

# HORIZONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY | SPRING 2008

## EDITOR'S NOTE: BETWEEN CONVERSATION AND PRAXIS

Tara Bynum, JHU Ph.D. Candidate (English)

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About two weeks ago, I traveled with my colleagues Mindelyn Buford II and Travis Gosa to the Temple University Department of African-American Studies AYA Graduate Student conference. We were there on a mission to discuss pedagogical approaches to teaching Africana studies courses. As I took in the conference and the various panels, a theme began to resonate—namely, the idea of praxis. How do we get from conversation and theorizing to practical application?

Our panel discussion produced much dialogue and response from the audience. Long time scholars and teachers offered their insights and made suggestions that sought to move our conversation from the realm of the abstract to the practical.

In this issue, we continue this conversation on the Hopkins campus. In each article, our undergraduate, graduate and faculty contributors explore the practical significance of topics as far-ranging as teaching and the role of Black history month to the possibility of a Black president.

We journey from the Afro American Newspapers archive to the present, where we welcome new faculty members, Drs. Nathan Connolly and Shani Mott. Though there may forever be a tension between the abstract and the practical, the conversation and the praxis, the classroom and the university setting represents a point where the two come together. The Center for Africana Studies creates this synergy in a creative and powerful way.



At the end of this academic year, I leave my post at Hopkins as Graduate Student Liaison to the Center for Africana Studies. I will be practically applying my Ph.D. in English as an Assistant Professor of African-American literature at Towson University. I will sorely miss my conversations with the good Drs.—Dr. Ben Vinson III, Dr. Floyd Hayes III, Dr. Neil Roberts, Dr. Katrina Bell MacDonald, Dr. Sara Berry, and Dr. Pier Larson at the Center, in the Greenhouse, and across campus. Thank you all for being gracious mentors.

Fortunately, I will only be up the road a ways, and I know the conversations will only get better. So please join us as we discuss. ◀

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If you would like to contribute to *Horizons* please email [cpoux1@jhu.edu](mailto:cpoux1@jhu.edu)

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## Director's Corner

Dr. Ben Vinson III, JHU Director, Center for Africana Studies/Professor of History

It is with great institutional pride that I write this installment of the Director's Corner. The year has been one of significant accomplishment at the Center for Africana Studies. We've been building a vibrant intellectual synergy through the successful and passionate discussions of our RAP sessions, through the rigorous engagement of texts in our Critical Thought Collective, and through the discussions precipitated by our lectures, symposia, conferences, and seminars. The Center has developed a sense of community that is starting to transcend its own walls. Looking towards the road ahead, we anticipate further developing the spirit that has been cultivated this year by improving the scope of our course offerings, expanding the reach of our research initiatives, and developing an even more robust programmatic agenda.

However, as we take further steps forward, there will be some who won't be making the journey with us. I am pleased to announce, however, that they are moving on in their careers to vibrant and exciting opportunities, and they will forever remain a part of the Center. Among these individuals

are our majors and minors within the graduating senior class. Also departing is Dr. Neil Roberts, our CAS postdoctoral fellow whose engaging teaching style and unyielding commitment to the discipline of Africana Studies has greatly enriched our curriculum, lecture series, and programs over the years. We wish him well in his appointment as a faculty member at Williams College.

Additionally, two graduate students, Tara Bynum and Travis Gosa have accepted tenure-track faculty appointments at Towson University and Williams College respectively. Tara has been essential in crafting the new look and feel of our newsletter, as well as steering our RAP sessions and managing our relations with the graduate student community. Travis Gosa has imparted his knowledge to cohorts of students enrolled in our Introduction to Africana Studies courses. Through his teaching, he has attracted new minors and majors to our program.

With the deepest gratitude, the Center wishes all of you continued success in your endeavors! ◀

**"WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE INSPIRED TO ENGAGE WITH OUR INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY..."**

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[www.jhu.edu/africana](http://www.jhu.edu/africana)**

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# Newsletter of the Center for Africana Studies at JHU

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## Africana Studies Bids Farewell to Dr. Neil Roberts

Dr. Floyd Hayes III, JHU Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, and Coordinator of Programs and Undergraduate Studies, Center for Africana Studies

In 2006, Neil Roberts joined forces with a burgeoning Center for Africana Studies and quickly established himself as a distinctive scholar, teacher, and major contributor to the Center's intellectual project. He came to Hopkins as a visiting scholar in the Center and in the Department of Political Science. He was a graduate student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, writing a doctoral dissertation, entitled "Freedom as Marronage: The Dialectic of Slavery and Freedom in Arendt, Pettit, Rousseau, Douglass, and the Haitian Revolution."

In 1998, Neil earned baccalaureate degrees in Afro-American Studies and Law and Public Policy at Brown University. Since the early 1990s, I have known one of Neil's major professors, Lewis Gordon (Temple University), who, in less than ten years, has become a world-renowned scholar of Frantz Fanon and one of the originators of contemporary Africana philosophy. Because of his association with Lewis, Neil and I quickly became colleagues. I valued his intellectual energy and expansiveness, as well as his efforts to advance Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

In 2007, Neil earned a Ph.D. and became a postdoctoral fellow in Africana studies and Political Science. He is establishing himself as a formidable student of the history of political philosophy, Africana philosophy, Caribbean intellectual history, and critical race theory. Like Lewis Gordon, his mentor, Neil's scholarship is destined to contribute significantly to the world of knowledge. His work on the intersections among Caribbean, Continental, and North American political thought is distinctive. Indeed, he is the author of published and forthcoming articles, reviews, and book chapters in a variety of venues: *Political Theory*, *Caribbean Studies*, *The C. L. R. James Journal*, *Journal of Haitian Studies*, *Philosophia Africana*, *Philosophy in Review/Comptes Rendus Philosophiques*, *Sartre Studies International*, *Shibboleths*, *Souls*, and an anthology devoted to the work of Caribbean thinker Sylvia Wynter. Moreover, he is currently co-editing a collection of essays with political scientist Jane Anna Gordon on the theme, "Creolizing Rousseau," that will appear in the forthcoming issue *The C. L. R. James Journal*. Finally, Neil is currently preparing a book manuscript that springs from his dissertation.

And this is not all. Neil is a marvelous teacher. During his sojourn at Hopkins, he has taught these courses: Political Freedom in Africana Thought; Heretical Political Theory;



Hannah Arendt and C. L. R. James; and Rastafari: Dread, Politics, and Agency. Since Neil and I often have students in common, I have learned much about his courses indirectly. His students *always* speak glowingly of his enthusiasm, thought-provoking discussions, and intellectually demanding approach; yet, he possesses a deep concern for his students' academic development. He challenges them to think critically, write well, and take pride in their scholarship.

His students admire and respect him. I also admire him tremendously! Here is a young professor who is academically innovative. Recently, I attended one of his lectures, entitled "Kant and Rastafari on Respect," the subject of which was related to his course on Rastafari. I had read the Guyanese historian Walter Rodney's small book, *Groundings with my Brothers*, back in the late 1960s, but I had not read deeply about the Rastas. After Neil's lecture, I went straight to the campus bookstore and purchased all of the books for Neil's course. (Con't on page 10)

## Announcements

### Course Spotlight: 362.201

#### *Rastafari: Dread, Politics, Agency*

##### Course Description:

This spring 2008 course, with 71 students, examined the emergence of Rastafari in the twentieth-century marked a distinct phase in the theory and practice of political agency. From its heretical roots in Jamaica, Garveyism, Ethiopianism, and Pan-Africanism, Rastafari has evolved from a Caribbean theological movement to an international political actor. This course investigates the political theory of Rastafari in order to develop intellectual resources for theorizing the concept of agency in contemporary Africana political thought and philosophy. We will analyze texts and audio-visual works on the political economy of late colonial Jamaica, core Rastafari thinking, political theology, the role of reggae music, and the influence of Rastafari on global politics.

##### Required Reading:

- Horace Campbell, *Rasta and Resistance: From Marcus Garvey to Walter Rodney*
- Barry Chevannes, *Roots and Ideology*
- Nathaniel Murrell, William Spencer, and Adrian McFarlane, eds., *Chanting Down Babylon: the Rastafari Reader*
- Velma Pollard, *Dread Talk: the Language of Rastafari*
- Walter Rodney, *Grounding with my Brothers*

### Generous Donors to the Center for Africana Studies

The Center for Africana Studies would like to thank Christina Mattin, Carroll E. Phillips, Jr. and Osei Yiadom for their generous financial contributions in support of the work of the Center. ◀

### WELCOME NEW FACULTY

The Center for Africana Studies is pleased to welcome two new faculty members, Dr. Nathan Connolly and Dr. Shani Mott, this fall.

Dr. Connolly will join the Department of History and the Center for Africana Studies as an Assistant Professor specializing in 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American History. He received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Shani Mott will join the Department of English as a three-year postdoctoral fellow, teaching courses in African-American literature and culture. Shani Mott received her Ph.D. in American Culture from the University of Michigan in 2005 and is currently Assistant Professor of English and Director of African Studies at Barry University in Miami, Florida. ◀

## **FACULTY SPOTLIGHT ON DR. PAMELA BENNETT** (Assistant Professor of Sociology)

### **What is your position at Johns Hopkins University?**

I am an Assistant Professor of Sociology and a Faculty Associate at the Hopkins Population Center.

### **Where are you from?**

I am from Baton Rouge, LA.

### **Where did you earn your Ph.D.?**

I received my Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

### **What was the topic of your dissertation?**

My dissertation did not follow the standard sociological model, which often addresses a single topic. Instead, I conducted three different projects with a cohesive theme—disadvantage. I examined a variety of contexts in which Black people experience disadvantage. All of the contexts were tied to education but not in the same way. I looked closely at 1.) the role of residential segregation in the racial gap in test scores, 2.) the impact of residential segregation on students' access to educational information, and 3.) racial differences in enrollment across college types.

### **Why did you get a Ph.D.?**

I got a Ph.D. because I wanted to be a sociologist. I wanted to study sociology. And once I learned that the only way to become a sociologist was to get a Ph.D., I did what I had to do and so the rest is history.

### **What is your current project?**

It examines the residential segregation patterns of multiracial people in order to understand the extent to which they live in places different from whites and racial minorities. The overall objective is to understand possible changes in the color line in the U.S. ◀

## **UNCOVERING BLACK HISTORY IN BALTIMORE**

Moira Hinderer, JHU *Diaspora Pathways Archival Access Project Manager/Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow*

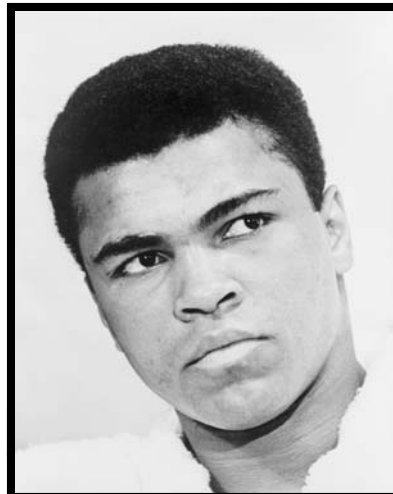
What do the Congress of Racial Equality, Muhammad Ali, and the Academy Awards have in common? They are all subjects represented in the rich archival files of the *Afro American Newspapers*. Under the auspices of the Diaspora Pathways Archival Access Project (DPAAP), five graduate and undergraduate students from JHU, Morgan State University and Goucher College have begun the long process of sifting through the Afro's newspaper morgue.

It is spring in the Afro Archives, which means more dust, more boxes, and more amazing documents. Folder by folder, the DPAAP interns have begun the daunting work of describing



2,000 linear feet of photographs, newspaper clippings and manuscript materials, which chronicle a century of local, national, and international Black history. Descriptions of these materials are now being entered into an online database, which will become a searchable, publicly accessible resource for historical research.

DPAAP will continue to hire undergraduate and graduate students from Johns Hopkins and other local colleges and universities to work on this three year project. Interested students should contact Moira Hinderer at [mhinder1@jhu.edu](mailto:mhinder1@jhu.edu). ◀



## Critical Issues Forum: RACE, HISTORY & POLITICS

Interdisciplinary conversations on issues facing the community

### AN OPINION: WHY WE STILL NEED BLACK HISTORY MONTH !

Alexandra Cork, JHU Class of 2009



**Dr. Daniel Hale Williams**

First to perform a  
successful open hearty  
surgery



**Madame C.J. Walker**

First self-made woman  
millionaire

The origins of Black History Month begin in 1926 with Carter G. Woodson. It was a week-long celebration of African American contributions that aimed to educate society about the achievements of African Americans. Fifty years after its inception, the original week long observance in February was expanded to include the entire month. Since Woodson's legendary move in 1926, people have questioned whether we still need a Black History Month. This is the question I seek to answer now.

Even, some 80 years later, the answer is not so clear cut. We are in a time of multiculturalism. Not only is a black man running for President of the United States, he is considered a serious contender. Many have argued that for these exact reasons, Black History Month is behind the times. Americans are color blind and believe that any man of any race can achieve and lead. Some say that a month dedicated solely to African-Americans supports separation of races, and therefore, Black history month is doing more harm than good and needs to be done away with.

Well, I beg to differ.

The absence of Black history in American history classes perpetuates an ignorance of Black achievement and confirms myths of black inferiority. The white woman who followed me around her place of employment, the grocery store, feels justified because all she knows about me and "my people" is that fifty percent of our males are or have been in prison. There are fellow Hopkins students who

believe I'm here because of affirmative action; they assume that I am not as smart as they are because I am African American woman. The only images of African Americans and education have been those featured on the local news of failing inner city school systems. And as for my black peer who has never heard of the creator of Black History month—what can you expect, when the information is not taught in schools.

America has a long way to go before we've reached the point that Black History month is no longer relevant or necessary. Ideally we would have reached it already because our history would have been properly and equally incorporated into all curricula. All children, not just the black ones fortunate enough to have parents who pass the information on, would recognize the names and accomplishments of great black scholars.

The conclusion has been reached time again that students' self esteem is boosted when they see someone who looks like them has contributed to the history of their nation. This is especially critical for African Americans who are bombarded with negative images that have astronomically detrimental effects and thus perpetuate the downward spiral of African American culture and society. It is critical that Black History month continue until the dream of truly becoming a part of American history is achieved. ◀

## Critical Issues Forum: RACE, HISTORY, & POLITICS

### A COMMENTARY ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2008

Dr. Lester Spence, JHU Assistant Professor, *Department of Political Science*

This year will go down as the year that we must rethink American political campaigning. Before this election everyone argued that it was impossible to run an effective Presidential campaign off of literally millions of “nickel and dime” contributions. However, Sen. Obama’s innovative use of the internet has thrown that out of the window. Similarly, most argued that the resources required to bring in hundreds of thousands of voters were better spent on smaller and smaller niches of tried and true voting groups (“soccer moms,” “Reagan democrats,” etc.). Facebook almost single-handedly put this notion to rest.

But what stands out most to me is the possibility that an African-American can be elected to the highest office in the land. For Americans old enough to remember when major newsmagazines asked, “What does Jesse Want?,” (when Rev. Jesse Jackson ran for President in 1984) this is nothing short of astounding. What I would like to do is take a step backwards and briefly examine the race that should have given astute viewers a glimpse that this was possible.

I would argue that the 2006 Senate race in Tennessee set the stage for this landmark opportunity. Harold Ford Jr., Representative of the Ninth District of Tennessee (and Black), ran for Senate against Bob Corker, former mayor of Chattanooga (and white). Ford Jr. lost to Bob Corker by only a couple of percentage points in an extremely tight race. Almost 880,000 voters cast their ballot for Ford, and it is safe to assume that a number of those who did so were white. Ford’s tenure in the Congress (where he served for ten years) was marked by his support for conservative causes, which ranged from banning same-

sex marriage to supporting the invasion of Iraq. His decisions lined up very neatly with the attitudes of many citizens of Tennessee. But many still felt that his color would be a barrier. Many scholars of Black politics ignored the polls that revealed the extent to which Ford ran neck and neck with Corker because they assumed that whites routinely lied in surveys about their willingness to vote for black candidates.

Despite these doubts, the final tally fit the final polls almost exactly. The Ford/Corker race indicated that whites in the south (arguably the most racially conservative body of voters in the country) would cast their vote for an African American if that candidate’s preferences were in line with their own. This point opened the door for someone, like Obama, to try to galvanize a significant number of white voters on a national level. But the Ford/Corker campaign also pointed out that race remains a critical fault line.

During the last few weeks of the campaign, an anti-Ford ad was released that castigated Ford for among other things, hanging out at the infamous Super Bowl Playboy Party. A scantily clad blonde woman who claimed to have met Ford at the party ended the ad by winking at the camera and saying “call me.” Over 40% of Alabama voters voted *against* a referendum that would remove laws against inter-racial marriages from the books in 2000. Such a sizeable vote for a law that was both symbolic and deeply racist signifies that inter-racial couplings such as those alluded to by the anti-Corker ad still rile some voters. (Con’t on page 10)

“WHETHER  
OBAMA WILL  
TAKE THE  
NEXT STEP  
FORWARD  
REMAINS TO  
BE SEEN...”

—DR. LESTER SPENCE

# Between Expectation and Experience: Teaching Comparative Urban History against an American Sensibility

Andre Young, JHU Ph.D. Candidate (History)

This article is an excerpt from a paper presented as part of a panel at the Temple University's Department of African-American Studies AYA Graduate Student Conference. The panel included Mindelyn Buford II (Sociology) and Travis Gosa (Sociology).

I have taught two courses at JHU that directly focused on African diasporic peoples. My course, *Civil War to Katrina*, while listed in the history department, was also cross-listed with the Center for Africana Studies. The second course, entitled *Dark Cities: African and African American Urban Experiences* was offered by the CAS and cross-listed in the history department. For both courses, the course title along with a brief description acted as the first interface through which students considered the subject and decided whether to enroll.

The description for the course read: "Hurricane Katrina exposed how Mardi Gras existed alongside poverty and inequality to produce a national tragedy. This course examines the city's past of riots, corruption, and racial politics to today." I penned the description with the intention of embedding riots, corruption, and racial politics through which to consider New Orleans's history through the present.

The first part of the description, that Katrina had exposed the Crescent City's poverty, functioned as a brief analysis of how media and other sources responded to the blundered aid efforts following the hurricane. I thought the description explained that the course would historically analyze these subjects.

However, students expected a course that did more than historicize aspects of the city's past that explained the impacts of the hurricane. I have realized that this expectation results in problematic readings of American history and is symptomatic of larger



difficulties present in the teaching of urban history, the history of African-Americans, or the Diaspora, and the history of the Deep South.

First, there is often an anachronistic stance typical of students who believe contemporary circumstances bear clear relation to the conditions of the past. My students have grown up in a time when the notions of equality and justice are protected by law, and when the more overt traces of racism are rare. Consequently, my students have consistently expected, if not a level playing field for African-Americans in the past, then at least clear cut distinctions between corruption and justice, as well as unambiguous advocacy for the rights of African-Americans.

Nevertheless, there remains, among students, a desire for a historical narrative rife with criticisms of social, racial, and political inequalities that left impoverished New Orleanians stranded in the wake of the storm.

Here we have the central problem of expectation and examples of how its interaction with experience has shaped my teaching of courses related to African American peoples or Africana studies. Enrolling in a call on Katrina and New Orleans, my students may have expected lessons and reading material that criticized the iniquities of a racial order and the failure of central government while providing positive examples of appropriate attitudes, responses, and behavior. The cumulative effects of finding few people who unambiguously represented moral behavior, advocacy for African-Americans, or even intra-group racial solidarity may have unsettled many of student's notions of what it meant to be African-American.

Over the course of teaching these courses I've learned to expect the students to experience frustration as information from course readings helps us define what constitutes African and African American experiences. I've learned that when confronted with material that contradicts their understandings and beliefs, students reflect upon their assumptions on their own.

Rather, than to articulate for the students what I consider to be examples of experience, or the purposes of historical inquiry, I prefer to let the students learn and define these things for themselves. ◀

# Where Fact Meets Fiction: Teaching African-American Literature; or When Keeping it Real Goes Wrong

Tara Bynum, JHU Ph.D. Candidate (English)

This article is an excerpt from a paper presented as part of a panel at the Temple University's Department of African-American Studies AYA Graduate Student Conference. The panel included Mindelyn Buford II (Sociology) and Travis Gosa (Sociology).

Over the course of the past year, I have taught two African-American literature (broadly defined) courses that have revealed recurrent thematic and pedagogical problems; my students don't recognize the literary value of Black cultural production. There is a limited appreciation of the creative processes that yield textual lineages that dialogue with and influence a larger American writing tradition. Instead, African-American literature exists within a linear vacuum that moves from Frederick Douglass forward; there is no sense that Black authors might have read the work of others outside of their racial, economic and social communities.

There have emerged two extremes in the way in which students receive African-American literature; (the first is) students anticipate and assume that Black authors write real and authentic accounts of a perpetual and constant victimization. Whether the authors write fiction or non-fiction, autobiographical narratives or political essays, my students assume that to be Black is to be a victim. As the victim, the Black author must always "keep it real." That is to say, the literature of both Black men or women chronicles and documents truth and in turn comments upon the facts of Black life.

Secondly, students ignore the means by which race is imagined as a literary device used creatively to speak of both fictional and true experiences. As such, the idea of race (defined culturally, ethnically, economically or socially) is lost or overlooked in an effort to discuss thematically reader reception of the

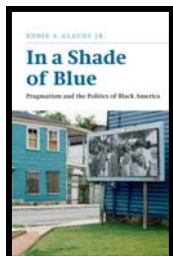
text. Here the reader is specifically imagined as a white and a part of audience with privilege and influence over the Black author.

As a consequence, the challenge of reading African-American literature with students has become to discover how to represent this diverse body of works in a way that reinforces its value and relevance. That is to say, as the teacher I search for ways to mediate the encounter between the spaces of both the text and the classroom or simply where fact and fiction meet.

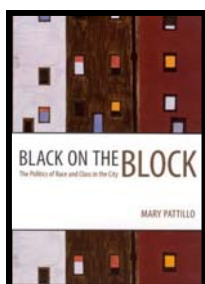
These experiences have forced me to rethink my pedagogical approaches in the classroom. I have to create a syllabus that engages texts both as racialized and as literature. The conversations must begin with conceptions of race, racial identity formation as well as questions such as: What does it mean to be Black? What is Black culture? Who can be Black? Who has the "right" to speak for Black people? Furthermore, for both students and literary critics alike it is important to emphasize the means by which Black folks are interested in writing as a tool of both creativity and creative activism; the two are not mutually exclusive but they are not mutually dependent either. When presented with the idea of Black creativity, my current students are hesitant. Their looks reveal how much they distrust my approach and my thoughts. The good news is the conversation continues and their distrust becomes open to the possibility. ◀

*"...the challenge of reading African-American literature with students is to discover new ways of reading that reinforce its relevance..."*

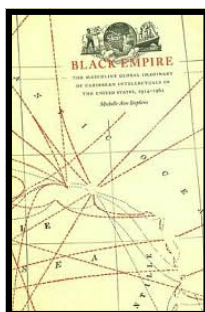
## READING AFRICANA



Eddie Glaude, *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).



Mary Patillo, *Black on the Block: Politics of Race and Class in the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).



Michelle A. Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

*Con't from 7 (Spence)*

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That Ford could run such a competitive campaign in the south is an indicator of progress (at least in political campaigns). That he lost arguably because of implicit racism is an indicator that we've got some ways to go. Whether Obama takes the next step forward remains to be seen, but the Ford campaign offered (and offers) a blueprint that should take him much closer than previous candidates.

Research suggests that if Ford would have simply called the Corker ad out for its content (something he refused to do), he would have neutered its effect. It appears that Obama is taking a different route.

Whether it will lead to different results for him remains to be seen. ◀

*Con't from 3 (Dr. Hayes)*

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Neil is truly informative and inspiring! Finally, Neil has chaired the Center for Africana Studies' Critical Thought Collective. During each semester, a cadre of students (undergraduate and graduate) and faculty meet in order to discuss new books, recommended by Neil, that make a significant contribution to Africana philosophical thought, specifically, or Africana studies, generally. Often, faculty members from surrounding colleges participate. All of us spring from different disciplines, and we possess different intellectual interests. To be sure, our sessions have proved to be thought-provoking, intellectually stimulating, and even raucous at times. As discussion leader, Neil always has been able to navigate skillfully through the often turbulent waters of our intellectual exchanges.

At the end of this academic year, Neil will leave Hopkins. We will miss him. He has been a personal friend, so I will miss our enthusiastic discussions. Even though he will continue to edit the Center's working papers, which appear at our website, he will leave a significant void that will be difficult to fill. As Neil joins the political science department at Williams College next year, we here at the Center for Africana Studies wish him well. Farewell, my friend. Respect. ◀

# HORIZONS

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## COURSE OFFERINGS—FALL 2008

**362.111 INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (3)** *Limit 15* This course is an introduction to the origins and emergence of Black Studies as an academic discipline in the American academy. The course is centered on the Social realities of people of African descent living in the United States.

**362.200 AFRICAN AMERICAN POETRY AND POETICS (3)** *Robbins Limit 25*

This course will explore the category, history, and development of African American poetry from Phillis Wheatley to the present. We will focus on poetry and poetics specifically but will consider the general movement of literature produced by African American writers over the course of three centuries. We will read works by the key contributors to this particular American literary tradition with the goal of understanding the aesthetic, cultural, and critical legacy of African-American poetry to the American literary and musical sensibility of the 21st century. From 18th century odes to 19th century shouts and spirituals to the jazz poets of the Harlem Renaissance to Black Arts poetry to the blues, hip hop, and rap tradition, we will examine the role that race, cultural identity, legal status, and the impersonal structures (or shackles) of poetic forms have played in shaping and reshaping African American verse.

**362.340 POWER & RACISM (3)** *Hayes Limit 25*

This is an interdisciplinary course that examines white supremacy and anti-black racism as a global system of power. Through reading texts in philosophy, history, sociology, politics, and law, the course will focus on trends, developments, and future challenges related to the social relations of racism and power in America and in Brazil.

### Cross-listed Courses

**010.290 AT THE VERY EDGE: THE ART OF ISLAMIC SPAIN AS A FURTIVE INTRODUCTION TO 'ISLAMIC ART' (3)**  
*Bauer*

**100.157 RACE AND EMPIRE (3)** *Shepard*

**100.304 NEW WORLD SLAVERY (3)** *Morgan*

**100.338 CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMIES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES (3)** *Berry*

**100.343 THE POWER OF PLACE: RACE AND COMMUNITY IN EAST BALTIMORE (3)** *Shell-Weiss*

**100.445 AFRICAN FICTION AS HISTORY (3)** *Larson*

**100.486 JIM CROW IN AMERICA (3)** *Connolly*

**130.101 ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CIVILIZATIONS (3)** *Schwartz*

**130.400 INTRODUCTION TO MIDDLE EGYPTIAN (Hieroglyphs) (3)** *Jasnow*

**190.214 INTRODUCTION TO RACIAL AND ETHNIC POLITICS (3)** *Spence*

**190.329 POLITICS, HISTORY, AND CULTURE OF THE MAGHREB (3)** *Lawrence*

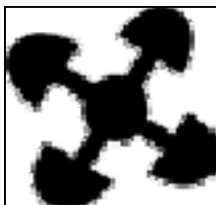
*Additional courses (in Public Health Studies, Sociology, German and Romance Literatures and Languages, Geography and Environmental Engineering, Public Policy, Language Teaching Center) are listed on the Registrar's website.*

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## contact us

*The Center for Africana Studies is located on the JHU-Homewood campus in the Greenhouse building. Our editorial staff seeks relevant news articles, editorial submissions and calendar items for publication. Please forward submissions to:*



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