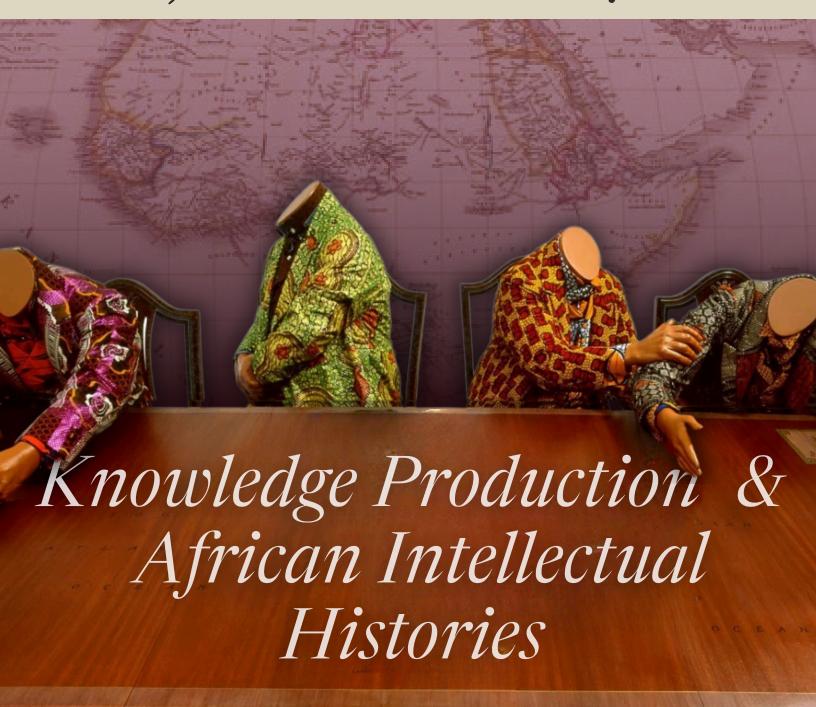
UF Center for African Studies 2025 Gwendolen M. Carter Conference





Gwendolen M. Carter



For over 30 years the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida has organized annual lectures or a conference in honor of the late distinguished Africanist scholar, Gwendolen M. Carter. Gwendolen Carter devoted her career to scholarship and advocacy concerning the politics of inequality and injustice, especially in southern Africa. She also worked hard to foster the development of African Studies as an academic enterprise. She was perhaps best known for her pioneering study The Politics of Inequality: South Africa since 1948 and the co-edited four - volume From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa. In the spirit of her career, the annual Carter conference offers the university community and the greater public the perspectives of Africanist scholars on issues of pressing importance to the peoples and societies of Africa.

2025 Co-Sponsors









- Liberal Arts and Sciences

Liberal Arts and Sciences

CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE
Liberal Arts and Sciences

——— Liberal Arts and Sciences



Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Conference Overview

The 40th Gwendolen M. Carter Conference: Knowledge Production & African Intellectual Histories

Convenor: Philip Janzen, University of Florida, Department of History

University of Florida Gainesville, FL USA 27-28 March 2025

Scholars have long considered the contributions of African intellectuals across the continent: early forms of social organization and public healing in the Great Lakes region; oral traditions in Central Africa; the political discourses of peasants in East Africa; the creation and study of Islamic texts in West Africa; the careers and writings of missionary-educated intermediaries; the spread of print culture in the early twentieth century; and the nationalist intellectuals of the 1960s. More recently, scholars have also turned to questions of knowledge production in and about Africa—not only in history, but also in literature, anthropology, global health, and other disciplines.

This conference will explore the newest approaches to the study of African intellectual history and will also consider the dynamics of knowledge production. The presenters will focus on a series of questions: Who are African intellectuals? What kinds of knowledge have been produced about political, social, and cultural institutions in Africa? By whom? Toward what ends? Using what sources, languages, and methods? And how have scholars in Africa and other parts of the world questioned the colonial legacies of knowledge production? Across five panels, scholars of history, archaeology, anthropology, literature, geography, and other disciplines will offer their ideas and perspectives on these themes and questions.



Scan the QR code to access the full list of abstracts.

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Reitz Union Room 3315

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM Check-in & Coffee

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Welcome: Miles Larmer, University of Florida Prologue: Philip Janzen, University of Florida

10:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Panel 1: Methods, Sources, & Early African Histories

Chair: Katherine Grillo, University of Florida



ADMIRE MSEBA, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Archaeology, Language & History: Knowledge Production and the Histories of the Zimbabwean Plateau's Early & Later Farming Communities

Admire Mseba is an assistant professor in the Van Hunnick Department of History at the University of Southern California. He has research interests in African social, environmental and economic history. His first book, Society, Power and Land in Northeastern Zimbabwe, ca 1560-1960 was published by Ohio University Press in November 2024. His research has appeared in the African Studies Review, the Journal of Southern African Studies, the International Journal of African Historical Studies, and in several edited collections. Admire is currently at work on his second book project, "International Cooperation and **Environmental Control: The Struggles Against Locusts in Twentieth Century** Southern Africa."



CHAPURUKHA KUSIMBA, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Current Themes in Archaeological Research in East Africa

Dr. Chapurukha M. Kusimba is a Professor of Anthropology at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and the Environment and the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida-Tampa. He specializes in the origins of urbanism in medieval East Africa. Through archaeological, ethnographic, and ancient DNA research, he has challenged the narrative that colonial invaders from Asia shaped urbanism and social complexity on the East African coast. His three decades of research at major coastal and inland sites have uncovered networks where African elites emerged, adopted Islam, and accumulated wealth. He has an extensive publication record in African archaeology, anthropology, history, and museum studies and was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2018.



RHIANNON STEPHENS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Recovering Responses to Drought in East Africa before 1900

Rhiannon Stephens specializes in the history of precolonial and early colonial East Africa from the first millennium CE through the twentieth century. She is the author of *Poverty* and Wealth in East Africa: A Conceptual History (Duke University Press, 2022) and A History of African Motherhood: The Case of Uganda, 700-1900 (Cambridge University Press, 2013. She is the co-editor of Doing Conceptual History in Africa (Berghahn Books, 2018). Her current research is a collaborative project that focuses on questions of gender, power, and climate over fifteen-hundred years on the east coast of Africa.

1:15 PM - 3:00 PM

Panel 2: Language, Legacies, and Religion Chair: Leonardo Villalón, University of Florida



DAVID BRESNAHAN, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Livingstone Died in Central Africa: A Corpse, Language, and Intellectual Histories of an Imperial Watershed

David Bresnahan is an assistant professor of history at the University of Utah. His first book, Inland from Mombasa: East Africa and the Making of the Indian Ocean World was published by the University of California Press in December 2024. His other work has appeared in the Journal of World History, the International Journal of African Historical Studies, and the Journal of Eastern African Studies.



SANDRA GREENE, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Thoughts/Actions/Legacies: Nyaho Tamaklo, Elite Intellectual

Sandra E. Greene is the Stephen'59 and Madeline '60 Anbinder Professor of African History Emerita and a Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellow at Cornell University, as well as an elected member of the Ambrosiana Academy in Milan, Italy (the second oldest library in Europe), and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her single authored books include Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast (1996), Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter (2002), West African Narratives of Slavery (2011), and Slave Owners of West Africa: Decision-making in the Age of Abolition (2017). She has also co-edited nine other volumes.



SEAN HANRETTA,
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Researching the Ahmadiyya: Global Muslim Intellectual Networks, Responses to Ahmadi Preaching, and the Shaping of British Policy in the Gold Coast, 1921-1925

Sean Hanretta is Associate Professor of History at Northwestern University. His research focuses on the intellectual and social history of religion in modern West Africa, particularly on Muslim intellectuals in colonial and postcolonial Ghana. He teaches and researches on religious and philosophical attitudes towards death and dying. He is currently completing a teaching text on the global history of death and dying and a research monograph on Muslim weddings and funerals in Ghana.

3:15 PM - 5:00 PM

Panel 3: Drugs, Knowledge, and Biomedicine Chair: Adrienne Strong, University of Florida



CLAIRE WENDLAND, UNIVERSITY
OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

"Our African boys": Missiongrounded Medical Knowledge about Africa from the Jim Crow U.S. to Colonial Nyasaland

Claire Wendland is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in the Departments of Anthropology and Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research explores the production and uses of medical knowledge, especially in Malawi. A Heart for the Work: Journeys through an African Medical School (Chicago 2010) was the first ethnography of a medical school in the global South. Partial Stories: Maternal Death from Six Angles (Chicago 2022) describes explanations for maternal death in a context in which mortality rates are high while the uncertainties surrounding any given death are substantial.



MARK HUNTER, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Whoongais a Heroin-based Street Drug: The Making and Persistence of the Antiretroviral-drug Legend

Mark Hunter is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). His research has explored the embodiment and institutionalization of inequalities in South Africa through the study of intimacy, health, education, race, and drug use. He is the author of Love in The Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender and Rights in South Africa (2010, Indiana and KwaZulu-Natal presses) and Race for Education: Gender, White Tone and Schooling in South Africa (2019, Cambridge University Press).



RAMAH MCKAY, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Thinking with and Against Safety: Can Ethnographies of Global Health in Mozambique Speak to Abortion Access Struggles in the US?

Ramah McKay is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Sociology of Science at the University of Pennsylvania. A medical anthropologist by training, she is interested in reproduction and social reproduction, caregiving, gender, labor and health and in the anthropology of humanitarianism and global health.

Friday, March 28, 2025 Smathers Library East Room 100

9:00 AM - 9:15 AM Check-in & Coffee

9:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Panel 4: Nationalism, Gender, and Decolonization

Chair: Miles Larmer, University of Florida



ELIZABETH JACOB, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS - AMHERST

The Specter of Matriarchy: **Debating Matrilineal** Inheritance in 1950s Côte d'Ivoire

Elizabeth Jacob is a historian of modern West Africa, with a focus on gender, family, and politics in twentieth-century Côte d'Ivoire. Her first book project examines how ideas about African motherhood shape possibilities for Ivoirian women's civic action, and how expectations of civic motherhood change over time. With generous support from UCLA's Modern Endangered Archives Program, Jacob also co-directs a project to digitize the photographic archive of Paul Kodjo, a pioneering documentarian of the first decades of Ivoirian independence. She holds a PhD in History from Stanford University, with a minor in Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies.



BENEDITO MACHAVA, YALE UNIVERSITY

The Decolonization of Mozambique and the Historical Record: Revisiting 1974

Benedito Machava is Assistant Professor of African History at Yale University. His research focuses on liberation struggles, decolonization, nation building, socialism and socialist experiments in Africa, and the relation between China and Africa. He is the author of The Morality of Revolution: Reeducation Camps and the Politics of Punishment in Socialist Mozambique, 1968-1990 (Ohio University Press, 2025). He is currently working on a second book project tentatively titled The Road Not Taken: Decolonization and Political Imagination in Mozambique, which explores the heated arguments about the possible paths that Mozambique could take after colonial rule by people on the margins of the liberation struggle.



RUDO MUDIWA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - IRVINE

"You Paid with Your Blood": **Building a Feminist Public in** Post-Independence 7imhahwe

Rudo Mudiwa is an Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Her research focuses on anti-colonial thought, Black women's cultural production, transnational feminisms, and Black geographies. She is working on a manuscript titled A Nation of Prostitutes: Gender, Conscription, and the Invention of Zimbabwe, which examines how the prostitute—symbolizing the mobile, transgressive Black womanmediated anxieties about urban space. policing, and gender relations after 90 years of colonial rule. Her academic and public work has appeared in the Journal of Southern African Studies, Transition, Chimurenga, New Frame, Popula, Ebony, and Africa Is a Country.

11:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Panel 5: Novels, Poetry, and Knowledge Production

Chair: Alioune Sow, University of Florida



CILAS KEMEDJIO, UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

I'm not your Native Informant: The Novel as Site of Decolonial Knowledge Production from Chinua Achebe to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Cilas Kemedjio is Professor of Black Studies and Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Rochester. He has published De la Négritude à la Créolité : Maryse Condé, Édouard Glissant et la malédiction de la théorie (1999), Mongo Beti, le combattant fatiqué : une bibliographie intellectuelle (2013). Cilas Kemedjio Cecelia and Cecelia Lynch, Eds. "Who Gives to Whom": Reframing Africa in the Humanitarian Imaginary (Palgrave Macmillan 2024). He is now preparing a monograph provisionally titled "The **Humanitarian Misunderstanding: The** Postcolonial African Humanitarian Imagination."



NATHAN SUHR-SYTSMA, EMORY UNIVERSITY

Thinking in Poetry: African Lifeworlds and Literary Worldmaking

Nathan Suhr-Sytsma is Associate Professor of English and a core faculty member of the Institute of African Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. His first book, Poetry, Print, and the Making of Postcolonial Literature, was published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press. His next book, African Poetry Worlds in the Twenty-First Century, is under contract with Oxford University Press. He co-edited "Poetics from the Global South," a special double issue of the journal Interventions published in 2024. He is increasingly teaching and writing about how literature imaginatively confronts the climate crisis.



AINEHI EDORO, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

African Literature and the Problem of the Archive

Ainehi Edoro-Glines is a Nigerian academic of Esan descent. She is jointly appointed in the English and African Cultural Studies departments at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she researches African literature and digital culture. She graduated summa cum laude in English from Morgan State University and earned a PhD at Duke University, where she launched Brittle Paper, now a leading platform on African writing and literary culture. She is working on her first book, Forest Imaginaries: How African Novels Think. In 2018, she was named to OkayAfrica's Top 100 Women list for her work in media and publishing. Her writing and commentaries have appeared in The Guardian, BBC World News, Africa Is a Country, and Lithub.

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Panel 6: Reflections and Departures: A Roundtable

Chair: Philip Janzen, University of Florida



NANCY ROSE HUNT, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Nancy Rose Hunt is an ethnographic historian of ex-Belgian Africa. Kinshasa's Star of Street Comics, her forthcoming volume (with Pedro Monaville) on Papa Mfumu'Eto, a Kinshasa-based popular intellectual and cartoonist, will appear with Leuven University Press. Psychiatric Contours: New African Histories of Madness (Duke 2024, co-edited with Hubertus Buschel), embraces several madmenintellectuals, all invested in creating textualities Un Etat nerveux, a translation of her award-winning A Nervous State (Duke, 2016) appeared in Paris with Editions de l'EHESS in 2024. Whether the Lokele letter-writing "middle figures" in her A Colonial Lexicon (Duke 1999; Herskovits Prize) were intellectuals remains an open question. Her 2019 field research on forms of madness in Bukavu, an intellectuals' city, appeared in Africa in 2024. She co-edits the Duke book series, Theory in Forms, with Achille Mbembe and Todd Meyers.



SANDRA GREENE, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Sandra E. Greene is the Stephen'59 and Madeline '60 Anbinder Professor of African History Emerita and a Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellow at Cornell University, as well as an elected member of the Ambrosiana Academy in Milan, Italy (the second oldest library in Europe), and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Her single authored books include Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast (1996), Sacred Sites and the Colonial Encounter (2002), West African Narratives of Slavery (2011), and Slave Owners of West Africa: Decision-making in the Age of Abolition (2017). She has also co-edited nine other volumes.



SEAN HANRETTA,
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Sean Hanretta is Associate Professor of History at Northwestern University. His research focuses on the intellectual and social history of religion in modern West Africa, particularly on Muslim intellectuals in colonial and postcolonial Ghana. He teaches and researches on religious and philosophical attitudes towards death and dying. He is currently completing a teaching text on the global history of death and dying and a research monograph on Muslim weddings and funerals in Ghana.

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Closing Reception

Location: Heavener Hall, Room 160

1325 W University Ave Ste 333, Gainesville, FL 32603

NOTES

