



# JWJI ANNUAL REPORT 2022–2023

RESURGENCE



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY

The James Weldon Johnson Institute  
for the Study of Race and Difference  
Emory College of Arts and Sciences



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# Letter from the Director

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Dear Friends,

As many of you know, Atlanta's city motto is the Latin word *Resurgens*, or rising again. While it has certainly been invoked to whitewash racist parts of Atlanta's history, it also represents a positive aspect of Atlanta's heritage in that the term connotes reemerging from challenges.

This year has been a reemergence for JWJI in many ways. We resumed fully in-person operations this year after having to do a lot of our programming online for the last two years. We welcomed a new assistant director to our staff. And we had the privilege of hosting a particularly outstanding fellowship cohort!

In many ways, this year's cohort reflects the vision of our founder, Dr. Rudolph Byrd. He envisioned JWJI—embedded in Emory with its intellectual resources and in Atlanta, with its rich history and network of seminal archives—to be a vibrant intellectual hub for the study of race and difference.

This year's program reflected that vibrancy. From the penetrating speakers to the synergistic research interests of the fellows to the fellows' eagerness to support each other and create intellectual community, this year demonstrated JWJI's potential and reach in so many positive ways.

I hope the next few pages convey how excited I am about the work of our fellows and speakers. These scholars are poised to be leaders in their fields. Because of JWJI, they have now made interdisciplinary connections that I believe will serve them well over the course of their careers. Their success demonstrates that Dr. Byrd's vision was not in vain.

Thank you again for your support of JWJI. We hope to build on this year's success to scale higher heights in future years.

Sincerely,

Andra Gillespie  
Director

# New Leadership: Assistant Director



For **Antonio Kyler**, strong operations are the foundation of impact.

Kyler joined the James Weldon Johnson Institute as Assistant Director in August 2022, bringing nearly a decade of active-duty service in the U.S. Army and extensive experience in higher education administration. His background in logistics and organizational management shaped a disciplined, systems-oriented approach that continues to guide his leadership.

Prior to joining JWJI, Kyler served in roles at Emory University's Winship Cancer Institute, where he supported major grant initiatives, coordinated conferences and research symposia, managed communications, and worked closely with executive leadership. That experience strengthened his ability to oversee complex operations while maintaining a clear focus on institutional goals.

At JWJI, Kyler supports the Institute's Visiting Fellows Program, working closely with fellows throughout their residency. As Assistant Director, he partners with the Director to execute the Institute's strategic vision and programming initiatives. He oversees daily operations, supervises staff and student workers, coordinates scholar orientations, and ensures that all administrative and logistical components run smoothly.

Kyler plays a central role in implementing more than 40 annual events, including the Institute's signature Colloquium Series, which convenes critical conversations on race, difference, and social justice. From speaker coordination and timeline management to event logistics and audiovisual oversight, he ensures that each program is delivered with professionalism and care.

Known for his collaborative spirit and steady leadership, Kyler focuses not only on assigned responsibilities but also on anticipating the needs that support collective success. He remains committed to advancing the Institute's mission by strengthening operations and ensuring that the Director's vision is carried out with precision and excellence.



# 2022-2023 At a Glance

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9

Visiting Scholars

4

Undergraduate Fellows

20+

Public Programs Hosted

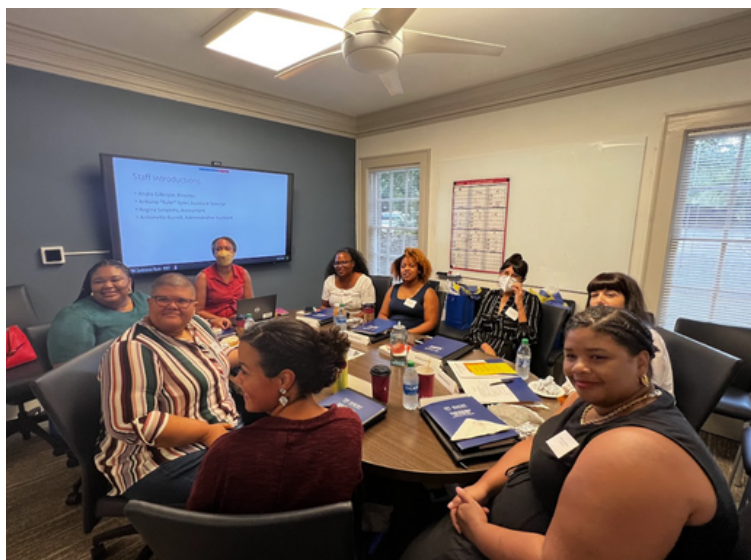
600+

Total Attendance

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Milestones of 2022-2023

August 2022: Cohort fourteen arrived.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Milestones of 2022-2023

**February 2023:** JWJI hosted Public Dialogue titled “Race and Anti-Semitism”.

Panelists: Marc Dollinger (Francisco State University); Rabbi Ruth Abusch-Magder (Be'chol Lashon); Cheryl Greenberg, (Trinity College); Terrance Johnson (Harvard Divinity School), and Candice Jenkins (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign). Moderators: Andra Gillespie and Miriam Udel, Emory University



# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Milestones of 2022-2023

**April 2023:** JWJI welcomed anthropologist Michael Blakey (College of William & Mary) to give the annual James Weldon Johnson Distinguished Lecture, “Beyond the Blinding Light of Race: A Social History of Scientific Racism; A Black Scholar’s Persistent Critiques and Alternatives; and the need for Democratization of Science”.



# 2022-2023 Fellowship Cohort



**Beatrice J. Adams**  
Mellon Post Doctoral Fellow  
The College of Wooster

In the course of expanding her dissertation into a book, Mellon Post Doctoral Fellow Beatrice J. Adams not only learned why many African Americans stayed in the South rather than joining the Great Migration, she also learned why many of those who left decided to return.

An assistant professor of history at the College of Wooster in Ohio, Adams specializes in African American history with a focus on 20th century migration. During her 2022-23 JWJI fellowship, she researched, wrote and edited her upcoming book, working title: “Standing in the Warmth of Their Own Suns: The Development and History of the New Great Migration.”

The first half of Adams’ book explores the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the North and Midwest which happened from about 1917 to 1970. The second part studies the New Great Migration of African Americans from the North back to the South which happened from about 1970 to near the turn of the century.

“I approach the American South as the homeland of African Americans, which some people accept automatically. They go to the South every summer to spend time with grandparents or they are from there originally,” Adams said. “For some other people there’s a little bit of resistance to that idea because of Jim Crow, racial segregation and its many forms, violence, economic oppression, lack of opportunity, not having access to educational resources—the list goes on and on. There are definitely reasons people left. But, the largest percent of the African American population has always lived in the American South. So there’s a demographic reality and the book explores the reasons for that—historical connections, cultural connections, ancestral connections.”

The JWJI fellowship served Adams in multiple ways.

One of which was allowing her time and access to delve into oral history archives to explore the life narratives of many African Americans who migrated, or didn’t, during the 20th century.

“I would say it’s a book about migration, but also it’s a book about longing and identity. People return for bread and butter issues, but almost all of them express this idea that there’s hope in the South. ‘I have connections to the south, I’m returning home. I feel comfortable here.’ And there’s a kind of theme throughout the people who stay because it’s home, because I want to fight for this place, because I have land here, because my ancestors were born here. So the book really tries to amplify that idea,” Adams said.

The fellowship gave her time to research, write and edit her book. It also meant that she taught an upper level undergraduate class researching the New Great Migration. Not only did she get fresh perspectives from her students, but preparing for the course also made her realize how little had been written on the topic.

“One of my students wrote about hospitals, medicine and migration in Atlanta. I don’t know a whole lot about public health and it just made me think somebody should write a whole book about this because it is fascinating. It’s not my project and she just scratched the surface, but it made me think there’s so much to write,” Adams said.

Over her yearlong fellowship, Adams benefited from professional development and the Colloquiums where she met and learned from academics she had long admired and also speakers who she would have not normally sought out but whose lectures she enjoyed for her own edification and to share with her students.

“It really made me excited to come back to the college and share all this knowledge with my students. The College of Wooster’s claim to fame is that every student

has to do a one-on-one project with a faculty member. So in my department, they spend two years working on their own research projects. I have a student who's applying to grad school and I'm like, 'Oh, are you interested in politics? This colloquium about politics was really great,' or I have students who are interested in writing about films and I'm saying, 'Oh, we had this scholar and they were talking about films in this way.' Super exciting," Adams said. "I think one of the most impactful professional development sessions is when we met with an editor. It was a key moment. I had just started thinking about contacting presses. So having that conversation with an editor, being able to ask whatever questions and be in a safe space, was so important for me."

But the most impactful aspect of the fellowship for Adams was "just being in community with like-minded scholars. It was actually the thing that shaped my experience doing the fellowship the most."

"I finished writing my dissertation during Covid," she said. "Those last couple of years where you're like writing and thinking in community with people and then going and talking to scholars at conferences or making meetings with scholars across the university, preparing for the job market, all the things people normally do—I didn't do any of that because it was Covid," Adams said.

The fellowship provided a catch-up for all that, she said.

"The fellowship allowed me to be in a physical space with other people who are interested in tackling some of the kind of broader, intellectual questions or scholarly endeavors that I'm interested in. I was able to go to my office and then come out and share a coffee with them, ask questions or have them read my work or talk to them about my conference papers. It was such a beautiful gift that I didn't realize I needed."



**Amanda Marie Martínez**  
Mellon Post Doctoral Fellow  
University of California

With a punk rock mom, Amanda Marie Martínez, a Mexican American native of California, isn't who you'd expect to study the history of country music.

But that's exactly Martínez's point.

A JWJI Mellon Postdoctoral fellow in 2022-23, Martínez is now in the middle of a 2023-25 postdoctoral fellowship . for faculty diversity at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill campus' department of American studies.

She completed her history doctorate at the University of California Los Angeles in 2022 and has used the fellowships to convert her dissertation into a book: "The Industry is Playing the People Cheap: Race and the Country Music Business from Nixon to 9/11."

The book, upcoming from the University of North Carolina Press, explores the role of race and the marketing of country music in the late 20th century.

"This is essentially a business history of country music," Martínez said. "Ultimately it is looking at how the business reacts to moments of social and cultural changes in America. I'm really interested in these moments where racial tensions kind of hit a boiling point in country music and how it's been cyclical."

Martínez can easily trace her interest in country music to growing up in Santa Cruz, California with a young, punk rocker, single mom.

"I was lucky to be raised in a musical household. We listened to punk, Mexican music and country music," Martínez said. "Santa Cruz is a college town. There are lots of record shops. So I was always kind of in the record shop, buying music and trading music I didn't like for new music. And I just kind of gradually developed this real obsession with country music."

Her interest in music history stems from the same time.

"My mom was young and single figuring out how to raise a kid on her own. So what she ended up doing was buying and reselling vintage clothes. Being surrounded by things from the past is probably how I gravitated towards history," she said. "What's so interesting is that history depends on the perspective of the person telling it. It's a matter of who's picking what to include or not include."

Martínez's interest grew in college while looking for research paper topics and coming across country music history.

"I was perplexed by the narrative in the history books—essentially country music is the music of white rural Southerners. At some point people moved to cities taking their music with them and passing it on to their descendants. And that's how country music grew," Martinez said. "That was something that certainly didn't track with my experience of growing to love the music, growing up, being Mexican American and Californian. So I started to tell my professors that I wanted to go to grad school and write about country music. They were like, 'Yeah, I don't think you should do that. No one's going to take you seriously.'"

Martinez tried working in museums but became "bored with that work because I wanted to tell stories with these documents. So I applied to grad school at UCLA," she said. "I started to go into the archives and found evidence that country music didn't fit this simplistic narrative—that it's the music solely of white rural Southerners."

She found that the country music business is unique in that it's centralized in Nashville and includes power institutions like the Country Music Association, Country Radio broadcasters and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. She said these organizations, coupled with the always powerful record labels, dominate the industry.

An example of this power came at the 1992 Academy of Country Music Awards which happened in Los Angeles at the same time as the Rodney King uprisings in response to the acquittal of police who brutally beat the African American man.

"It gave all of country music a front row seat. Garth Brooks was the biggest star in country music at the time. He wrote a song, 'We Shall Be Free,' responding to all the racial tensions. His basic message was optimism and the need for all people to come together," Martinez said. "The business discouraged him from releasing the song. Garth Brooks' producer, Jimmy Bowen, said the song was too liberal for country music's demographics and oversimplifying everything that was happening."

Perhaps teaching was one of the most beneficial aspects of the fellowship experience.

"Teaching is a huge part of developing my scholarship—having the flexibility, freedom and creativity to teach what I wanted. The class I created was history of race and marketing cross-listed between African American studies and business.

I have learned so much from my business students because they shared stuff they were learning in their marketing class," Martinez said. "When you are trying to sell your product, you have three questions, 'Who is my consumer? What are their values? How do I reach them?' And that is exactly what the country music business is doing. They're saying, 'This is my consumer, this white conservative, middle class person. What are their values? Social conservatism that's often presumed racist. You reach them through the radio.'"

Martinez enjoyed the JWJI fellowship for multiple reasons, the interdisciplinary nature of the Colloquiums, the quality of professional development meetings, funding for conferences and time to write.

"I can't say how grateful I am for the experience of being in this community and to grow with this like-minded, cool bunch of people," she said.



**Candice J. Merritt**  
Mellon Dissertation Fellow  
Northwestern University

Candice J. Merritt's own unique life experience inspired her to further the discussion of what it means to be a Black mother in society today.

Merritt holds her bachelor's degree in women studies from Emory and a master's degree in women's, gender and sexuality studies from Georgia State University.

She is pursuing her Ph.D. in African American Studies from Northwestern University and used her 2023-24 JWJI Mellon Interdisciplinary Cluster predoctoral fellowship, to work on her dissertation, "In Search of Our Mother's Freedom: Exploring the Felt Life of Black Mothers."

In it she focuses on the nature and ethics of Black women's disavowal of motherhood. This topic is personal to Merritt and several chapters of the dissertation are autobiographical.

"I am a mother myself and came to motherhood not by choice. I had my son when I was 12 and originally did not plan to keep him. My family made the decision to take in my son and keep him. And as a child, I just fell in line with my parents," Merritt said. "These questions about individual freedom, keeping a child versus giving up the child and going against your tribe are questions I've been sitting with for decades. Now I'm exploring them intellectually. My son is 23 and I imagine my relationship with him has probably looked a bit different from traditional ideas of what Black mothers and sons are supposed to do and feel for one another."

Merritt has a photo of her mother relaxing and reading a book when she was younger that seems ordinary, but to her, is profound.

"I recall growing up my mother liked to read, but at some point she read less and less until I just remember her not reading at all. Those quiet moments became less over time when our family life became more hectic," Merritt said. "My mother was nearly 50 when I had my son and she became primary caretaker. I think she was 21 when she had my first brother."

Merritt said her mother was a third grade teacher for more than 30 years. She argues that, in addition to mothering at home, she was also mothering in the larger community.

"My mother did not disavow motherhood. My mother took up the labor of mothering for her family and for others outside the family," she said.

To delve into the reasons behind disavowal of Black motherhood, Merritt looked beyond her own family to literature about motherhood from June Jordan, bell hooks and Lucille Clifton, documentary films, and court cases.

For an extreme case of shunning motherhood, Merritt researched the story of Shaquan Daley, a South Carolina woman currently incarcerated for killing her two young sons in 2010.

"To murder your own children, it's unthinkable. It probably would have to be some kind of madness—in terms of sanity but also in terms of rage—about the conditions of one's life and sense of self," she said.

Merritt studied another story of rejecting motherhood, legally sanctioned, in the autobiographical documentaries of artist Camille Billops and her husband James Hatch found in Emory's Rose Library.

Their 1991 film, "Finding Christa," tracks Billops' reunification with her daughter about 20 years after she gave her up for adoption.

"In giving her daughter up for adoption, what were the primary drives and feelings around that act and what does their relationship look like when it's not bound to a traditional mother/daughter model," Merritt said. "I also came across letters about her work from other women artists and non artists thanking her for exploring such difficult material. Because, historically, because of anti-Black racism, family life or matters of gender and sexuality had to be hidden away in fear of confirming stereotypes about Black family life or Black women and Black men in particular."

Merritt contends that, currently, the most understood issues regarding Black motherhood involve fear of losing their children, whether it's alarming infant mortality rates in Black communities or violence from the state. Her work has more to do with mothering as a form of essential labor and the sacrifices that go into that "laboring to keep people alive."

"Camille Billops gave up her daughter because she wanted to be an artist. She did not want to lose that," Merritt said. "It is sanctioned, but it's still not okay from a larger cultural standpoint. Mothers don't give up their children. Mothers are supposed to keep their children and hold them very tightly and want them all the time. So to give up a child is a social transgression," she said. "We expect women in family life to take care of people. But I'm thinking about how that can be also about coercion, how it can be about denying someone's desire to do something different. Maybe women don't want to mother. Maybe women want to do something else. I'm thinking about other kinds of losses that happen when women have to take care of other people."

JWJI offered funding for books and travel for conferences but it was the space and community that Merritt valued most during her fellowship.

The Covid-19 pandemic stripped the intellectual community portion of graduate school work that Merritt thrives on.

"I remember when I first started, when I talked about missing that environment, that community, tears would come to my eyes. It was very lonely. And with JWJI that loneliness was chipped away at and I really appreciated that," she said. "You have the weekly lectures and you get to speak with various thinkers and academics across the nation about their work, how they came to their projects, what changed, what did they wish they could do or do differently. JWJI, for me, has been phenomenal."

Having an office to go to where she could separate home and work and meet with peers has been another essential aspect of Merritt's fellowship experience.

"We ask each other, 'What does the sentence sound like?' Or we talk about being stuck and listen to each other and say, 'Yeah, that makes sense,'" she said. "I've developed individual friendships and colleagues that I will be speaking with for the remainder of my life and career."

Merritt, who is expected to graduate in the spring, is continuing her work on another predoctoral fellowship from the American Association of University Women before seeking an academic position.



**Allison Mashell Mitchell**  
Mellon Dissertation Fellow  
University of Virginia

Allison Mashell Mitchell, a JWJI Mellon Dissertation Fellow, wants Americans to understand that, when it comes to Black political history, Florida is not a rogue state. In fact, it offers a microcosm of our national political system and a valuable critique of Southern politics.

Mitchell took a year from her pursuit of a history doctorate from the University of Virginia to spend the 2022-23 academic year at Emory working on her dissertation.

"Battle for the Ballot: A History of Black Electoral Politics and Voter Suppression in Florida" explores the period of 1940 to 2000.

As a University of Florida student and Tampa native, Mitchell's major in history gravitated towards politics when she became interested in the basics of voting.

"To me, voting for a politician is the most simple part of democracy that people should be allowed to do. 'I agree with this person's ideas. I'm just gonna punch the ballot for them,'" she said. "Everyone should be allowed to do it."

A colleague suggested she start her research, primarily oral histories, close to home.

"He gave me a historical interview of a civil rights activist in Tampa, and from there I became engaged with the civil rights era," Mitchell said. This led to her masters thesis "The Balance of Power: Harry T. Moore and Voting Rights in Florida" focused on a 1940s and 50s civil rights activist whose work and resulting assassination captured her research interests.

It was then she realized that Florida was not simply a red or even purple state.

"Just because you might think that the Conservative Party seems to completely dominate politics in Florida at this point in time doesn't mean there aren't people there fighting, working hard to get elected, to get other people elected, to have their voices heard," she said. "Florida is a microcosm of the U.S. It's a good state to use as a case study to argue things about the country."

Her dissertation explores voting registration efforts, its suppression and history of violence along racial gerrymandering, voter groups and patterns and challenges and issues of black political representation in the South. For example, Mitchell delved into civil rights groups like the NAACP and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and movements like the Freedom Summer in Mississippi in 1964.

"We get upset when people are pessimistic about politics and participating but there's a reason to be a little discouraged. Taking a historical perspective would show the constant frustration has always been there. It was there from the beginning, as soon as Black Americans and other minorities started voting in the U.S," Mitchell said. "Black folk and minorities in the South are not just existing. They are fighting, they are mobilizing, they are voting. They are trying to elect officials that they feel like best represent them."

The conservatives are not just taking over the South. We need to stop ignoring the people there fighting for the spaces that many of them were born and raised in.”

While at JWJI, Mitchell completed three-fourths of her 250-page dissertation. Research was aided by a funded weeklong trip to the state archive of Florida in Tallahassee. Emory’s digital periodical collection saved her more trips out-of-state for Florida’s large and small circulation newspapers and Black newspapers as well.

“Emory’s resources of Black newspapers and political conversations saved me so much energy and time. I’m so grateful for that too. I didn’t have to travel to Florida to access archives,” she said.

The community of academics at JWJI was perhaps the most beneficial part for Mitchell.

“I got so much of that not only with Colloquiums and speakers about book publishing but also just from the other fellows because we’re all in different stages. So, I’m pre-doctorate trying to finish sitting next to somebody who just applied for a job last year. They have all these materials. Or the senior fellows who are already in their careers tell me their experience from being on a hiring committee,” Mitchell said. “I think having that type of mentorship and relationship was one of the best things.”

After earning her doctorate this spring, Mitchell’s goal is to be hired for a tenure track position in Black political history with a primary focus on storytelling in different mediums, everything from digital publication to academic presses to film.

“This is probably the most interdisciplinary experience I’ve had where my work was engaged by so many different people who asked me questions that I would not even think to ask myself,” Mitchell said. “When you’re doing work like this that you hope has a larger meaning, not just for history, but for the current moment, you have to take a level of interdisciplinary engagement. I found that to be exceptional with JWJI.”



**Kiela Crabtree**

JWJI ECAS New Faculty Fellow  
University of Michigan

For Kiela Crabtree, the yearlong JWJI Emory College New Faculty Fellowship made the leap from graduate school to new faculty member at Emory University a productive, instructive and smooth transition.

“I had the time where I could close the door on my graduate school chapter and be fully prepared to walk into a new chapter as a faculty member,” said Crabtree, an assistant professor of political science at Emory University. “I would say this was a really generative period for me.”

During the 2022-23 postdoctoral fellowship, Crabtree became better acquainted with Atlanta and Emory’s campus, taught an undergraduate class, submitted a manuscript for publication and developed a book project proposal.

Crabtree, who holds her doctorate in political science from the University of Michigan, focuses on public scholarship examining racial violence and its lasting implications in the United States.

During the fellowship, Crabtree prepared and sent out three manuscripts for publication, “Remaining Neutral? White Americans’ Reactions to Police Violence and Policing” co-authored with Nicole Yadon, was published in the November 2022 edition of “Political Behavior.”

She also conducted research and drafted a book proposal for her first book, “Forged in the Fire: How the Enduring Legacies of Racial Violence Shape American Politics.”

“Part of the book makes the argument to go back and think through how we have measured racial violence, hate crimes or lynchings over time. I’m arguing that we’ve segmented how we’ve done that by giving these issues different labels,” Crabtree said. “We think these things ended in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. We don’t quite realize that there’s been a consistent stream of violence in different tactics and forms, different labels, up until the present day.”

Part of her process is collecting data from historical newspapers. Crabtree said the Emory Center of Digital Scholarship was one of the key resources she used during the fellowship for archival research.

“They were incredibly helpful because they had access to these hard drives of historical African American newspapers,” she said. “I was just so grateful. They were like, ‘Come in and we are here to help you’ and it was amazing.”

Crabtree developed an interest in the history of racial violence from family stories she heard growing up with her grandmother and her father who came of age during the Civil Rights movement.

“There were stories that my grandmother would tell about how her relatives migrated to Chicago from the South, as many African Americans did in the early 20th century, and that was because of the threat of violence they experienced,” she said. “In talking with other colleagues I realized that they didn’t necessarily have that same sort of collective memory passed down to them.”

Crabtree explored the subject of her book in a class she taught during the fellowship called “Race and Extralegal Violence.”

“It was a wonderful group of students—such a great introduction (to Emory) and a fantastic way to start my time here,” she said. “I felt really lucky that my course very much aligned with the book project. For me, it was a chance to do some reading and writing alongside my students and really draw on the things they were saying and get their perspectives,” Crabtree said.

During the class, the students explored core texts including “A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882-1930” by Stewart Tolnay and E. M. Beck.

“I really appreciate that work, because it’s given me this basis to then ask, ‘What happens afterwards?’ I look at the other side of the puzzle—not necessarily why these lynchings happened, but what happened afterward and what happened to the folks who remained in the communities and how did they respond,” she said.

Students were able to choose any medium for their final projects which included a 3-D map of racial violence in every county of Georgia, a video, a podcast and a walking tour.

The other text was “Leaving Atlanta” by Tayari Jones, a creative writing professor at Emory.

“She has written this magnificent novel about her experience as a child in Atlanta during the child murders (1979-81). She draws on her own experiences to inform it. We spent a week in class talking about that period of time, collective memory, the power of perception and the power of legacies of violence,” she said.

Crabtree also improved her public speaking skills during the fellowship.

“As part of the postdocs, we had to do this talk about our work and that was the last thing I wanted to do. I get really nervous talking in front of people,” she said. “It was just so helpful to have someone give us suggestions of talks to watch on YouTube and tips for creating a presentation for an audience who have no idea what you’re talking about. It was really, really valuable for me.”

Crabtree, a self-proclaimed introvert, said she appreciated the fellowship in giving her time to get settled at Emory, get to know the campus, meet potential mentors and colleagues and get acquainted to campus resources before starting her new position.

“JWJI really facilitated that for me. They made introductions and reached out to departments,” she said. “It helped me ease into the new role.”

The “great community” of other fellows from a wide variety of disciplines provided a significant learning opportunity and support.

“Every time we were together I was learning something from them—maybe academic or just about life,” Crabtree said. “If I needed support or if I just needed cheering up, someone was always there to lift me up.”



**Olivia Johnson**  
Laney Dissertation Fellow  
Emory University

Although her work spans generations in time and space, the dissertation Olivia Johnson wrote during her JWJI 2022-23 fellowship is deeply personal and close to home.

“Ain’t I a Mother? Examining Black Motherhood Through Culture and Community,” is a passion project for Johnson.

“I am really fascinated with my own family’s history. We come from Alabama and all the women in my family have just been such interesting people. Because I’m studying motherhood from slavery until now, I’m just really interested in how it has informed our family’s trajectory,” Johnson said.

Johnson used her family as a jumping off point for her dissertation, she interviewed her mother and her aunts, but she includes a historical perspective on mothering as well as a current one. She wrote from archived stories of formerly enslaved people of Alabama, Georgia and Florida telling of their experiences of mothering or being mothered during slavery.

She also interviewed more than a dozen Southern Black women over the age of 50 about their mothering choices and what it means to be a mother in “anti-Black country.” She chose this age group because of their years of mothering experience while also being able to share memories of how they were mothered themselves.

“They talked a lot about their own relationships with their moms—‘she was kind of strict’ or ‘she was my best friend.’ You can see that how they were mothered informs their current mothering decisions,” Johnson said.

Some of the most profound motherhood perspectives came from the child.

“One of the (slave) narratives is from a guy named Uncle Gus. They call everybody uncle and auntie in the narratives, which is interesting. His very first memory was of his mother being whipped.

That was his first memory as a child. And his mother was whipped for something that he had done. He said then that he knew what it meant to be a slave—even as a child. That’s an example that kind of sticks with me,” Johnson said. “One of my big findings is that Black moms have always had to make complicated decisions about parenting—sometimes decisions other people wouldn’t understand. But, based on the context, what could you really do instead? I’m thinking about enslaved women who killed their babies to save them from slavery. That could be seen as a brutality. It also could be seen as a mercy. And I’m thinking about Black parents today who don’t allow their kids to be outside after dark. They’re tough, but they’re also very scared. So I’m kind of looking into the nuances of that.”

The fellowship enabled her to take an archival training class, conduct interviews and write two chapters of her dissertation. Johnson experienced JWJI both in learning from experienced faculty and editors and also working alongside her peers.

“I was really close with my cohort and especially the other dissertation fellows, Allison (Mitchell) and Candice (Merritt). We are like three peas in a pod now,” Johnson said. “That was a big part of the fellowship for me, the friendships that I created.”

Getting the JWJI fellowship gave Johnson necessary time to do the reading and writing for her dissertation and a connection she may have not realized she needed.

“When I was in the office, I was like, wow, I’m really an emerging race scholar. That still doesn’t feel real to me. So it was nice to be recognized as a race scholar and then being in a community with so many race scholars from different fields,” she said. “We had a place to park. We had a place to sit. The house was always warm and welcoming. I loved seeing the people there, it was just a really nice community. It was vibrant. It was fun. It felt safe. For the first time I was around people who were interested in some of the same things that I’m interested in. So it felt like I had a sense of belonging.”

Before earning her doctorate in sociology from Emory in December, Johnson received numerous teaching honors including being named 2023 Sociology Graduate Student Teacher of the Year, receiving the Eleanor Main Mentoring Award and becoming a part of the Emory Faculty Women of Color in the Academy Inaugural Cohort.



**Wandeka Gayle**  
UNCF-Mellon Fellow  
Spelman College

“When will Afro-Caribbean American writers stop singing this note of disappointment?” asked an attendee at a 2019 symposium.

Coming in response to Wandeka Gayle’s faculty research presentation on Edwidge Danticat’s “Breath, Eyes, Memory,” her fictional work about Haitian immigrants in America, the question sparked new inquiry and purpose for Gayle who then began examining her own work and gathering thoughts from other creative writers on the subject.

Since 2019, Jamaican-born Gayle has been an assistant professor of creative writing at Spelman College. She holds her Ph.D. in English and creative writing from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She primarily writes fiction but has also published poetry and creative non-fiction. Her first book, “Motherland: and Other Stories,” was published in 2020 by Peepal Tree Press.

Gayle used her UNCF faculty enhancement fellowship to expand her dissertation’s introduction into a monograph comparing the U.S. Afro-Caribbean experience as depicted in literature to the lived experience.

The monograph working title is “Writing Through Trauma and Constructing the Afro-Caribbean Immigrant Narrative in America and Why It Has Changed.”

“This springs from that introduction because my collection of stories thematically focuses on the experience of displacement in America and the search for home and what that means,” she said. “I’m interested to see how other Caribbean writers have tackled it.”

Her dissertation explored displacement and disillusionment depicted in fictional works including Danticat’s “Breath, Eyes, Memory,” Jamaica Kincaid’s “Lucy,” and Elizabeth Nunez’s “Anna In-Between.”

During her fellowship, Gayle got the chance to meet those authors. Nunez and Danticat were presenters at the Clark Atlanta University Writers workshop held at Emory and Kincaid came to Emory as a guest writer.

She took the opportunity to ask Danticat the same question posed to her at her 2019 presentation.

“She said ‘I’m no longer singing that note.’ I realized that she’s right because that book was 30 years ago,” Gayle said. “She said that Caribbean writers always write an arrival work.”

“Just like the black experience is a lived experience and the immigrant experience is that lived experience. So we’re always going to write about expectation versus reality,” Gayle said.

Gayle said Nunez described the experience as a search for home where there is an “evolving kind of trauma because you’re displacing yourself and trying to find belonging somewhere new.”

One Jamaican writer described a feeling that “you are not really American even with citizenship and you can’t go back home. You aren’t the same anymore,” Gayle said.

“You don’t fit squarely back into the society and there is this idea of still being in limbo,” Gayle said. “What compels us to write, is there some kind of catharsis in the writing as well as the questioning?”

During her 2023 JWJI fellowship, Gayle took advantage of the Woodruff Library and Rose Library reading rooms to research literary representations of the Afro-Caribbean immigrant experience in America and scholarly and historical articles on the lived experience of black Caribbean nationals making their home in mostly in America. She spent the majority of her fellowship finding newer fiction writers, new sources, reading and analyzing those articles and narratives.

She also reviewed books on real experiences of the Jamaican immigrants including “Jamaican Hands Across the Atlantic,” by Elaine Bauer and “In a New Land: A Comparative View of Immigrant” by Nancy Foner.

Gayle discovered and reviewed private papers of Caribbean writers who expressed their transition to the United States. They included a Trinidad dancer and scholar, a Guyanese artist and writer and a Trinidad writer, dancer and painter.

Gayle said she particularly enjoyed the informal conversations and connections made after fellowship presentations.

“Those exchanges were always a nice experience when you could go to one of those,” she said. “I loved talking with them during the Q and A’s and talking about specific things we would want more clarification on.”

She said the presentation about being a public scholar was insightful and helpful.

“I hadn’t thought about myself in that way before and wondered how it would manifest itself in my discipline. It was a good conversation about being an expert voice and pitfalls of presenting to a lay audience,” Gayle said. “I learned a lot regarding that.”

During the fellowship, Gayle also applied to other scholarly opportunities, including a Hedgebrook residency which she participated in last summer.



**Rebecca Kumar**  
UNCF-Mellon Fellow  
Spelman College

Rebecca Kumar got a glimpse into JWJI when she attended a few of the weekly Colloquiums while completing her Ph.D. in English at Emory in 2015. She made it a goal then to return for her own fellowship.

In 2022, Kumar, who writes about the representation of race theory in cinema for Turner Classic Films and is an assistant professor of English and cinema studies at Spelman College, got that opportunity as a UNCF Mellon faculty-in-residence fellow.

“The James Weldon Johnson Institute, always had such a fantastic reputation. I had a few (Spelman) colleagues who had the fellowship and they found it to be wildly productive for their work and it was the same for me,” Kumar said.

Kumar, whose work focuses on feminist film criticism and queer and trans cinema, appreciated returning to JWJI’s weekly Colloquiums.

“Dr. Gillespie does an amazing job curating these weekly lectures. She really does try to find folks that dovetail with our research interests,” she said.

Kumar also wanted to return to Emory’s library where significant developments, especially in digital humanities, had been made since her time in graduate school and stay in Atlanta.

“It was the perfect place. I looked forward to going to the lecture and then staying at the library,” she said. “The time away from teaching and service was integral for me to get my work done and the Institute gave me the space I needed to do that.”

During the faculty-in-residence fellowship, Kumar worked on an edited collection tentatively titled, “Queer and Femme Gazes in Afro Asian American Visual Culture.”

The upcoming book is already under contract by Palgrave MacMillan and is a collaboration with her co-editor and colleague, Seulghee Lee.

The book will consist of nine chapters from nine contributors building on a subfield of Black Asian studies focusing on gender, sexuality and those representations in the media.

“I think we’ve actually become such passive viewers because visual culture is all around us, and we can just kind of scroll through it and not be critical about it. There’s an insidious way in which the representations of people that we may not know personally or representations of people we think we know, get filtered through political agendas and we don’t get the opportunity to think about how we might break out of those representations.”

In each of the chapters, Kumar challenges readers to think about the political agendas of both authors and their mediums and where their sense of citizenship and belonging fit in.

“I think this collection does a great job of asking us to think differently about the relationship between two seemingly very different groups, Black people and Asian people. It asks us to think about the complicated racial choreography that has affected the way they’ve been pitted against one another in the media, the way they may work together in the media and the way in which gender and sexuality mediate all of that,” Kumar said.

One chapter takes a new reading of the silent era’s Charlie Chan and Stepin Fetchit from a queer lens while another chapter examines Black Asian representation of the “Rush Hour” series in terms of radicalized masculinity. A chapter delves into queer Afro Asian content in the movie, “Monsoon,” and another chapter explores gaming.

Kumar, of South Asian descent, was raised in the United States by her parents who immigrated from India.

When she first went to college she began her interest in South Asian representations in literature and film but eventually did her graduate work on post-colonial adaptations of Shakespeare in film and literature.

At her first teaching job at Morehouse, she discovered her students were interested in why a South Asian professor would teach at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU).

“I moved from the Renaissance period back to the contemporary period to meet the needs of my students and started creating classes around Black Asian representation because my students were really interested in it. I found myself thinking about what kind of trends since 9/11 have shaped the representation of both Black and brown people. What does this mean for incarceration and citizenship?” she said. “I’m interested in what media commentators say about Black and brown populations. Who are those people and why are they put together? And where are the women and where are the queer people in that?”

During the fellowship, Kumar edited several chapters from contributors and prepared them for the manuscript.

“I use this opportunity to kind of mine those media outlets for the collection. It’s been great fun to meet these other scholars that are working alongside me in these endeavors. I found that I really do like editing,” she said.

Kumar also worked on her own introduction on the significance of the collection and drafted a contributing chapter. It’s focused on representations of brownness in film and cinema since 9/11.

“Brownness studies come out of Black and Asian studies, kind of a comparative analysis of the relationship between Black and Asian folks around the globe,” she said.

Her chapter focuses in part on the relationship of blackness and brownness and femininity examining Beyonce’s video for the song, “Brown Skin Girl,” and an episode, “Two Piece and a Biscuit” of the HBO show, “Random Acts of Flyness.”

“(‘Random Acts of Flyness’) is around representations of Blackness and kind of has a futuristic, surreal bent. In this episode, there’s a cameo from a non-binary poet and performance artist, Alok Vaid-Menon. I’m kind of thinking about what that cameo of them means in this kind of Black cinematic world,” she said.

“I had an editors hat on, but I also had a scholar’s hat on, and I was doing both at the same time,” Kumar said. “(JWJI) really gave me the space and opportunity to do all of that work that semester.”



**Rafael Solórzano**  
Mellon Career Enhancement Fellow  
California State University

During his most recent JWJI stint, Rafael “Rafa” Solórzano moved closer to two of his goals—finishing his book proposal on the undocumented youth movement and landing a job in the South.

As a 2022 JWJI Mellon Career Enhancement Fellow, Solórzano completed several chapters of his first book and the book proposal he sent to publishers.

The then-California State University professor also used the fellowship to apply for jobs in the South.

Last fall, Solórzano joined the University of Florida, Gainesville at its Center for Latin American Studies as an assistant professor.

“My research is in the South so I’ve been trying to get there for the last four years. This new position is a big win for me,” said Solórzano who recently taught a graduate class on queer and trans expressions and the Americas.

During the 2022 JWJI fellowship, Solórzano also conducted workshops across Atlanta, giving talks at Spelman College, Georgia State University and Emory.

It wasn’t his first time at JWJI. In 2018-19, Solórzano worked on finishing his doctoral dissertation during his fellowship.

As a young scholar, it was important to experience how other scholars presented their work, he said.

“It was also an opportunity for me to see traditional scholars in sociology and political science to understand how they do their work, specifically because I come from an ethnic studies background,” he said. “Our work is different. It’s more interdisciplinary. As a junior scholar it was great to sit down and just talk shop and meet scholars. You’re building community too.”

Solórzano’s interest in migrant rights began as a youth organizer in California in the early 1990s.

“I’ve been fighting for migrant rights, queer rights and educational justice at a professional level since 2000,” he said.

That passion fueled the subject for his dissertation, “Mobilizing Corazones and Forging New Visions of Migrant Justice.”

In 2019, Solórzano completed his Ph.D. in Chicana/o and Central American Studies from UCLA. During his 2022 JWJI Mellon Enhancement Fellowship, Solórzano continued work on transforming his dissertation into his book, working title, “Migrant Refusal: The Making of the Trail of Dreams.”

The book explores how 9/11 attacks changed Southern racial dynamics regarding immigration enforcement, leading to the activism of four activists—Gaby Pacheco, Felipe Matos, Carlos Roa and Isabel Rodriguez—who walked the “Trail of Dreams” from January to May, 2010. The “Trail of Dreams” kicked off in Florida, traversing through Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia before culminating in Washington D.C.

Solórzano compiled more than 40 oral histories from interviews with participants, community organizers and supporters of the march. The book also draws from newspaper accounts, marcher’s own blogs and social media posts.

“The students talked about how the trail built community itself and it was also helping the movement at a larger scale,” he said.

An important distinction of the march, Solórzano said, is that it was a woman of color-led and queer-led campaign.

“What I’m trying to do is uplift all these moments of resistance emerging within moments of coalition-building across the South,” Solórzano said. “I’m interested in highlighting the moments where migrant rights activists are building racial solidarity with black activists in Georgia, with queer activists in North Carolina. Asking, ‘What do those moments teach us?’”

The march was in opposition to the rise of immigration enforcement across the U.S. and in support of comprehensive immigration reform, specifically the DREAM Act, Solórzano said.

“Much of my book is also to highlight that they were the first ones to come out as undocumented, unafraid. That’s when you started to pick up a lot of the civil disobedience across the United States. I make the claim that they’re the first ones to do this in the undocumented youth movement,” he said.

During the “Trail of Dreams” march, the youth, in communities where they had few or no ties, had to build those relationships as they “walked every single day” with church leaders and community leaders and held daily events and press conferences, he said.

“One of the key things I introduce in the book is this idea of regional racial formation. So when we study social movements we have to pay attention to places where these activists have grown up and know how their activism is linked to local history,” he said.

In other communities, like Georgia and North Carolina, long-standing groups had organized for years and helped provide support and housing for the undocumented youth marching.

“These moments teach us about how specific Latinx migrants are radicalized in Florida. It teaches us how migrant justice activists are re-articulating and picking up old strategies from the Civil Rights movement, specifically from Georgia. It teaches us how Latinx migrants can build coalitions with white Christian churches across the South,” he said. “It’s not just a migrant rights issue, but it’s a workers issue, a queer rights issue, a racial justice issue.”

When Solórzano returned to JWJI in 2022, he continued to build community, conduct research and do interviews with Black and Latino communities.

“I was very lucky that when I went to Atlanta I had already established community there and I just deepened it,” Solórzano said. “For people who do work in the South and in Atlanta, I mean this place (JWJI) and space is great—a great place to cultivate all those things.”



**Laila Nashid**  
Undergraduate Honors Fellow

As a Black author of young adult novels herself, Laila Nashid uses her unique perspective to explore the ways other Black women and girls create narratives.

She delves deeper into that subject in her Emory honors thesis, “A Lineage of Blossoming: Analyzing Literary & New Media Portrayals of Black Girlhood by Black Women Authors and Black Girls.”

“As a Black woman YA author, I’m constantly creating narratives that center Black girls and focus on Black girlhood,” Nashid said. “As someone who is a part of Gen Z, I’m also interested in how Black girls construct their own narratives about Black girlhood through social media aesthetics.”

Her thesis examines literary portrayals of Black girlhood by Black women authors across the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The first three chapters each investigate two novels from those centuries and trace shared themes. The final chapter explores social media’s aesthetics created and participated in by Black girls.

A key issue is how narratives Black women authors construct about Black girlhood “(un)align” with those that Black girls create for themselves.

The work attempts to bridge “the gap in the literary genealogy of Black girlhood—as created by scholar Nazera Sadiq Wright—between contemporary literature written by Black women young adult authors and earlier novels by Black women authors, as well as show how such a genealogy is connected to portrayals in new media,” Nashid said.

Her 2022 JWJI Undergraduate Honors fellowship helped support her thesis work.

The JWJI fellowship provided me with financial support enabling me to add a great level of depth to my thesis,” she said.

Nashid read and analyzed six books for her thesis.

“The monetary support from the fellowship allowed me to purchase hard copies of the books that I didn’t already have so that I could take annotations and sticky note pages,” she said.

Nashid, a 2022 Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute fellow, explored the archives at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture which was crucial to the development of her thesis.

“The JWJI fellowship gave me a community of peers who are also engaged in really unique research, most of whom I might not have crossed paths with if not for the fellowship,” she said.

In May 2023, Nashid graduated from Emory with highest honors with degrees in English and sociology. After graduation, Nashid began her doctoral program in English literature at Cornell University in fall 2023.



**Gabi Kim**

Undergraduate Honors Fellow

Gabi Kim, intrigued by her family's connection to missionary work, explored its intersections with Asian American history, transpacific migration and religion during her undergraduate thesis JWJI fellowship.

Last May, Kim graduated with high honors with a Bachelor of Arts in history and a minor in religion at Emory.

An essay derived from her honors thesis, "Attempting Great Things for God: Southern White, Chinese, and Korean Women in the MECS Missionary Enterprise (1878-1925)," earned first place in the Emory William A. Beardslee Prize for Religious Literature.

Kim, whose Korean family came to America through religious sponsorship in the 1970s, said the thesis was a personal endeavor.

"I want to understand my own history. A lot of my family came to America because they were pastors," Kim said. "I'm trying to understand how Christianity and religion fit into Asian American history."

Kim's study of Asian American history as a freshman became the groundwork for her interest in transpacific studies. She then delved into the complexity of Christianity as "an attempt towards doing good."

"People can be Christian for so many reasons. When I came to college I wanted to understand it in a more nuanced way because the missionary enterprise can't be solely bad or good," Kim said. "My central argument is they are doing their best, but that doesn't mean that the product of what they do is necessarily good."

Kim focused on the Southern Methodist missionary enterprise because it was a project housed at Emory's Rose Library. With funding from the history department's Jack Award, Kim also conducted research at Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville. Founded in 1892, the center is a former training school for women missionaries.

While researching in Nashville, Kim discovered a calendar in the archives which referred to William Carey's renowned phrase, "Attempt Great Things for God," that became the impetus for the title of her thesis.

One chapter highlights several Southern Methodist "elite" women including Maria Layng Gibson, the principal of the Scarritt Bible and Training School for missionaries when it was located in Kansas City.

"They were trying to help other women by mentoring each other. It was huge for them to have this opportunity for community leadership outside of the home at this time. The church was one of the few socially acceptable spaces for women in leadership," Kim said.

Another chapter shares the journey of a pioneer missionary in China, Laura Haygood, sister of Atticus Haygood, one of Emory's former presidents. Haygood, an educator for a home missionary school, was recruited to start a women's school to raise Christian Chinese women to become suitable wives for the Christian men studying to become pastors.

"They were trying to educate these women but in the Western Victorian way. It was like matchmaking between the missionaries," Kim said. "Haygood would comment on Chinese 'strange' marriage practices because they were arranged but she was doing this matching herself."

In the third chapter, Kim explores the life of Melissa Kim, a Korean woman who converted to Christianity and then traveled to America and China and founded the Kūnhwa hagwōn in 1920, a school to educate other Korean women.

While at JWJI, Kim learned presentation techniques and research methods from the Colloquiums that she applied to her thesis presentation.

"It was really helpful. I liked how different people present even within the study of history, political science, sociology or other disciplines," Kim said.

JWJI Fellow Olivia Johnson's help with her honors thesis and graduate school applications was especially beneficial, Kim said.

In fall 2023, Kim began her master's of theological studies degree at Harvard Divinity School as a dean's fellow. She is focusing on women and gender in American religious history.

"I'm most interested in lived religion, how people practice their faith and an understanding of the connection between Asian American history and religion and how it's influenced by race, gender and class."



**Sierra Talbert**  
Undergraduate Honors Fellow

Sierra Talbert believes humanities scholarship provides essential insight into improving the relationship among people, technology and computer interaction.

She graduated with highest honors, earning a Bachelor's of Arts degree in women, gender and sexuality studies and a minor in computer science from Emory in May.

Talbert started college as a math major but soon realized she preferred coding and switched to computer science. To fill her general education requirements, she took two women, gender, and sexuality classes.

"It was a great feeling. I didn't know there was a whole field of study about my experiences," Talbert said.

She didn't know how to "marry" her two passions until she stumbled onto the field of human computer interaction.

STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) scholarship, she said, often disregards the humanities. So Talbert sought to address the divide between the humanities and technology in her 45-page honors thesis, "Human.exe: Generating Critical Theories of Humanity in Human-Computer Interaction."

The first chapter lays out humanities theories relevant to technological design. The second chapter examines theories of humanity in human computer interaction.

"The field aims to acknowledge racist and oppressive algorithms—how humans think about computers,

how computers can shape how we think about humans and how humans think," Talbert said. "We can avoid designing flawed algorithms by looking at the humanities scholarship addressing racism and marginalization in order to help fix these issues."

For example, there is a dark skinned woman who was creating a facial recognition algorithm so that the computer could recognize her face but it didn't recognize her face until she put on a white mask because the computer was poorly calibrated to dark skinned faces, Talbert said.

"That was due to the nature of the faces included and what the algorithm was trained on and the pictures it had access to," she said. "It raises questions about whether government or rich companies should have this power."

Talbert worked on her thesis as part of a JWJI Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship during the 2022-23 academic year.

"Thesis work or research can be an individual, or even isolating, process. Giving us office space with people who are going through the same process, one that might be described as grueling, was good to push back on that isolation. It gave us a community of people to reach out to and ask questions," Talbert said.

Monthly professional development and informational sessions were also helpful, Talbert said, especially the one on thesis defense conducted by JWJI Fellow Olivia Johnson.

"Most of us have never attended a defense. It was nice to have a rundown of everything that is customary in a defense," she said. "We were able to ask questions that even our directors wouldn't think about. It was one of the most helpful things we did."

Talbert presented her thesis at the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Foundation (MMUF) Spring Research Conference at Emory University in April 2023 and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Foundation (MMUF) Southeast Regional Conference (SERC) at Howard University in November 2023.

She plans to work for a year and apply to a Ph.D. program in either human-centered computers or human computer interaction.

“We are in the interim period while all of this technology and technology companies are expanding,” Talbert said. “If we don't incorporate the humanities scholarship into these really powerful algorithms and really impactful technologies, then it won't be very good for all of us.”

# Colloquium Series 2022-2023

## FALL 2022

**9/12 JAMES DOUCET-BATTLE**  
**University of California, Santa Cruz**  
*From Social Death, Laboratory Life: Race, Diabetes, and the Science of Inclusion*

**9/19 ROBIN MORRIS**  
**Agnes Scott College**  
*Goldwater Girls to Reagan Women: Gender, Georgia, and the Growth of the New Right*

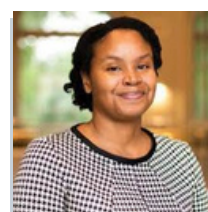
**9/26 CHAD L. WILLIAMS**  
**Brandeis University**  
*The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War*

**10/3 MONICA DE LA TORRE**  
**Arizona State University**  
*Feminista Frequencies: Community Building through Radio in the Yakima Valley*

**10/17 BELINDA EDMONDSON**  
**Rutgers University, Newark**  
*Caribbean Middlebrow*

**10/24 LAWRENCE JACKSON**  
**John Hopkins University**  
*Shelter: A Black Tale of Homeland, Baltimore*

**10/31 NADIA BROWN**  
**Georgetown University**  
*Sister Style: The Politics of Appearance for Black Women Political Elites*



The James Weldon Johnson  
Institute for the Study of  
Race and Difference  
Emory College of Arts and Sciences

**11/7 LAURA HARJO**  
**The University of Oklahoma**  
*Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity*

**11/14 FRANCESCA ROYSTER**  
**DePaul University**  
*Black Country Music: Listening for Revolutions*

**11/21 SHANTÉ PARADIGM SMALLS**  
**JWJI Alum**  
**New York University Tisch**  
*Queering Hip Hop's Aesthetics*

**11/28 SHATEMA THREADCRAFT**  
**Vanderbilt University**  
*Intimate Justice: The Black Female Body*

**1/23 DENNIS TAYLOR**

**Fordham University**

*The Problem of the Color Line in  
the Age of COVID-19*

**1/30 AKIRA DRAKE RODRIGUEZ**

**University of Pennsylvania**

*What is Our City Doing for Us?: Placing  
Collective Care into Atlanta's Post-Public  
Housing Movements*

**2/7 NOLIWE ROOKS**

**Brown University**

*They Tried to Kill Us With Their Democracy,  
So We Fought Them With Ours': A Story of  
Segrenomics, Racism, and Health in the  
Battle for Education in Detroit*

**2/13 KRISTEN HENNING**

**Georgetown University**

*The Rage of Innocence: Race, Trauma,  
and the Criminalization of Black Adolescence*

**2/20 DARYL MAEDA**

**University of Colorado Boulder**

*Bruce Lee: Martial Artist in Pacific Currents*

**2/27 ALFRED MARTIN**

**University of Iowa**

*The Generic Closet: Media Industries, Black  
Audience Imaginations and Black Gay  
Reception Practices*

**3/13 KAREN JAIME**

**Cornell University**

*The Queer Nuyorican: Racialized Sexualities  
and Aesthetics in Loisaída*

**3/20 ALLISON PARKER**

**University of Delaware**

*Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary  
Church Terrell—Suffragist & Civil Rights  
Activist*



**3/27 KIELA CRABTREE**

**JWJI Fellow**

*Hate Has No Labels: Challenges of  
Measurement and Meaning in Historical  
Racial Violence*

**4/3 BEATRICE ADAMS**

**JWJI Fellow**

*We Might as well Fight at Home: Writing  
the History of the New Great Migration*

**4/10 AMANDA MARIE MARTINEZ**

**JWJI Fellow**

*The Industry is Playing the People Cheap:  
Race, Ethnicity, and the Country Music  
Business in the 1990s*

**4/17 R. KHARIB BROWN**

**Wayne State University**

*Race, Religion, and Black Lives Matter*

# Programming Calendar 2022-2023

| Date                           | Category         | Topics and Speakers                                                           |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday, 9/8<br>10:15-11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>The Job Market<br>Speaker: Deboleena Roy |
| Monday, 9/12<br>12 – 1:30pm    | Colloquium       | James Doucet-Battle<br>University of California-Santa Cruz                    |
| Monday, 9/19<br>12 – 1:30pm    | Colloquium       | Robin Morris<br>Agnes Scott College                                           |
| Monday, 9/26<br>12 – 1:30pm    | Colloquium       | Chad Williams<br>Brandeis University                                          |
| Monday, 10/3<br>12 – 1:30pm    | Colloquium       | Monica De La Torre<br>Arizona State University                                |
| Monday, 10/17<br>12 – 1:30pm   | Colloquium       | Belinda Edmondson<br>Rutgers University                                       |
| Monday, 10/24<br>12 – 1:30pm   | Colloquium       | Lawrence Jackson<br>Johns Hopkins University                                  |
| Monday, 10/31<br>12 – 1:30pm   | Colloquium       | Nadia Brownn<br>Georgetown University                                         |
| Monday, 11/7<br>12 – 1:30pm    | Colloquium       | Laura Harjo<br>Oklahoma State University                                      |

# Programming Calendar 2022-2023

| Date                               | Category         | Topics and Speakers                                                             |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, 11/9<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Grant Writing<br>Speaker: Nicole Dancz-Bal |
| Monday, 11/14<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Francesca Royster<br>DePaul University                                          |
| Monday, 11/21<br>12-1:30pm         | Colloquium       | Shanté Paradigm Smalls<br>St. John's University                                 |
| Monday, 11/28<br>12-1:30pm         | Colloquium       | Shatema Threadcraft<br>Vanderbilt University                                    |
| Wednesday, 12/7<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Teaching<br>Speaker: Donna Troka           |
| Monday, 1/23<br>12 – 1:30pm        | Colloquium       | Dennis Tyler<br>Fordham University                                              |
| Wednesday, 1/25<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Media Training                             |
| Monday, 1/30<br>12 – 1:30pm        | Colloquium       | Akira Drake Rodriguez<br>University of Pennsylvania                             |

| Date                              | Category         | Topics and Speakers                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, 2/1<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Making Your Research Legible for<br>Interdisciplinary Audiences |
| Monday, 2/6<br>12 – 1:30pm        | Colloquium       | Noliwe Rooks<br>Brown University                                                                     |
| Monday, 2/13<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Kristin Henning<br>Georgetown University Law Center                                                  |
| Thursday, 2/23<br>12 – 1:30pm     | Public Dialogue  | Race and Anti-Semitism                                                                               |
| Monday, 2/20<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Daryl Maeda<br>University of Colorado-Boulder                                                        |
| Monday, 2/27<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Albert Martin Jr.<br>University of Miami                                                             |
| Wednesday, 3/1<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Public Speaking<br>Speaker: Ed Lee                              |
| Monday, 3/13<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Karen Jaime<br>Cornell University                                                                    |
| Monday, 3/20<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Alison Parker (JWJI Alum)<br>University of Delaware                                                  |

| Date                              | Category         | Topics and Speakers                                                               |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday, 3/27<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Kiela Crabtree (JWJI Fellow)                                                      |
| Monday, 4/3<br>12 – 1:30pm        | Colloquium       | Beatrice Adams (JWJI Fellow)                                                      |
| Wednesday, 4/5<br>10:15 – 11:30am | Fellows' Meeting | Professional Development Session:<br>Public Scholarship<br>Speaker: Allison Adams |
| Monday, 4/10<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | Amanda Martinez (JWJI Fellow)                                                     |
| Monday, 4/17<br>12 – 1:30pm       | Colloquium       | R. Khari Brown<br>Wayne State University                                          |
| Thursday, 4/20<br>4 – 5:30pm      | Public Dialogue  | JWJ Annual Lecture<br>Michael Blakey<br>College of William and Mary               |

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