, that's the first point. Similar to C.L.R. James in *The Black Jacobins* where he talks about the planter class in the beginning. You cannot know yourself if you don't know your past. For more particular people who live in colonial societies whose histories are not as long, this shows the kinds of struggles our people went through to get where we are and masters thought we were ignorant.



INTERVIEW: PROFESSOR SELWYN CUDJOE

Q: Whom do you envision as your readers?

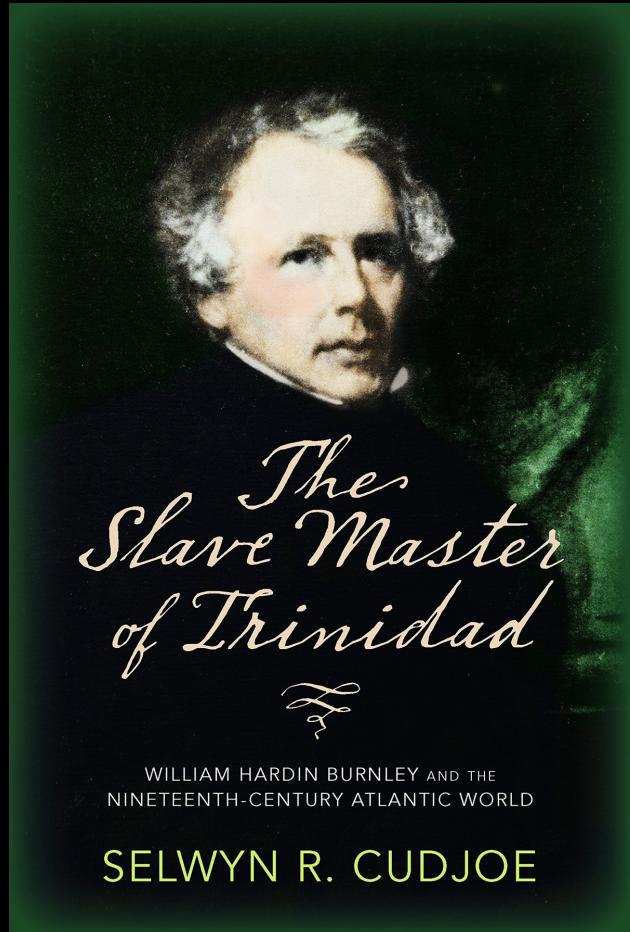
SC: In the first instance, I thought of a Trinidad audience. But the audience is not just the Caribbean, but the whole Atlantic world. There was a lot of fluency and movement between people of Africa and the Caribbean and London. The primary audience is people from Trinidad and the Caribbean. Secondary, people from the US and England who understand what colonialism is because of the black people born there. It's important that he was connected and engaged with people all over the world. He was part of a family, some of whom lived in Virginia as well.

Q: What ways do you expect people to engage with your book?

SC: Whichever way they see fit. When I wrote the book, as I mentioned before, I did not see what Professor John Bracey saw in it. People take what they want to get from it. Once you've written a book, it is no longer your book but what people make of it. I want them to see the interconnectedness of black life. I want my readers in the Caribbean, Guayana, Jamaica, Panama, the US, and the rest of the Atlantic world to understand how interconnected black lives are and have always been.

Q: What important ways do you see literature informing intellectual history? And in the case of the novel, Caribbean history?

SC: Biographies bring to life ways in which people lived and how they lived. So literature helps us to see what we cannot see, feel what we cannot feel, know what we cannot know. As a biography, it pokes into different corners of a person/nation's life that sometimes history cannot do.



INTERVIEW: PROFESSOR SELWYN CUDJOE

Q: Considering today's current social movements such as Black Lives Matter, what role do you think that your book plays in American and global literature?

SC: I was recently at Scotland, Harvard, Yale, Brown, etc where people found out that their universities were built using slave money. This discovery led to conversations about reparations through initiatives such as repairing the damage using scholarships. A book like this shows a guy who generated wealth by exploiting slave labor in the Caribbean. His son then used this money to build a school. Here, you see the connection between slavery and educational institutions they are not isolated. For BLM, I hope people can see that these things are intertwined.



Q: What are you currently doing/where are you launching/"world tour"?

SC: I plan to visit Amherst College (Joan's Theater), 13th of December, we'll be launching in Trinidad under hospices of Prime minister with Chief Justice there too at the Central bank, 14th at University of the West Indies History Department under hospice of Vice Chancellor review, January 20: Slavery Museum of London, February @ Newhouse Wellesley, February: Marist College (Poughkeepsie, NY), March 12: Seminar UCLA, Launch @ HH, March: University of Glasgow, Scotland, April: Launch at Trinidad & Tobago High Commission in London .

Is there anything you want people to know that we have not discussed?

SC: I recommend the book, *Marxism, Colonialism, and Cricket: CLR James's Beyond a Boundary by Cudjoe*. It's not just about Trinidad but is also about blacks in the 19th century Atlantic world (Caribbean, Latin America, US).

LIFE AT WELLESLEY: PROFESSOR LISELI FITZPATRICK



Q: How has your transition to Wellesley been?

LF: It has been a welcoming transition. I immediately felt a rooted sense of belonging when I got here enlivened by the natural environment and warmth of the people I encountered - some I regard as kindred spirits.

Q: How have you found the scholarship at Wellesley and what are some fascinating ways people can engage with your course?

LF: It has been quite moving and fascinating for me. Wellesley students possess a sincere and healthy desire for knowledge and truth that aligns with my teaching philosophy and innate and unwavering passion for empowerment. My pedagogical style is informed by my lifework that is centered around consciousness, compassion, cosmological thought and practices. Students are encouraged to explore and discover self through multi- and interdisciplinary lenses in ways that engender and cultivate an empowered sense of identity and community.

Q: What has been your favorite things about Wellesley?

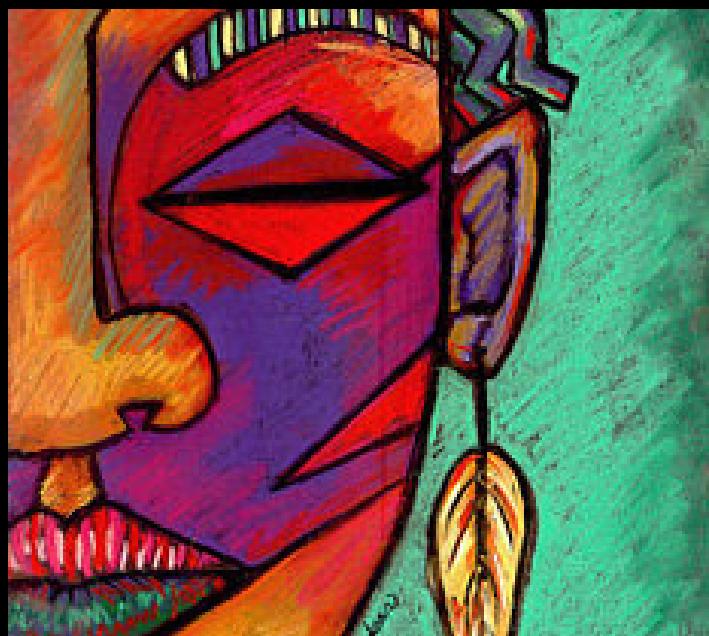
LF: The feeling of family and community within the time and space I have been here and the compassionate relationships I have been able to establish with the students. It feels good to be a part of a Department that I can call home. Being a member of the Fac-Staff soccer team Diversity Coalition (DC United) is something I also enjoy about my time at Wellesley. I look forward to the camaraderie and banter that we share on and off the pitch.

Q: What are your favorite themes to explore in your classes and why is it relevant considering the current political climate?

LF: My favorite themes include cosmological consciousness, identity, resilience and cultural expressions. I emphasize the importance of self- and communal consciousness, love, harmony and the creation of expansive spaces. Your consciousness is your guide and compass, your navigational tool, without it you will be lost in an ever-changing world. For me, the classroom embodies a safe and open space or womb for experiential learning, nurturing, engagement, exploration and growth. I see myself both as the teacher and student by acknowledging that each person has a profound voice and presence. I encourage self-expression, I encourage students to tap into themselves and connect with ideologies and works of art that stir their souls - to see value and synergy within and across the arts and articles. To delve into their passions and identify pathways for a successful life without compromising their holistic health and well-beings. To exchange ideas and experience life in living color beyond what is bound in black and white. To live. To care for and appreciate nature, and seek its wisdom.

Q: What ways do you see yourself contributing to the Wellesley College community?

LF: My contributions go beyond the walls of the classroom. I see myself playing an active role in the daily lives of students both as a voice of inspiration and an ear of compassion. I want to create a sense and space of belonging and purpose by reflecting my truth, by being transparent and available. As such, my door and arms remain wide open...I host office hours everyday lol! Overall, communal consciousness, compassion and love.



Q: What was your journey to this self interest ?

LF: My journey is a fulfillment and materialization of prophecy. I was born for this very purpose. I teach what I live and live what I teach. My penchant for empowerment and African cosmology is rooted in its inclusive and emancipatory principles, in the energetic, vibrant and rhythmic pulse of the people. African cosmological practices, expressions and culture have been demonized, distorted, desecrated and defiled under the tyranny of colonialism and the ghost of its afterlife. Africans have not been acknowledged for their contributions to world civilization that predate European thinkers and inventions. As such, I am committed to a life of service, empowerment, community and equity driven by my love, and the desire for cosmological truth and balance. I recognize that dismantling systems of injustice is sacrificial work, sometimes we have to stand in the belly of the beast to break-down inequities. It is, therefore, no coincidence that I am here today doing the work. I see it as an act of divine providence. What drew me to Wellesley College was its focus on liberal arts education, the intimacy of learning and its mandate for empowerment. To be placed in a position where you are responsible for guiding desirous and brilliant minds in a liberating and self-empowering way is beyond humbling - it is an act of service and love.

Q: Why do you think that Africana Studies is important ?

LF: The field of Africana Studies is extensive and offers expansive ways of not only understanding, interpreting and studying the experiences of Africans but also the way we view the world. Africana Studies is a worldview and not a mere discipline, it is intellectual, experiential, creative and critical. One gets to explore world phenomena and life through a non-hegemonic lens. It is a truism that African culture exists everywhere yet it has not been accurately or sufficiently represented in the curriculum. Born out of the civil rights era, Africana Studies is an educational and emancipatory praxis designed to bring balance to the discourse and put an end to inequities. Africana Studies is not concerned with replacing one system of hegemony with another but rather its focus is on undoing systems of oppression and creating authentic spaces for inclusion, expression and engagement.

W115



Interview with Dr. Carter Jackson

An Inside Look at Her Newest Book, Force and Freedom

Q: Describe your writing process. How did you do this research and where did it start for you?

KCJ: This project started in undergrad and has taken me about 10 years to write. I was accepted into a program where I got paired with a mentor and conducted research. My paper was on the private life of Fredrick Douglas. It was the first time I ever went to the archives and figured out what history really is. It was at that moment that I realized I wanted to be a historian and that this was the kind of work that I wanted to do. I wanted to study slavery and the 19th century. I wrote another paper on John Brown, his radicalism, and his use of violence. When I went to grad school, I thought about how I could take this to the next level. I started writing about John Brown, not as a leader but as a follower. John Brown was a follower of Black ideals and Black principles. My advisor then encouraged me to look deeper into the use of violence by abolitionists. I took this idea even further and began to look not at John Brown but at the Black people who inspired John Brown and the violence that they thought was necessary to overthrow slavery.

Q: In your book, you give a more complex and nuanced analysis of the use of violence by Black Abolitionists. Why do you think this shift towards violence in the abolitionist movement goes largely unaddressed and dismissed?

KCJ: We do not talk about violence because it is complicated. I think that people are more comfortable talking about non-violence such as these great stories of the Underground Railroad of people running away and fleeing. However, we don't talk about that in order to flee you needed to fight. Fugitive enslaved people had to engage in man to man combat to get to freedom. I don't think the field wanted to talk about how much violence was required to overthrow slavery. When you look at the Civil War, it's the bloodiest war we have had in American history. 2% of the population died. If we are unwilling to grapple with that truth and the amount of violence that was required, we are never going to get to an understanding of why it all happened in the first place. I am not only pushing the field to look at violence in a nuanced way but to also look at its period and see it as something that has to be discussed, if we are going to talk about liberation in any facet.



Q: What do you hope the impact of your book will be?

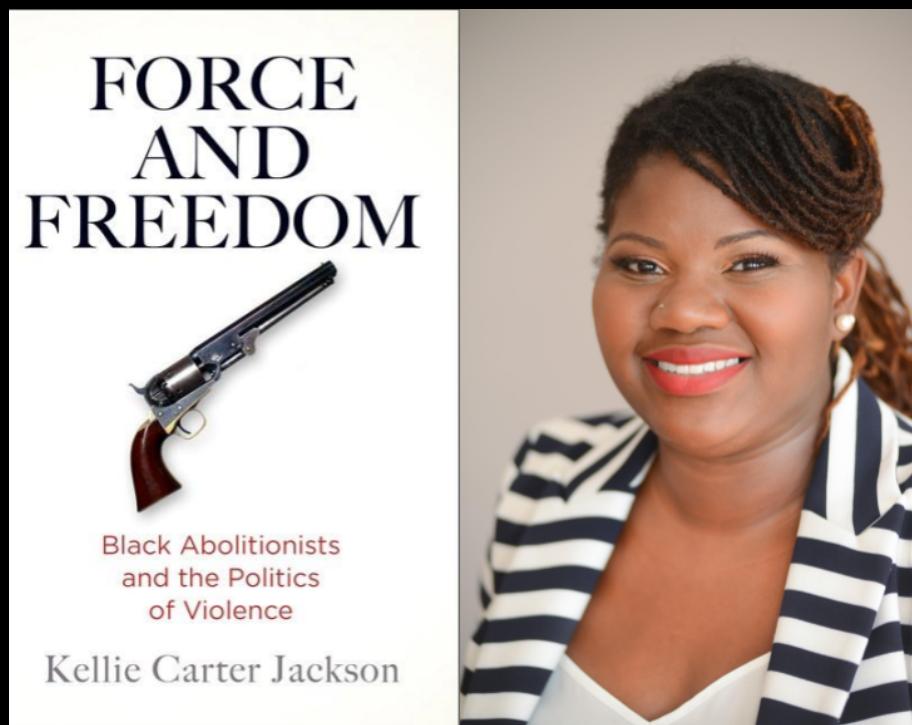
KCJ: I hope that when people read this book that they learn something new and feel empowered by what they read. I hope that my readers find strategies to think about and take their own liberation or be an ally to someone else's. I always say in my classes that I want my students to learn something new and to feel affirmed in what they already know. Even if some of these stories are familiar for my readers, I hope that they are affirmed in the idea that Black people were central to their own freedom, then that is never a lesson that cannot be repeated enough.

Q: Is there anything else you would like your readers to know?

KCJ: I want people to know that they have the capability of making great changes. Black abolitionists showed me the capacity we all have to produce change. I don't think that we can say that slavery was going to end, that its end was inevitable. I think that it could have continued for another hundred years, but the abolitionists believed that it was possible to overthrow the institution of slavery. They did it without all the things we have now. When I think about what they did with what they had, it makes me think how much more could I do in the world that we live in right now.

Q: Do you have any upcoming projects? What are you working on next?

KCJ: I am writing an article called, "Dare You Meet A Woman" and it is about black women and violence in the abolitionist movement. It is about how black women employed tactics of violence, either as slaves, fugitives, or free women. My next book project is about the only black person on the Titanic, Joseph LaRoche. The title of the book is, "Losing LaRoche, the Story of the Only Black Passenger on the Titanic", but this project is way far out – I am starting research this summer. I would like to get it done within the next 5 years. Now that I know how and what is required to write a book, I can do it quicker. With that being said, research takes time. I am also going on leave next year! I plan to read for pleasure, spend time with my kids, watch movies, and just develop a good regimen of self-care and self-love.



SPECIAL THANKS!

Honoring Professor Filomina C. Steady



We are sad to be saying goodbye to Professor Steady this year. In addition to teaching her courses phenomenally, Professor Steady's research in African(a) feminism and leadership in a global context has empowered her students to become agents of change. She has truly impacted the lives of her students and has been a positive leader by creating a dialogue amongst students that is necessary to building a positive future. We'll leave it to some students to show some love!

"Professor Steady is a brilliant Professor. Her lectures are engaging and she is able to make her class a space where everyone's voice matter. I am so grateful that I got to learn from her."

- Hawah Kallon '18

"I love professor Steady! She manages to impart so much information in her lectures, and consider nuanced and layered perspectives with a skill that is rare to see in the classroom. Her lectures are so informative without seeming impersonal and she really has a way with connecting with her students.

She will be sorely missed."

- Brianna Soleyn '18

We are so grateful to have worked with Professor Steady and experienced all that she has added to our institution and students' lives. Wishing her the best along her path!

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT

"I'm currently doing my Masters in African Development (an International Development degree with a regional concentration in Africa) . Taking courses in Africana studies revealed my interest in learning about the African continent. I thus decided to explore these interests further as I hope to better understand the root causes behind some of the continent's issues so as to better to inform my contributions to the continent"

Pelumi Botti '16

DISCOVERING AFRICANA STUDIES

Q: Why did you decide to study Africana studies?

PB: I actually made the decision to minor in Africana Studies during my Senior year at Wellesley. I finally acknowledged and owned the fact that my research interests were in Africa as evident from the many Africana courses I took as well as the African related courses I took both at Wellesley and during my study abroad.

Q: What ways do you think that your experience in Africana courses either inform/influence your academic interests and perspective?

PB: Reading the writings of Mariama Bâ (Une si longue lettre/So Long a Lettre), W.E. B. DuBois (The Souls of Black Folk) and Walter Rodney (How Europe Underdeveloped Africa) really shaped my studies and worldview today. Firstly, I was given an intersectional framework for seeing the world and many of society's issues today, one that includes the marginalised, the forgotten and often excluded. Secondly, by opening my eyes and providing clarity to the familiarity in the issues faced by people of African descent, Africana courses enabled me to empathise with others better and globalised the Pan-African struggle for me as one that must include ALL people of African descent. Finally, as an African woman myself, the Africana courses gave me much to celebrate and to take pride in having expanded my knowledge into the histories, victories and achievements of peoples of African descent



*"I was given
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one that
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the forgotten
and often
excluded"*

Q: What was your favorite course/topic of interest as an undergraduate taking an Africana course?

PB: Definitely, introduction to African Literature. The course reemphasized my love for African literature, it was also my first time recognizing African texts for their inherent value and contributions to literature and not as texts for anthropological analysis. I also felt known, affirmed and recognized having being able to identify with many of the experiences reflected in the literature. It was a course where the assigned readings were not a pain to read, I truly enjoyed reading them and used many of the readings to start a personal library of African literature. I've circulated many of the novels from that course with friends and loved ones. Above all, I fondly recall the lively conversations that emerged from the course. Many of these conversations would spill over outside the classroom to the dining halls.

Q: What are your future aspirations and how do you see this discipline assisting you with that study?

PB: I ultimately seek to make social impact on the African continent, more specifically through youth empowerment and capacity building. This might either be through a career in the private sector, the public sector (policy work) or the education sector (teaching). Only time will tell, but Africana Studies definitely gave me a sense of urgency to my life mission and has given me a conceptual framework for whatever contribution I make.



Q: Any advice to people who are considering either majoring/minoring in this department?

PB: Be humble enough to learn about the vast experiences of people of African descent. There is always so much to learn! Use the opportunity to be exposed to different experiences and not just those you are familiar with. African studies exposed me to Caribbean thinkers like Walter Rodney, Eric Williams, the great W. E. B. Du Bois and how I learned about the Siddis the people of African descent in India

Q: How did the Africana studies department shape your Wellesley experience?

PB: In between classes, I probably spent the most time in the Africana Studies Department (in the basement of Founders). A lot of the Africans professors practiced an open door policy, where you could come and chat about anything from what

Q: What did you love about the Africana Studies department?

PB: The wonderful people that made up the Africana department. From the faculty to the staff (a special shout out to Lizette and Susan).

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATING MAJORS AND MINORS!

Majors:

Kemi Akande
Kennedy Austin
Tyanna Crump
Hawah Kallon
Brianna Soleyn

Minors:

Jennifer (Ginny) Nwako
Jamilah Lewis-Horton
Belyse Inamahoro
Morinade (Jayla) Stevenson
Natalia Marques
Christine (Halle) Rubera
Empress Helwig
Hailey Den Elzen



Book and Film Highlights

Books

The Slave Master of Trinidad by Selwyn Cudjoe

Force and Freedom by Kellie Carter Jackson

Children of Blood and Bone By Tomi Adeyemi

Becoming by Michelle Obama

Never Caught: The Relentless Pursuit of the Washington's Slave by Erica Armstrong Dunbar

The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas

Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology By Deidre Cooper Owens

We Were Eight Years in Power by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

Freedom is a Constant Struggle by Angela Davis

The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson

Films

If Beale Street Could Talk

I Am Not Your Negro

Moonlight

OJ Made in America

Whitney

The Rape of Recy Taylor

The House I Live in

Get Out

She's Gotta Have It

Black Panther

Step Sisters

The Chi



AFRICANA STUDIES
WRITING PRIZES 2019

Congratulations

THE ZORA NEALE HURSTON

CHIKA EGBUZIE '19

JAYLA STEVENSON '19

ESA TILIJA '19

JAMILA LEWIS-HORTON '19

HAWAH KALLON '19

LILY XU '19

THE ELLA SMITH ELBERT '88

SHARON LU '20

EMMA BURKE '20

THE FANNIE LOU HAMER

ADWOA ANTWI '21

TYLER VARGAS '21

