Hello and welcome to the fall 2012 newsletter of the African American Studies Program! Our faculty, staff, and students have been involved in wonderful educational activities that we would like to tell you about in our newsletter.

First, we welcome Dr. Baliram Gaikwad, a Fulbright Scholar and Professor of English at N.G. Acharya and D.K. Marathe College in Mumbai, India, to our university. Dr. Gaikwad has worked with Professor Faye Harrison in India and will be in residence in the African American Studies Program during the 2012-13 academic year. His research is entitled “Autobiographies of African-American and Maharashtrian Dalit Women as a Literary Form of Socio-political Protest: A Comparative Study.” It discusses the common experiences of Dalit and African American women and includes a study of autobiographies by Urmila Pawar, Shantabai Kamble, Angela Davis, and Maya Angelou.

Second, I would like to tell you about some of our program’s more recent accomplishments. During the summer of 2012, Professors Sharon Austin and Patricia Hilliard-Nunn, Program Assistant Sharon Burney, Secretary Denika Player, and Research Assistant Vincent Adejumo received a $1,500 Civil Debate Wall Grant from the Senator Bob Graham Center at UF. We led an online debate and discussion of the question, “Should people of African descent support same-sex marriage?” We found this to be an enlightening discussion because of the belief that most African Americans oppose same-sex marriages because of their conservative religious beliefs in the black church. We received 60 responses to this question. Out of these respondents, 32 believed that African Americans should support same-sex marriages and 28 answered no to the question. This question also sparked 36 additional debates relating to the question on the Graham’s Center’s website. We were very pleased that all of our respondents, many of whom remained anonymous, provided respectful and civil comments when referring to our question. We also believe that we were somewhat able to dispel the stereotype that overwhelming majorities of African Americans oppose same-sex marriages adamantly.

In addition, the African American Studies Program recently received a $3,500 grant from the Center for the Humanities and Public Sphere to host a three-day workshop that is tentatively entitled “The Education, Identity, and Overall Plight of African American Men.” The workshop will take place in February 2013 and will address the unique challenges African American men in America.

Third, we encourage our students to attend the Presidential Inauguration Seminar in Washington, D.C. that will take place from January 12-22, 2013. If selected for the seminar, students can contact their undergraduate coordinator in their department and possibly receive 1-3 credits for their participation in the seminar. Students minoring in African American Studies can contact me about the possibility to completing an independent study for African American Studies credit. The seminar utilizes lectures, site visits, and class discussions before and during the 2013 inauguration of the President of the United States. During daily class meetings in the mornings, they attend lectures by some of the most prominent political analysts in the nation. During the afternoon sessions, they will tour historic sites in the District of Columbia such as the U.S. Capitol, Supreme Court, and others. Student participants can also visit colleges and universities in the metropolitan D.C. area.

Speaking on behalf of all of our faculty, staff, and students, we would like to encourage you to take our courses, visit our offices on the first floor of Walker Hall, and attend the activities we are putting together for your enjoyment. In November 2012, the program will host an information session and reception for students minoring in African American Studies and for other students who are interested in declaring an African American Studies minor. We look forward to meeting you and continuing to mentor you as you pursue your degrees.
Dr. Dr. Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons

Dr. Debra Walker King, AASP Affiliate

Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better. (Carter G. Woodson, 1933) Cross listing my courses with African American Studies is a natural extension of what I do. I am a philosophical pragmatist—an African Americanist scholar, critic, teacher and author whose teaching strategies, ambitions, and energies are motivated by a personal charge to do my best and a dedication to providing “real education” as defined by the esteemed African-American historian Carter G. Woodson. I rise each day with the hope that something I say or do will not only teach a student critical thinking, effective writing, and cultural literacy but will also provide a three dimensional perspective of the subjects I teach. I mean to provide students with tools for living an inspired, experientially informed, and action-oriented life.

This goal demands that my classes are not only informative and memorable, but also pragmatic.

Pragmatism in this context (and for my cross listed courses) is a form of cultural criticism responding to boundless social and cultural concerns by exploring and explaining their meaning for America and their function within a variety of African American production and reproduction technologies (film, literature, music, internet, et. al.). Seeking and exploring solutions to catalysts of social and cultural crises is a necessary part of learning three-dimensionally. This is why the primary assignment in my cross listed African American Literature I: 1746-1940 class asks students to research, study, and engage the sociopolitical, cultural and creative ideologies of one or two writers. Through this assignment students are encouraged to learn how sociopolitical ideologies and creative practices we study in class are formed and expressed by the individual. Students learn what competing ideologies meant in the lives and literature of the writers they choose and how similar ideologies are inflected, transformed, repeated or revised in our current era—indeed, in our understanding of creativity, conflict and resolution today.

One entry in the learning journal students produce for this assignment is creative, opening a way for them to express their experience with the writer in a manner that is their own, uniquely. Learning should never be boring and neither should teaching. I regard the podium as a place where knowledge and critical awareness are invigorated by motion, vision, sound, and breath. With this is mind I include recitations, music, film, and role-playing in my course plans. I have also found using wide-ranging modes of student/teacher contact intensifies the productivity and focus of students—encouraging their genuine involvement and experience in the process of learning. Therefore, I employ interactive teaching techniques ranging from the traditional Socratic method of question / answer instruction to improvisational call and response oral examinations. Cooperation and community are developed during panel directed discussions or group presentations, which also encourage students to contemplate, analyze, and interpret texts or issues creatively—often before I begin my instruction. The goal of interactive teaching is to facilitate focused independent thought, collaboration, and interaction among students while putting into practice my belief that learning is as much (if not more) doing as it is hearing and observing. I consider every moment with my students (office visits, SKYPE and emails included) a special moment. My ultimate goal as a teacher is to nurture individual confidence while providing inspiration and lively interaction within an environment of mutual respect and rigorous intellectual engagement. For me, providing “real education” means offering thoughtful effort, superb scholarship, and absolute dedication to students ungrudgingly. As a professor, I care and will always perform beyond expectations without exception or hesitation.

Dr. Simmons
Lecturer of African American Studies Program and Religion

One of the panel members included our very own Dr. Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons. A former student nonviolent coordinating committee project coordinator in Laurel, Mississippi, Dr. Simmons is a professor at the University of Florida and teaches courses in Islam, Women, Religion and Society as well as African American Religious Traditions. The theme of this year’s panel was, “Fannie Lou Hamer, Civil Rights Movement Organizer: Lessons and Legacies.” Our panelists explored Mrs. Hamer’s approach to organizing for social change, and gave consideration to how these lessons can be applied today to deepen our commitment to economic justice, democracy, and a deeper understanding of American history.
Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn, Lecturer

Patricia Hilliard-Nunn is teaching a new class called the Politics of Black Hair. After engaging in numerous class discussions about the influence of mainstream culture on black identity, the release of Chris Rock’s film, Good Hair (2009), and observing the increase in the number of black women wearing “natural” hairstyles. Hilliard-Nunn created an interdisciplinary course that incorporates basic theoretical approaches to African American Studies to explore the meaning(s) that “Black hair” has in relation to race, gender, and class. Black hair politics have long been addressed in the work of scientists, writers, scholars, poets, filmmakers, artists, business owners and regular people. Black hairstyles have been glorified, imitated and simultaneously scorned in a world where European standards of beauty have been elevated internationally via popular culture, particularly the mass media. Conversely, tightly curled or kinky hair has been devalued. Degrading stereotypes have had real psychological, social, economic, and legal consequences for African people. Students are exploring the ways that cultural hegemony has influenced the way that some black girls and women have styled their hair. They are also examining the ways that people have overtly resisted dominant Paradigms of acceptable hair design.

Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy Headed People, by Ayoka Chenzira, I’m Not My Hair video by India Arie and A Girl Like Me by Kiri Davis are a sample of work that is discussed in class. The texts for are Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America (Byrd land Tharps 2002), From the Kitchen to the Parlor: Language and Becoming in African American Women’s Hair Care (Jacobs-Huey, 2006) and Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery (Akbar, 1996). The course packet includes a variety of articles including: Alice Walker’s article Oppressed Hair Puts A Ceiling on the Brain (1987), Kobena Mercer’s Black Hair/Style Politics (1987) and A Hair Piece: Perspectives on the Intersection of Race and Gender (1991), a law review article by Paulette Caldwell.

Dr. Bailram Gaikwad

I am Baliram Gaikwad from Mumbai, India. I have ten years teaching experience at undergraduate level in Acambahry and Marathe College under University of Mumbai. Have completed Ph.D. in 2009 from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University Aurangabad in Contemporary British Novel. I have also been studying Dalit literature and was awarded a fellowship for pursuing Post Doctoral studies in Comparative Literature on ” Autobiographies of African American and Maharshtrain (Marathi) Dalit women as Literary form of socio-political Protest: A comparative study”. I am also a visiting Fulbright scholar in the African American Studies Program during the 2012-13 academic year and is being mentored by Professor Faye Harrison of the African American Studies Program and Anthropology Department.
Dr. James Davidson, Associate Professor of Anthropology and AASP

At the Society for Historical Archaeology 45th annual meetings in Baltimore, Maryland, in January of this year, James M. Davidson was selected as the 2012 recipient of the Society's John L. Cotter Award. The Cotter Award was established in 1988, and named in honor of John L. Cotter, a pioneer educator and advocate for the discipline. This award is presented to recognize outstanding achievement by and individual at the start of his/her career in historical archaeology.

Dr. Maria Franklin of the University of Texas at Austin prepared the nomination for the award, but many other supporters signed on and/or provided supporting materials, including Paul Mullins (Indiana University-Purdue University), Robert Mainfort (University of Arkansas), and Robert Paynter (University of Massachusetts-Amherst). Specifically the award recognized:

“significant contributions to historical archaeology, particularly in the field of African Diaspora archaeology. There are two areas in which Davidson has produced a substantial and critical body of research: (1) historic mortuary and bioarchaeological studies, and (2) long-term research regarding the lives of enslaved Africans at the Kingsley Plantation in Florida. With regard to the former, Davidson is one of the leading experts on the bioarchaeology and cultural dimensions of burial practices among people of African descent, and has published his research widely on these topics. His work is representative of the best that our field has to offer in making innovative and socially relevant contributions to historical archaeology.”

Students can contact me at davidson@ufl.edu for information on the summer program and on receiving independent study or internship credit.

Progress Report of the 2012 Kingsley Plantation Historical Archaeology Field School

During Summer A of this year (May 14 - June 22), I once again led the Historical Archaeological Field School at the Kingsley Plantation, located on Fort George Island, Duval County, Florida, within the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve National Park, which is administered by the National Park Service. This year, I and four graduate students – David Markus, Karen McIlvory, Clete Rooney, and Justin Dunnavant – instructed 10 undergraduate students in field and lab methodologies, including unit/level excavations, basic artifact identification and recordation/mapping.

This summer’s excavations focused on gaining a greater understanding of the use of yards associated with the Africans who once lived and labored in the Kingsley era slave cabins, and excavations adjacent to the tabby-walled barn were conducted to help establish the chronology and sequence of events in the barn’s construction and later use. This field school marks the seventh year of such student-centered research at the Kingsley Plantation, which has primarily focused on the life of the enslaved during the 1814 to 1939 era, when Zephaniah Kingsley, his African-born wife Anta Madgigine Jai, and their four children, owned and operated the plantation.

Over the past seven years, we have excavated four slave cabins, and discovered entirely through archaeological excavation the remnants of a cottage for friends of the Kingsley’s that once stood along a path known originally as Cedar Avenue, uncovered the massive tabby-walled Sugar Mill complex, discovered and excavated to the depth of three meters a slave-dug water well, and finally uncovered the location of the long lost Kingsley-era African Burial Ground. Over these past seven years, we have also trained 103 undergraduate students in the basics of field archaeology, African-American history, and provided them in the process of living and working together on a beautiful sea island fronting the Atlantic Ocean, an unforgettable experience.
Dr. Marc Lamont Hill will give the 2013 Foreman Lecture in February 2013. Dr. Hill is a Professor of Education at Columbia University, a commentator for National Public Radio, CNN, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel, and a regular guest on The O’Reilly Factor. He also regularly contributes articles to the Washington Post, Essence Magazine, the New York Times, is editor-at-large for the Philadelphia Daily News, and is the host of the nationally syndicated television show Our World With Black Enterprise. Dr. Hill is the author of Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity and co-editor of Media, Learning, and Sites of Possibility and The Anthropology of Education Reader.

The Education, Identity, and Overall Plight of African American Men

Beginning on February 23, 2012 at 6pm, the African American Studies Program will host a workshop on "The Education, Identity, and Overall Plight of African American Men." Both African American men and women experience various challenges in American society because of the racism and discrimination they encounter throughout their lives. However, it is believed that African American men experience problems that are more severe than any other group in America. We will host a number of panel discussions by students, educators, and community leaders about the educational, political, and other challenges African American men face in American Society. The workshop will be funded in large part by the Center for the Humanities and Public Sphere's "Support for Workshops and Speaker Series in the Humanities" grant.
Student Spotlight

Jean-Luc Adrien

In May of this year, I earned a dual degree in Political Science and Anthropology as well as a minor in Spanish from the University of Florida. Due to my senior thesis on Charter Schools in New Orleans, I graduated magna cum laude. During my senior year of undergraduate study, I was granted admission to the New York University School of Law. However, my passion for education and underserved youth, led me to defer law school for two years and sign up as a Teach for America corps member. Teach for America is a national movement that recruits high achieving college seniors to teach in rural and urban schools with the goal of closing the achievement gap. I am now a high school Spanish teacher at Dumas Senior High School in Dumas Arkansas – a small town in the Mississippi Delta. My strongest desire, while in Arkansas, is to help instill a passion for excellence in Dumas’ youth. With that in mind, I have already started working, with administrators and the superintendent of my district, to establish a young men’s group that will address mentorship, achievement, and personal development.

Passing the Torch Forum

"Passing the Torch" was the inaugural event sponsored by the UF African-American Studies Department where students sought advice and guidance from upperclassmen peers on how to obtain top internships, as well as earn prestigious and nationally recognized fellowships and scholarships.

The event was co-sponsored by the Minority Business Society, Black Political Science Association, Institute of Black Culture, Black Student Union and open to all majors. The event, hosted by Khama Weatherspoon, and Leandra Stubbs started with a panelist of high achieving upperclassmen who have demonstrated a connectedness to their community, and a willingness to help create a better society through communal support. The panelist included Jenise Araujo, Kimone Ferguson, Joy Scott, Leonard M. Thompson Jr., Sasha-kay Myers, Breanne Palmer, Patricia Posey, and Kimberly Gant.

The event ended with a networking session where students had the opportunity to speak to panelists and participating organizations about how to better prepare themselves academically and enrich themselves professionally.

This will be an event that the African-American Studies Department hopes to continue for years to come.
On September 14th, Ms. Breanne Palmer traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana for National Council for Black Studies Board Meeting for the purposes of planning their annual conference for 2014 which will be in Miami. This is significant for Breanne because she is from the Miami area and she is serving as a Keto Fellow for two years. The purpose of the Keto program is to provide leadership training to the next generation of young scholars and professionals who will assume positions of responsibility in the field of Africana Studies and in the African Diaspora community. Participants in the program will be exposed to a variety of settings where they will have the opportunity to observe, participate, examine and exercise leadership skills in a national organization. The program is named in honor of South African born Dr. Tsehloane C. Keto a dedicated, committed Africa-centered scholar and educator who was a powerful force in the fight for liberation and empowerment for all people of African descent. Breanne’s Role as a Keto Fellow is to serve as a voting member on the Board for two years and to work with other Keto Fellows to encourage more student participation at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Breanne’s vision for this year is to bring a larger number of students to the conference in 2013 to participate in activities and present their research findings to the academic community and inspire students to create a NCBS chapter here at the University of Florida.

Black Graduate Student Organization

Greetings All! My name is Vincent Adejumo and I am the President of the Black Graduate Student Organization. The Black Graduate Student Organization was founded in 1985 by graduate and professional students at the University of Florida. This organization was created in order to provide a comfortable social, academic, and cultural outlet for Black graduate and professional students on a predominately white campus. Twenty-six years later, BGSO continues to provide many opportunities for graduate and professional students of African, Caribbean, and African-American descent to network with each other and become involved at UF and in the surrounding community. The BGSO helps black graduate and professional students at UF and in the greater Gainesville community foster meaningful and lasting relationships that aid in academic achievement and success. This Fall 2012 semester, the BGSO has been very active in achieving the goal of fostering meaningful relationships amongst our general body. A few of the many activities that we have hosted this semester include the Welcome Back Social, Black Thought Lecture Series, LSU Crab boil Tailgate, and patronizing Ruby’s restaurant for the purposes of achieving our Supporting Black Businesses initiative. For the Spring 2013 semester the BGSO will be focused on our premier events which include the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Program, Valentine Soiree, and the End of the Year banquet. If you’d like to become a member of the BGSO and receive updates on our upcoming activities, please go to http://ufl.collegiatelink.net/organization/bgso and click join organization.
African Student Union

The African Student Union (ASU) at the University of Florida is a student-run organization that seeks to create an avenue for cross-cultural exchange. While promoting African issues and culture, ASU also inspires African and non-African students to be conscientious world citizens who create positive impacts in the local community of Gainesville and the continent through their participation in the group’s educational and philanthropic activities. There are several niches within the organization. The soccer team facilitates the building of camaraderie and interactions with other student organizations at UF, in Gainesville and beyond, in competitive and noncompetitive spheres. The award-winning, highly acclaimed dance team is an important cultural component, which serves as a representative across Florida. It provides students with an exhilarating, hands-on, cultural learning experience. Students in ASU are also highly involved in community service here in Gainesville and in various African countries. We work with organizations such as Ronald McDonald’s House, Adopt-a-Road, Southern Sudan Healthcare Organization and Sankofa Children’s Home to mention a few. In sum, ASU offers interested students an opportunity to discover new perspectives and represent their common roots proudly.

Contact: ufafrisu@gmail.com
Ambassador Outreach Program

We are a student run organization whose mission is to increase the diversity here at the University of Florida. As Ambassadors, we serve as liaisons between the Office of Admissions and potential students. We work with various middle school and high schools locally, as well as across the state of Florida, out of state and internationally. We encourage all students to obtain a secondary higher education even if it’s not with the University of Florida. The Outreach Ambassador Program prides itself on increasing diversity at the University of Florida and promoting higher education. The resources that we offer are offer tours, student panels, Q/A sessions and admission presentations to the different schools. We also conduct hometown visits, were ambassadors can go back to their hometown and talk about the University of Florida. Lastly, we offer real-life scenarios about what it’s like to not only be a UF student, but a college student as well.

Questions?
Contact: oapcampusliaisons@gmail.com

Institute of Black Culture

IBC, your home away from home, offers a variety of programs throughout the semester that are geared toward affirming and empowering Black students here at the University of Florida. These programs include:

Black Male Development Initiative (BMDI) and Black Women’s Image Initiative (BWII) - A collection of men and women respectively who aim to create a supportive community that offers students identity development, professionalism, and an aspect of mentoring.

IBCinema - A movie night that showcases various documentaries on the different aspects of Black culture.

Black Thought Lecture Series - Highlights the research being conducted by Black graduate students around the university.

Food 4 the Soul - A lunch series which takes on issues or trends that effect Black students in today's society and around campus.

Conversation’s with Black Faculty/Staff - A speed dating social which helps to connect students with Black Faculty/Staff on the campus of UF.

Cypher - A partnership with the Counseling and Wellness Center which allows students to be open and honest about personal issues they experience in their every day lives.

James E. Scott Black Student Leadership Conference - Provides current and rising student leaders with the skills and knowledge that can help them become effective leaders on campus and onward.

Latoya Hunter
IBC Graduate Assistant
latoyah@multicultural.ufl.edu
(352) 392-1217 x250
The mission of the Office of Academic Support is to provide programs and services that assist in the recruitment, retention and graduation of UF students. A primary focus is to serve students who are first generation, low income, AIM, or from underrepresented groups at UF, including, but not limited to, racial and ethnic minorities. We welcome all UF students and encourage their participation in our comprehensive programs and services that foster academic, professional and personal development. OAS strives to enrich the academic experience and inspire a commitment to excellence and life-

W. George Allen

W. George Allen, the first black student to ever graduate from the University of Florida in 1962 spoke at at the Fredric G. Levin College of Law law at UF in Gainesville event celebrating the 50th anniversary of his graduation on Friday October 12th. The event included speakers recounting the history leading to UF’s integration and the unveiling of a plaque in Allen's honor in the law school courtyard. Allen graduated from Florida A&M University and served two years in the Army before being accepted in 1960 into UF law school. He said the state of Florida offered to pay for him to attend law school elsewhere. He was accepted into schools ranked higher than UF, including Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley. But Allen decided to attend UF, where Virgil Hawkins had fought a nine-year legal battle to attend. Hawkins agreed to withdraw his application in exchange for UF allowing other black students to attend its graduate and professional schools. Allen spoke vividly of Hawkins and dedicated much of his speech to him. "You started a revolution, and Florida is better because of you and your good work." After graduating from UF, Allen moved to Fort Lauderdale. He established his own law practice there and helped lead the fight to integrate Broward County's public school system. Allen concluded his speech by saying his experience at UF was bittersweet because Hawkins was unable to attend. Other notable speakers at the event included U.S. District Court Judge Stephan Mickle, the first black undergraduate to earn a degree at UF and the law school's second black graduate.
### Spring 2013 Schedule

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Opportunity Corner


Hundreds of students from 117 colleges and universities just recently had the opportunity to experience the National Political Conventions in Tampa and Charlotte. Now, students and faculty will have a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of the U.S. Presidential Inauguration and witness history in the making and the political process in action – an experience that will open doors to students as they pursue their future careers.

Through site visits, tours, and special events, faculty and students from colleges across the country will have the unique opportunity to:

Witness history and democracy in action
Understand the media’s impact on the presidential campaigns
Build a professional network and explore potential career paths
Interact with nationally and internationally recognized leaders in politics and media

This program runs from January 12-22, 2012 in Washington, D.C. Students will have the unique opportunity to witness history and attend special events, including a reception at the National Press Club. The program fee of $1,995 includes housing and credit, when proper arrangements are made with your institution. For more information, please email C2012@twc.edu or see http://twc.edu/seminars/programs/inauguration.

Support the African American Studies Program

The African American Studies Program at the University of Florida depends upon gifts from alumni and friends to fund student and faculty travel, research, and lecture series. If you would like to support the program, please consider making your gift today. The University of Florida Foundation, Inc. is the steward of all private support of the University of Florida.

You can give online to The African American Studies Program Fund which makes it possible for the program to engage in extracurricular activities that promote community building and public programming. Private sources of funding increase our capacity for creating a supportive environment for interactions among students, faculty, and the wider community. Designate African American Studies account F008477.

One way to offer a specific contribution is to support the Harry Shaw Travel Fund which will make it possible for students to travel for research and conference presentations. Designate African American Studies and list F016689 to build this account.

The James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship Endowment Fund honors the memory of the late James Haskins (1941-2005), a former University of Florida Professor of English and a distinguished writer who interpreted the African American experience. In well over 100 books, he exposed children and youth readers to the biographies of leading African Americans and key aspects of Black culture, social history, and contemporary life. The scope of his writings also extended beyond Black America to other parts of the world. The James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship Endowment Fund provides the critical resources needed to enable African American Studies to host emerging and established scholars with research interests that complement some aspect of the scholarly agenda of faculty within the program. The African American Studies account code to build this fund is F013759/013760.

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Thank you for supporting our stability and growth!