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From the Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the new academic year! While we hope you had a good summer, we are also excited for the advent of fall and our new programming season.

JWJI remains committed to supporting excellent scholarship and providing a venue for civil dialogue. These goals are essential in the topsy-turvy world we live in. We are proud to use our scholarly perch to advance these goals, and we are honored to partner with you in these endeavors.

A dynamic group of scholars has joined our fellowship program this year. As you read their profiles, we hope you get excited about their work. We also have an exciting set of programs planned for this year. We look forward to seeing you at our many events this year.

Thank you again for your support of JWJI. We look forward to engaging with you soon.

Sincerely,

Andra Gillespie
Director, JWJI

RACE & DIFFERENCE

COLLOQUIUM SERIES

FALL 2026

9/14 CHAYA CROWDER

Loyola Marymount University
Confronting America's Racial History:
Black Wall Street, Reparations, and
Political Change

9/21 ATINUKE ADEDIRAN

Fordham University
Corporate Disclosures as Governance
Infrastructure: Race, Risk, and
Private Regulation

9/28 DAVID DE MICHELI

University of Utah
Back to Black: Racial Reclassification
and Political Identity Formation in Brazil

10/5 DANIELLE WIGGINS

Georgetown University
Black Excellence: Atlanta and the
Making of Modern Black Liberalism

10/19 CHRISTINA CROSS

University of California, Berkeley
Inherited Inequality: Why Opportunity
Gaps Persist between Black and White
Youth Raised in Two-Parent Families

10/26 KEVIN A. ESCUDERO

Brown University
UndocuAsians: Lived Experiences and
Social Movement Activism Across the
Diaspora

11/2 DANIELLE BAINBRIDGE

Northwestern University
Currencies of Cruelty: Slavery, Freak
Shows, and the Performance Archive

11/9 ANGELA M. SIMMS

Barnard College
Fighting for a Foothold: How Government
and Markets Undermine Black Middle-
Class Suburbia

11/16 PERILOUX PEAY

University of Maryland, College Park
Riptides: How the Spread of Racial
Policies Fuels Volatility in American
States

11/23 NICHOLAS MITCHELL

University of Kansas
On Bigotry: Twenty Lessons on How
Bigotry Works and What to Do About It

11/30 REENA GOLDTHREE

Princeton University
Democracy's Foot Soldiers: World War I
and the Politics of Empire in the
Greater Caribbean



MONDAYS AT 12PM | Emory Bookstore, 2nd Floor

LUNCH PROVIDED | RVSP REQUESTED

JWJI.EMORY.EDU

Please join us!

[Click Here](#) to Register or Scan the QR Code



WELCOME NEW FELLOWS!

JWJI welcomed the 2026-2027 cohort of fellows to Emory in August 2026. This outstanding cohort of fellows represents a wide range of disciplines and research topics. Please learn about each fellow and their research project below:

JAMES T. LANEY DISSERTATION FELLOW



Andrew Aldridge is a sixth-year doctoral student in Emory's History PhD program. Born and raised in Philadelphia, he received his B.A. in History from the College of Wooster, and his M.A. in American Studies from Rutgers University – Newark. He studies race, criminality, and popular culture in U.S. cities across the twentieth century. His research focuses on how cultural products that center race and crime shape and have been shaped by dominant understandings of black criminality, and how black folk responded to these social and political developments.

During his time at the James Weldon Johnson Institute, Andrew will focus on completing his dissertation project, "Reel Perceptions: Popular Culture, Race, and the Making of Criminality in the United States," a Black cultural history that explores the intersection between popular culture and societal perceptions of race and crime in the United States from the 1940s to the 1990s. To demonstrate the various ways cultural mediums have influenced the public's understanding of blackness and criminality over time, Andrew develops a framework, "popular culture criminality," (or 'pop culture criminality'). He argues this framework helps us unpack stereotypical racial profiles of the "criminal" since the mid-twentieth century, and highlights how, and why, Black folk made efforts to counter racist ideas about why people commit crimes in the first place.

UNCF MELLON FELLOWS



Dr. Tanya N. Clark is an Assistant Professor of English at Morehouse College whose teaching and scholarship sit at the intersection of African American literature, Black speculative literary traditions, and Women's and Gender Studies. She earned her BA in English from Clark Atlanta University, her MA in English from the University of Rhode Island, and her PhD in English (with a Certification in Women's Studies) from Temple University. Her work explores how Black writers use genre, archives, and cultural memory to challenge injustice and imagine Black futures shaped by freedom and self-determination. She is also completing a memoir that examines infertility, pregnancy loss, and Black motherhood through an Afrofuturist lens.

During her residency at the James Weldon Johnson Institute, Dr. Clark will focus on her book manuscript, *Pauline E. Hopkins and Afrotemporalism: Time, Memory, and Black Futures*. The project introduces Afrotemporalism as a framework rooted in Sankofa, meaning "go back and get it," to show how Hopkins's fiction, essays, and editorship of *The Colored American Magazine* transform memory into a tool for Black community repair and development. Through close reading and periodical analysis, the study traces how Hopkins's body of work, together with the magazine's broader contents, constructs a reader community oriented toward historical recovery, present action, and future imagination at once, offering an interdisciplinary method that moves across literary study, archival inquiry, and classroom practice.



Dr. Deanna P. Koretsky is a literary and cultural critic, Associate Professor in the Department of Literature, Media, and Writing at Spelman College, and a 2026-27 fellow in residence at the James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference at Emory University.

Building on her training in British Romanticism, Deanna's work approaches a wide range of literary and cinematic texts through the lenses of queer and feminist theory, Black studies, and critical neurodivergence studies. Her first book, *Death Rights: Romantic Suicide, Race, and the Bounds of Liberalism* (2021), demonstrates how cultural representations of the suicidal creative genius routinize antiblackness in the modern world. She is currently developing her second monograph and co-editing, with Alex Milsom, a volume on AMC's *Interview with the Vampire* / *The Vampire Lestat*.

Other publications include "Mary Shelley's Mathilda" (2025), "Demystifying Mystic Falls: Essays on Race in the Vampire Diaries Universe" (2027), and over a dozen scholarly essays on topics from nineteenth-century British and Afrodiasporic literature to contemporary television and film. Beyond her solo work, Deanna serves as Associate Editor for Reviews at *The Journal of American Culture* and coordinates Spelman's partnership with the Georgia Film Academy. She is a founding member of the Bigger 6 Collective and occasionally pops into the *Dear Vampire Diaries* podcast.



Dr. Nafeesa H. Muhammad is an Assistant Professor of History at Spelman College. Her areas of interest include nineteenth and twentieth century United States, African American, Transnational, and African Diasporic history. She specializes in the history of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the movement of Black Nationalism in America.

After earning her B.A. from Spelman College, she obtained a master's degree in African American Studies and a Ph.D. in History from Georgia State University. Her current book project focuses on the Nation of Islam in Atlanta and centers the southern leadership within the larger Black Freedom story.



Dr. Clarissa Myrick-Harris White is a Professor of Africana Studies at Morehouse College, co-founder of the college's Black Men's Research Institute and co-editor-in-chief of *The Black Scholar* journal. Her research and published work focus on leadership and the intersection of race, class and gender during the Civil Rights and Black Power era, and in higher education. Her publications include: "The Gospel According to Leroy Jones: Gospel Music As Passing Reference in Blues People," *The Black Scholar*, 54:1, Spring 2024, 12-24. "Call the Women: The Tradition of African American Female Activism in Georgia During the Civil Rights Movement," in the book *Southern Black Women in the Modern Civil Rights Movement*, and "Behind the Scenes: Two Women of the Free Southern Theater," a chapter in *Women of the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers & Torchbearers, 1941-1965*.

Her research project as a JWJI Fellow will be an analysis of the evolution of Black student activism as represented in the primary source archive of *The Black Scholar Journal*. Specifically, this analysis will compare early reflections on student activism during the Civil Rights and Black Liberation/Black Studies movements (1960-1975) with contemporary 21st-century discourse about those early periods. She earned her BA degree in English from Morris Brown College, MA in Journalism from The Ohio State University, and PhD in American Studies/African American Studies from Emory University.



Dr. Félix Miguel Rosario Ortiz is an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at Spelman College. He earned his Ph.D. in Romance Studies from Cornell University. As a writer, Rosario's notable works include the poetry collections *Mermar* and *También mueren los lugares donde fuimos felices*, as well as the novel *Morales 19*. His writing has been recognized with numerous distinctions, among them the Puerto Rico National Poetry Award from the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture (2023) and the Juan Ramón Jiménez International Poetry Award of Coral Gables (2020).

His current research spans critical and creative registers, exploring paranoia as an epistemological and aesthetic mode across twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature from the Caribbean and the Americas—tracing how distrust, born from surveillance, colonial governance, and now algorithmic mediation, becomes a structure of meaning-making and resistance. During his UNCF/Mellon Faculty Residency at the James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference, Rosario will advance a pair of complementary projects, deepening the theoretical foundations through archival work while pursuing new writing that engages paranoia as a generative force.



UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS

In August, we welcomed our ninth cohort of undergraduate fellows to JWJI. This exceptional group of scholars will complete their honors theses with support from the institute. We are grateful for the support of the **Emory Black Alumni Impact Circle**, which is funding the Undergraduate Fellows Program for a fourth year. We are also thankful to the members of the selection committee, Professors Michelle Gordon, Janeria Easley and Carl Suddler, for their work in helping to select the fellows.



Laniah Bowdery
Human Health and
African American Studies



Will Peck
Political Science



Winston Stukes
African American Studies
and Music



Cece York
International Studies and
Religion/Philosophy

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