

*The*  
**Griot**

*"a griot is a storyteller, historian, musician, warrior, singer, diplomat...but above all, a griot remembers"*

# Africana Studies Department



## Spring 2018 Newsletter

Writers & Editors:  
Kristen Adams '20  
Gloria Samen '18

# Karibu!

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During this academic year, Africana Studies has experienced a number of transitions. We welcomed Professor Kellie Jackson, a historian specializing in slavery, Black women's history, and cinema studies. She previously taught at Hunter College and held a Post-Doctoral position at Harvard University. Her daughter Josephine visited Wellesley *in utero* when her mother came to interview for the position. She is now a year old! Congratulations JoJo! We also bade farewell to our beloved and popular professor Pashington Obeng who will be teaching at international institutions in Africa and Asia in the future. We wish him well. Professor Filomina Steady was on sabbatical in the fall of 2017 in West Africa researching "The returned African Diaspora in Africa with Women in Focus." We are looking forward to welcoming a new faculty member in the fall.

Professor Layli Maparyan served as acting chair during the fall semester and provided valuable leadership, including negotiating for a new tenure-track position and a temporary bridge position for a visiting lecturer for two years. Our new College president, Dr. Paula Johnson, is committed to strengthening Africana Studies and supporting its commitment to promoting excellence in teaching and research. We co-sponsored the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Lecture on "A Visual Approach to Studying the Organizational Structure of the Modern Civil Rights Movement" by Dr. Karcheik Sims-Alvarado on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

In the Spring semester, the College hosted a historic "African Women's Leadership Conference" from March 7th through 9th, co-sponsored by the Mastercard Foundation. Professor Filomina Steady presented the first lecture on "African Women's Leadership Through the Ages." Also in March, the department hosted Dr. Aldon Morris, who spoke on "WEB Dubois at the Center: From Science, Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter." In April, Roy Anderson presented his remarkable work on the Maroons of Jamaica to the Wellesley College community.

The Africana Studies Department is proud of our offerings in the Swahili language and we hope to strengthen and expand it as the only indigenous African 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 many 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**

1. 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;

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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;
5. 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;
6. 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!

Layli Maparyan, Professor/Chair, Africana Studies, Fall Semester  
Filomina C. Steady, Professor/Chair, Africana Studies, Spring Semester

# 17-18 Events

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL LECTURE

A VISUAL APPROACH TO STUDYING  
**THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**



**DR. KARCHEIK SIMS-ALVARADO**  
**TISHMAN COMMONS**  
**10 / 26 THUR 7:30 PM**

|               |                        |                             |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Admission     | Free                   | Open to the public          |
| Location      | Tishman Commons        | 100 W. 25th St., 10th Floor |
| Registration  | Not required           |                             |
| Accessibility | Wheelchair accessible  |                             |
| Phone         | 212.875.5500           |                             |
| Website       | www.tishmancommons.com |                             |



Questions: [awing@wellesley.edu](mailto:awing@wellesley.edu)  
 Free and open to the public  
 For disability access: [disability@wellesley.edu](mailto:disability@wellesley.edu)  
[www.wellesley.edu/visit](http://www.wellesley.edu/visit)

March 8 | **African Women's Leadership Through the Ages**



**Speaker: Professor Filomina Steady, Africana Studies**  
**Moderator: Professor Lidwien Kapteijns, History**

9:30 - 10:30 am  
 African Women's Leadership Conference  
 Alumnae Hall Auditorium



**CW: Sexual Assault**



**The Story of Recy Taylor**

In 1944, Recy Taylor, an African-American woman, was kidnapped and gang-raped by six white men in Abbeville, Alabama. Taylor refused to remain silent about the brutal rape she suffered. Her case led to organizing in the African-American community and later national activism regarding justice and civil rights. Her story gained attention in Danielle McGuire's book, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance, in Ourselves*. Her story is also featured in *Call My Name* by Whitney's Golden Globe Accolade actress and when the Congressional Black Caucus held Democratic Caucus members in wearing red "they" pins while attending the 2018 State of the Union. This documentary tells her story.

Screening: *The Rape of Recy Taylor*  
 Followed by: Q & A Discussion  
**7:00 - 9:30pm**  
 Collins Cinema  
**Tuesday, March 20**

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The Africana Studies Department Presents:

**The Agency of Women within the Narrative of Boko Haram**

with Dr. Ini Dele-Adedeji, a Nigerian scholar from University of London (SOAS)

Student Presenters: Halle Rubera '19, Belysea Inamahoro '19



**Tuesday, April 17 4:30-6:00 PM**  
 Harambee House



Co-sponsors: English, Harambee House, Jewish Studies, The Freedom Project  
 Disability Access | @disabilityservices

Africana Studies Department Presents

**Against All Odds: The Indomitable Maroons of Jamaica**  
 Lecture & Dinner



Thursday, April 19

~ with a screening of Roy Anderson's *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chiefness* ~

5:30 - 7:00 pm  
 Founders Hall 120

For Disability Access: [disabilityservices@wellesley.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@wellesley.edu)

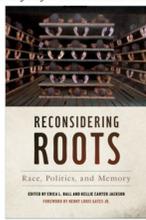


Co-Sponsors: Education, English, Harambee House, and History Department

Africana Studies Department Presents

**Observations of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Alex Haley's Roots**

~ Led by Professor Kellie Carter Jackson ~



**RECONSIDERING ROOTS**  
 Race, Politics, and Memory  
 EDITED BY KELLIE CARTER JACKSON AND ROBERT G. LEE, JR.

What were criticisms and controversies surrounding *Roots*?  
 Why did *Roots* warrant a remake in the Age of Obama and Black Lives Matter?  
 Where does *Roots* go from here?

Reconsider the politics and scope of *Roots*! Examine why it became such an extraordinary cultural phenomenon.

4:30 - 6:00pm  
 Thursday, October 19  
 Harambee House

Africana Studies Colloquium

Africana Studies presents

Professor Adekeye Adebajo

**The Curse of Berlin: Africa After the Cold War**



HARAMBEE HOUSE: MONDAY, NOV. 13 | 4:30PM



Professor Adekeye Adebajo is the director of the Institute of Pan-African Thought and Conversation, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. He is a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy at Tufts University and a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

Co-Sponsors: Harambee House, History, Peace and Justice Studies, Political Science and The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship



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Africana Studies Department Presents

**W.E.B. Du Bois at the Center: From Science, Civil Rights Movement, to Black Lives Matter**



**Dr. Aldon Morris**



The Leon Forrest Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Northwestern University

documents Du Bois's contribution to the birth of American sociology.

4:30pm - 6:00pm  
**Tuesday, March 6**  
 Library Lecture Room



RSVP → @Irodriaguezponce  
 Co-sponsors: Sociology Department, Harambee House, Mellon Mays Fellowship, The Freedom Project, Executive Miller Fund, Africana Studies, Committee on Lectures and Cultural Events (CLCE)  
 Disability Accommodations | [art@disabilityservices.com](mailto:art@disabilityservices.com)

# Our Professors

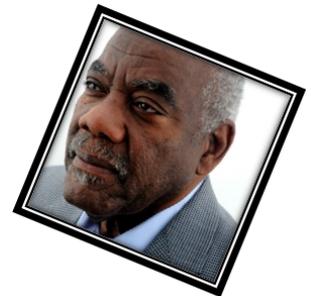
## Professor Kellie Carter-Jackson



I am the newest addition to the Africana Studies Department. I specialize in 19th Century American History, but I teach courses on Slavery and Film, Black Women's History, and many of the required survey courses on African American History. I highly value mentorship and taking students under my wing, particularly students who are interested in graduate school and the professoriate. I enjoy screening the latest new films #wakandaforever and I hope to use my next courses in the department to take students beyond the campus and into the vibrant and historical spaces where black Americans have had an impact. #Fieldtrips

## Professor Selwyn Cudjoe

Professor of Comparative Literature, Professor Cudjoe teaches courses on the African American literary tradition, African literature, black women writers, and Caribbean literature. Professor Cudjoe is a director of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and member of a Cabinet – appointed Round Table Discussion on Race Relations. He is the president of the National Association for the Empowerment of African People (Trinidad and Tobago).



## Professor Ophera Davis

Professor Davis is an interdisciplinary social scientist whose research includes psychology, disaster studies, women's studies, and education. She teaches interdepartmental cross listed courses such as Black Psychology, Race Relations & Racial Inequalities, The Black Family, and Women in the Workplace. Her recent research, framed in Womanist theory, focuses on Hurricane Katrina Mississippi Black women survivors' resilience and recovery.



## Professor Geofred Osoro

Professor Osoro has taught Swahili language and culture at multiple universities. Professor Osoro specializes in Swahili language and culture. His research focuses on Swahili proverbial language and the sociocultural theory.



## Professor Filomena Steady

My teaching philosophy has been expanding to address challenges of post-modern and post-colonial discourses and epistemological challenges to the social sciences. I have taught courses on Africa and the African Diaspora, African women, medical anthropology, environmental justice, urban studies, and a Wintersession course in Jamaica. My research has benefitted from work on policy analysis as a former director in the United Nations.



## Highlights from Dr. CJ's First Year!

My first year has been a whirlwind!!! During the 2017-2018 academic year I've taught three courses: *Women and Slavery in the Transatlantic World*, *Understanding Slavery through Film*, and *African American History from 1500 to the Present*. I have enjoyed getting to know each and every student in my classes. I feel completely embraced by students and faculty alike. It's the best feeling. I love my job! One of the highlights of this year was receiving several personal letters from students in my "Women and Slavery" course. Reading about how my course impacted them was so rewarding, particularly at the end of a long and hard semester.



I've learned that Wellesley students work intensely hard, but they are also incredibly thoughtful and human. I never cease to be impressed by their presentations and what they bring to the table. My students give me so much hope for the future.

On a personal note, I've loved being able to see my young children (4 and 14 months) play on Wellesley's campus. I was offered the job at Wellesley the SAME day I had my daughter Josephine. Ha! I'll always think of her birth and this job at the same time!

Next year, I'm looking forward to teaching AFR 105: Introduction to the Black Experience and Black Women's History in the spring of 2018. To my knowledge, this will be the first class at Wellesley that will offer an exhaustive look into the ways black women have shaped just about every aspect of American History. The class will go from Mumbet (the first black woman to sue for freedom and win) to Michelle Obama.

## Alumnae Spotlight: Marcia Frimpong '15



### What was your favorite Africana Studies class?

I have two. My favorite Africana studies classes were Professor Steady's class "Black Women Cross-Culturally" and "Intro African Literature" with Cudjoe.

### What have you been up to since graduation? Anything new coming up?

I spent a few years in Texas teaching middle school science which was challenging but thoroughly rewarding. Currently, I am an MPH student at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health in the Department of Global Health trying to figure out how to make an impact on the world. In my free time, I'm doing some traveling outside the country and learning some new recipes. I'm looking forward to the summer after my first year working in consulting.

### How have you used the skills you learned in Africana Studies?

I am constantly using the writing skills I learned from my Africana Studies classes. Additionally, I think I am much more able to see systems in my studies and my past work experience because of the critical lens on systems my Africana classes provided.

### What advice do you have for current Africana Studies student?

I think sometimes it's hard to see the relation between Africana Studies and professions but some of my most used critical skills came from my Africana classes. Learn to ask those questions in class and sharpen those skills and learning to find the answers.

## Alumnae Spotlight: Tamar Davis '16



### What was your favorite Africana Studies class?

My favorite Africana Studies class was Black Women Writers. I was introduced to some incredible literature in that class and many of the books we read remain my favorite novels. I also really enjoyed getting to share conversations about those books with other Black Wellesley women. Getting to visit NYC and see *The Color Purple* on Broadway after reading it was the icing on the cake as well!

### What have you been up to since graduation? Anything new coming up?

Since graduating I moved back to New York and began working in the nonprofit field. I currently work at Color of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice non-profit as a campaign researcher. This summer, I'll begin graduate school at Columbia University where I'll be earning a masters in journalism.

### How have you used the skills you learned in Africana Studies?

Africana Studies introduced me to so many black thinkers and writers and that foundational knowledge has really served me well in both my personal and professional life. Africana Studies also made very clear how Black thinkers over the course of American history have built upon one another's ideas and shaped the vocabulary that we continue to use even now when we discuss the Black American experience.

### What advice do you have for current Africana Studies student?

My advice for current Africana Studies students is to enjoy it fully. Once you graduate the opportunities to just talk about and explore ideas can feel increasingly rare and the opportunities to devote so much of your time to talking about, reading, and exploring the work of Black scholars, writers and historians are almost non-existent. As an Africana Studies student you get the chance to center Black life in a way that just isn't always readily available so definitely take advantage of it and soak it all in.

I would also encourage students to always think about how the content of their coursework circles back and relates to the current experiences of Black people throughout the diaspora. It can be really easy in school to treat your readings or the topics you're learning about as just "work", but in a field like Africana Studies it's important to remember that none of the content that you're learning about exists in a vacuum. It can help better explain the world that we live in and give you a better informed understanding of the lives experience of black folks all throughout the diaspora and I think that all Africana Studies students can find value in that regardless of their personal racial/ethnic identity.

## Special Thanks!

We are sad to say goodbye to Professor Ophera Davis this semester. In addition to teaching her courses superbly, Professor Davis manages to have her diverse array of students embody future agents of change by engaging in dialogue that is crucial to building a positive future in our society. Past students note that her role as a teacher and as a resource has truly impacted their lives in ways they could have never expected. We'll leave it to some students to show some love!



*“With her support and guidance in her class ...I grew a sense of confidence in myself and my goals and values that I had never before experienced. This sense of confidence and self-knowing guides me today as I prepare to enter the workforce after Wellesley. Professor Davis is an excellent educator and cares about her students as whole people.”*  
- Anju Madhok '18

*“After two semesters of being here, her class was the first I had in which students could laugh so comfortably but also have intense dialogue about topics directly relating to our lives...[she] made me truly excited to go to class, and her teaching style is such that I felt we were learning about a topic and ourselves the whole time. She always said that one of us will be President one day...”*  
- Kristen Adams '20

*“Outside of the classroom, Professor Davis is also an amazing mentor, who encourages me and other students to participate in academic conferences and research. She was so willing to listen to students' ideas and providing feedback and guidance...she is also present in a lot of students' event to demonstrate support.”*  
-

Chloe Mann '17

*“Somehow we got on the subject of morning routine and Professor Davis said, and I quote (literally, because it was so unexpected, I remember it clearly), ‘I make a point of wearing my hair differently every few days. I want you all to know that you can be a professional woman and still take risks on your looks’...Professor Davis wasn't my official advisor, and I only had one class with her, but she is the professor I will always think of first when I think about how Wellesley has impacted me.”*  
- Anonymous

'16

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

GLORIA SAMEN '18-Zora Neale Hurston Prize

CHIKA EGBUZIE '19-Ella Smith Elbert Prize

FRANNIE ADAMS '21-Fannie Lou Hamer Prize



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*Africana Studies 2018 Prize Winners*

## Congratulations to our graduating majors!!

### **Serenity Hughes**

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois

“I majored in Africana Studies because I plan on becoming a Professor of African American Studies and/or American Studies, specializing in the intersectionality of Black cultural studies and Hip Hop”



### **Kamaria DeRamus**

Hometown: Gadsden, Alabama

“It's fundamental that we understand where we come from, in order to continue in our journeys ahead. I feel that much of my middle and high school history lessons were falsified and often left out the Black experience. Learning of my roots and my culture has given me the confidence and assurance to succeed in America.”

### **Gloria Samen**

Hometown: Potomac, Maryland

“I majored in Africana Studies to better understand myself, my friends, and the world we live in. It has given me a better understanding of the African diaspora through literature, film, music, and more.”



### **Zilpa Oduor**

Hometown: Nakuru, Kenya and Albany, NY

“Africana Studies gave me the space to understand myself and where I'm from through literature, religion, language and music. It was the most effective way to stay connected to my roots, while learning about different cultures and traditions around the continent and in the diaspora.”

## Paige Cheatham

Hometown: San Antonio, Texas

“I minored in Africana Studies because I really enjoyed a class that I took with Prof. Cudjoe, and I wanted to have more of an opportunity to engage about the topics that we discussed. Also I felt like it really balanced the rest of my academic classes, where we did not discuss the diaspora or culture at all.”



## Sydney Robertson

Hometown: New York, New York

“I decided to minor in Africana Studies because I wanted to learn about myself more than I felt like my other points of academic learning, whether at Wellesley or prior, did. Throughout my past four years in the department, the lessons of my own history and culture have heavily influenced the way in which I have come into my own as a black woman.”

*oh, the  
places  
you'll  
go*

# '18 Summer Movie/Book Recs!

## FILMS

[Black Panther](#)  
[The Chi](#)  
[OJ Made in America](#)  
[The Rape of Recy Taylor](#)  
[The House I Live In](#)  
[Dear White People \(season 2\)](#)  
[Amateur](#)  
[Message From the King](#)  
[She's Gotta Have It \(series\)](#)  
[Time: The Kalief Browder Story](#)



## BOOKS

[Homegoing](#) – Yaa Gyasi  
[The Hate You Give](#) – Angie Thomas  
[Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) – Harriet Jacobs  
[Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology](#) – Deirdre Cooper Owens  
[We Were Eight Years in Power](#) – Ta-Nehisi Coates