



Chair's Update

A new school year and a new semester are already in full swing. The Clara Luper Department of African and African American Studies is delighted to have you as a part of our extended family as we venture collectively to seize the moment. Over the course of this academic year, our own part in this shared effort will involve mainly a strategic retooling of our course offerings and a redoubling of our continued effort to center AFAM as a physical and intellectual space for organized engagement with the challenges that beset efforts to think through and bring into effect a more humane and more just society.

I would like to impress upon you, our extended family, the fact that AFAM represents our collective investment toward the attainment of this goal. Your input as friends, colleagues, and students remains essential as we carry out our mission and continue to uphold the legacy of the esteemed Civil Rights leader and activist whose name is the standard that we bear in these trying times. We look forward to a semester laden with genuine, meaningful interactions with you that are to the enrichment of us all.

October 2022



Spring 2023 Courses

Intro to African and AFAM Studies (AFAM 2003) – Introduces students to African and African-American Studies at the University of Oklahoma, and at other institutions of higher education in the United States. Students will study the major ideas, concepts, problems, issues, research, and scholars in the field. Provides career focus and information for students who will major or minor in African and African-American Studies.

Africa and the Diaspora (AFAM 2113) – The course introduces students to the study of Africa and the dispersion of African people throughout the New World. Focus is placed upon the geographical and historical understanding of the continent of Africa and the identification of central causes of underdevelopment within the continent.

Blacks & The Movies (AFAM 4233)– Historical overview of the development of African American and African Diaspora cinema. Examines how film has been used to define the parameters of Black cultural and political identity, globally. Course will include readings in film studies and Black popular culture. Most films will be screened during class.

Prison Industrial Complex (AFAM 4813) –

The American prison industrial complex is a phenomenon with roots in American prison history, convict leasing, and the proliferation of prison industries. Designed to familiarize students with the phenomenon, how it came to exist, and the impact it has had and is having on American society in general, and on the African American community in particular.

Hip Hop & American Politics (AFAM 4970) – Hip Hop Culture and Contemporary America will explore the historical origins and development of hip hop as a musical genre in post-civil rights urban America to its emergence as a global culture movement in the 21st century. The overarching goal of the course will be to familiarize students with foundational readings and debates within hip hop studies.

The Black Athlete in America (AFAM 3453)– Provides students with a historical and contemporary overview of the Black athlete in American society. This course will underscore and examine the Black athlete from a social, political, and cultural perspective. Many of the misconceptions and deep-seated stereotypes of Black athletes both in intercollegiate athletics and professional sports will be uncovered. Additionally, perspectives will be gained on the changing status of Black athletes and how those changes have engendered the changing of sport, American society, and critical triumphs within Black culture.

AFAM Religious Traditions (AFAM 4633) – An anthropological and historical inquiry into the nature of the religious experience of Africans enslaved and involuntarily brought to the United States. Emphasis is placed upon the identification and understanding of the central cultural and religious practices and products form black peoples' experiences of the holy.

Gospel Music Past and Present (AFAM 3143) – African and African-American history as it relates to gospel music. The class correlates the climate and cultural history with various genres of music that led to gospel music. Individual artists are studied not in isolation but as part of the larger cultural context

Issues in AFAM Family (AFAM 4413) – The purpose of the class is to explore the inter- and intra-structural components of the African American family using an applied social systems and ecological approach. Great emphasis will be placed on historical and concurrent social, religious, political and economic factors that influence the psyche of both the family and in a broader sense a culture rooted in the Afrocentric paradigm.

Afrocentric Think/Civil Rights (AFAM 4713) – Examines afrocentric thinking and identifies key afrocentric patterns and strategies within the civil rights movement. Students will analyze African American leadership and how leaders brought afrocentric thinking to the forefront.



Dr. Andrea Benjamin is selected as the Director of OSLEP. Congratulations to our very own, Dr. Andrea Benjamin on her new role as Director of OSLEP. The Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program is sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and is administered for them by the University of Oklahoma. Learn more about the program here: <https://oslep.org/about/>



Beginning August 1, Dr. Karlos Hill began a new role as Advisor to the President for Community Engagement. Dr. Hill will help support the implementation of Lead On strategic plan as it relates to community engagement and external partnerships. Dr. Hill looks forward to working closely with university leaders across the University of Oklahoma system to advance community engagement efforts.



Dr. Kalenda Eaton was accepted into the inaugural cohort of the City of Norman Diversity Roundtable. The two-year committee, sponsored by the city's Office of Diversity & Equity "engages the public to form a group of Norman residents, representing various communities. The purpose of the group is to gather insight, develop new activities, provide direct 2-way communication for communities, and drive collaboration." The group focuses on civic initiatives dedicated to inclusion, implementing change, and networking with city leaders and offices in Norman.



In addition to researching and writing, Dr. Jeanette Davidson has been engaged in ongoing work with Glasgow City Council's BLM/Slavery Legacy Group. Also, she has recently been invited to serve on the advisory board of the independent Interim Governance Group (IGG) in Scotland, the purpose of which is to create an infrastructure for systemic change to support Scotland becoming an anti-racist society.



Dr. Thibodeaux had a busy summer and early start to the fall semester. He was one of 5 scholars chosen by the Journal of Southern History to workshop an article manuscript that contained themes related to the environmental and carceral histories of Texas. In early September, Dr. Thibodeaux also attended the Southern Labor Studies Association annual conference at the UNC-Chapel Hill where he presented work on the role of the Colored Farmers' Alliance in Texas and its early anti-convict labor positions. Dr. Thibodeaux was also one of four scholars to sit on a roundtable that addressed the history of policing/carceral state in the South. He provided an overview of his own work in this area and offered comments that addressed glaring gaps in the existing scholarship, mainly focusing on how Texas is usually left out of the conversation about the South.

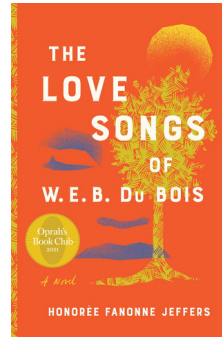
African Aesthetics will be offered in Summer 2023 as Study Abroad Option

In summer 2023, Dr. Eaton will offer “AFAM 3133: Introduction to African Aesthetics” as part of the Northern Uganda study abroad program, sponsored by the College of International Studies. The course will emphasize intersections between African feminist practices, activism, and creative expression. Readings will focus on African visual art, storytelling, literature, music, and film across the continent, with special attention to western, southern, and eastern Africa. Students enrolled in the course and study abroad program will participate in a service-learning activity with the annual Women's Peace Conference for community leaders in Gulu, Uganda. For more information about the course and program costs, contact Dr. Eaton at (k.eaton1@ou.edu) or Education Abroad at OU https://www.ou.edu/cis/education_abroad. Tentative dates: June 7-June 28, 2023.



**We salute AFAM Affiliate Honoree Fanonne Jeffers featured in
Sooner Magazine**

<https://sooneromag.oufoundation.org/stories/the-love-songs-of-honoree-fanonne-jeffers>



As an addition to its other noteworthy accolades, Dr. Jeffers' debut novel, *The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois* has been selected as the winner of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. The official press release can be found at

<https://lithub.com/honoree-fanonne-jeffers-and-clint-smith-have-won-the-dayton-literary-peace-prize/>

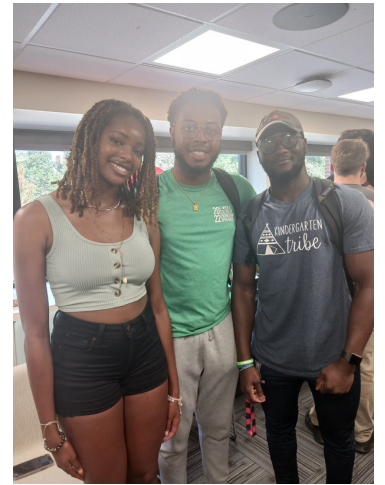


The first piece of Karina Cunningham's exhibition is now set up on our floor (3) in Cate 2. We will display pieces from the exhibition both in the fall and spring semesters. We hope that you can stop by and see it in person.

The artist Karina Cunningham will visit the OU School of Visual Arts virtually from 5-6 pm on Tuesday, October 4 to discuss her exhibition Karina Cunningham's Playhouse, now on view in the Spotlight Gallery of the Fred Jones Center, 520 Parrington Oval, on the first floor near the elevator. Olivia von Gries, a Ph.D. student in art history at OU and the current Kerr Fellow at the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of the Art of the American West, will moderate.

AFAM HOSTS SEMESTER WELCOME BACK EVENT

We were excited to welcome back our students, Faculty, and staff for another great semester! The event was full of food, fellowship and AFAM swag.



African Student Association



We are excited to be advisors for the African Student Association (AFSA) for another year. Stay up to date with their events here:

https://linktr.ee/OUAFSA?utm_source

AFAM Co-Sponsored Events



WHAT IS THE AWAKENING”?

OU's Black Student Association strives to create a home environment for all of our students that can be celebrated for years and years after the undergraduate career. This theme of this year's BSA Homecoming is "The Awakening", where we awaken the true life and excitement of the OU Black community and highlight the rich history.