



The *James Weldon
Johnson Institute*
for the *Study of Race
and Difference*

EMORY UNIVERSITY

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Colloquium Series*



WELCOME TO OUR NEW FELLOWS: Left to right: Barbara Harris Combs, Haylee Christine Harrell, and Francine L. Allen Adams, page 3.

Director's Letter



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2020–2021 academic year! After being forced to shut down our programming in March because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are happy to be returning and look forward to engaging with you.

The work of JWJI continues, even under different circumstances. We have an exciting set of programs planned for this year, which we hope you will attend virtually. Our scholarly work also continues. This year, we are pleased to welcome three visiting fellows. We would love

to introduce you to them in person, but we hope you get to know this year's fellows through this newsletter and through our virtual programming.

Our work is so important, especially in these extremely tense times. Our nation once again has an opportunity to acknowledge and address systemic racism in all its forms. And once again, this clarion call for justice is meeting virulent resistance. We see it as our job to bear witness to what is happening and to use scholarship to advance the cause of justice. We were doing this well before this summer's protests, and we plan on doing this as long as it is necessary.

Thank you again for your support of JWJI. We look forward to engaging with you this year in cyberspace.

Sincerely,

Andra Gillespie

Director, JWJI

JWJI 2020–2021 Visiting Scholars

The James Weldon Johnson Institute is pleased to welcome its 2020–2021 cohort of Visiting Scholars. This year, JWJI entered a partnership with the UNCF-Mellon program to welcome postdoctoral scholars from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). For the first time, JWJI will host UNCF-Mellon Fellows for the full academic year. In addition to the UNCF-Mellon Fellows, we are also pleased to welcome our fourth Laney Graduate Fellow. JWJI is grateful for the work of the JWJI advisory committee (Michelle Gordon, Hank Klibanoff, Karen Stolley and Carl Suddler), who helped select fellows.

Barbara Harris Combs UNCF Fellow



Barbara Harris Combs is associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta. She received her PhD

in sociology with a concentration in race and urban studies from Georgia State University in 2010.

She also holds a juris doctorate degree from The Ohio State University and an MA in English from Xavier University (Ohio). She brings this interdisciplinary background to her study of society.

Her research focuses on the role of place (as a geographical, social/cultural, and class construct) on modern identity formation and human relations, especially race relations. She is the author of *From Selma to Montgomery: The Long March to Freedom*, a book about the Selma campaign for voting rights. The book chronicles the marches, placing them in the context of the long civil rights movement, and

considers the legacy of the Voting Rights Act, drawing parallels with contemporary issues of enfranchisement.

Her current book project, *Blackout: The Continuing Assault against Black Bodies*, argues there are underexplored cognitive aspects of place that can prove helpful in understanding the continuing assault against Black and Brown bodies in US society. It does so by advancing a theoretical framework—bodies out of place (BOP)—that exposes frameworks used to justify and normalize the contemporary rash of attacks on Black and Brown bodies and fit them into a continuing historical pattern of anti-blackness.

The book is under contract with University of Georgia Press. She has published in a variety of academic journals including *Critical Sociology*, *Sociological Spectrum*, *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, and others.

Francine L. Allen Adams

UNCF Fellow



Francine L. Allen Adams is an associate professor of English at Morehouse College. She earned a BA in English and journalism and an MA in literary

studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill her PhD at Georgia State University.

As an African Americanist and literary scholar, she explores generally the intersection between theology and literature. In her current research, she has been examining specifically what the implied and actual presence of the Black church in texts within the African American literary canon reveals about the worldview similarities between the patristics and Black faith communities in the United States.

This current research has emerged from her earlier research on the fictional works of novelist and essayist James Baldwin. In her research on Baldwin, Adams has examined the ways in which Baldwin showcases redemptive suffering as a countermeasure to social injustice, particularly for those on the margins of society.

Her latest essay, "Let Them be Black and Beautiful: A Black Southerner's Grasp at Self-Respect in C. Eric Lincoln's *The Avenue, Clayton City*," was published in the 2019 print issue of the *North Carolina Literary Review* and explores faith and race in the only novel written by C. Eric Lincoln, a former Duke University professor of religion and culture and a former professor at Clark Atlanta University.

Haylee Christine Harrell

Laney Predoctoral Fellow



Haylee Christine Harrell (she/her) is a PhD candidate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Emory University. Her project titled "The Monstrous Mulatta: A Feminist Genealogy of a Peculiar

Invention," is a feminist genealogy of how the mulatta haunts black women in our present.

Harrell posits that the ghost of the mulatta is a reminder of W. E. B. Du Bois's problem of the color line defined as "the relation of the darker to the lighter races." Haylee addresses the persistence of the mulatta in the lived experiences, literature, and artistic works of four modern black women: black feminist Patricia Williams, author Nella Larsen, artist-philosopher Adrian Piper, and contemporary writer Danzy Senna.

Specifically, Haylee's research is invested in bridging the divisions between lived experience and academia, between everyday comments ("What are you? But you don't act black.") and scholarly sites like Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Taking into account this broad history of the mulatta, Harrell's findings enrich existing studies of mixed-raceness by showing the diversity of Black history.



RACE & DIFFERENCE COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Please join us! Register via Zoom: jwji-fall-colloquium-series.eventbrite.com.

September 14

Christopher Bonner, University of Maryland
Against the Law: Forms of African American Politics

September 21

Edlie Wong, University of Maryland
Empire and the Black Pacific

September 28

Maylei Blackwell, University of California, Los Angeles
Geographies of Latinx Indigeneity

October 5

Monique Moultrie, Georgia State University
Leading from the Margins: Authenticity, Authority, and Black Women's Sexual Agency

October 12

Alejandro De La Fuente, Harvard University
Becoming Free, Becoming Black: Race, Freedom, and Law in Cuba, Virginia, and Louisiana

October 19

David Phoenix, University of California, Irvine
The Anger Gap: How Race Shapes Emotion in Politics

October 26

Gladys Mitchell-Walthour, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Black Politics and Black Activism in Brazil

November 2

Matthew Clavin, University of Houston
Fugitive Slaves and the Fourth of July: Race, Resistance, and the Politics of the Enslaved

November 9

Karla Slocum, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Black Towns, Black Futures: Enduring and Complex Attractions to Rurality, Blackness, and Place

November 16

Keith Clark, George Mason University
Lessons Before and After Dying: The Life and Art of Ernest J. Gaines in "Post-Racial" America