AAST Bulletin 2016

Hello!

Our energetic students and dedicaed faculty work together on a variety of endeavors both within and beyond the classroom, ranging from original research projects, to community arts initiatives.

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Jane Rhodes

Head of Department

Dear African American Studies Students, Faculty and Alumni,

Welcome to a new academic year! We look forward to challenging and timely courses, lectures and presentations by scholars and activists, and ample opportunities for everyone to discuss the numerous issues that confront our communities. The City of Chicago is home to a vibrant and diverse African American and African diaspora population that have been an incubator and launching site for black protest and critical engagement, political leadership, and groundbreaking arts, music, literature, research, public policy, and numerous other accomplishments. The African American Studies Department at UIC is committed to training our students to be acute critical thinkers and influential community actors; our goal is to benefit from the rich resources of Chicago's black heritage and to contribute to and enhance that heritage.

This will be a year of continued financial and political challenges, as well as the daily crises of violence, economic inequality, and criminal justice that plague not only Chicago, but much of the nation. This makes an education in African American Studies more necessary now than at any time in recent history. We cannot solve today's problems without a thorough understanding of the past. We cannot find solutions to the problem of race in America without deep and critical analysis of our institutions. We invite you to join us in this vital project. Take our courses. Participate in programs. Send suggestions for activities. Propose collaborations. Spread the word. Together, we can make a difference.

Recent Graduates!

Travell Williams **Mikita Lee** **Zorgie Sanchez**

Not Pictured:

Demaria Tinsley **Keyira Jones** **Tierra Bradford**

Year *in* Review

Empire Discussion Sept. 16, 2015

Conversations on Katrina with Cedric Johnson & Christopher Manning November 4, 2015

Spike Lee's Film Discussion January 27, 2016

Thomas Allen Harris Screening Feb. 25, 2016

Nicole Franklin Luncheon & Charlene Carruthers Lecture March 2, 2016

Alicia Garza Lecture April 5, 2016

Amanda Lewis Professor of African American Studies

In fall 2015, Amanda was annouced as the new director of IRRPP and published her co-authored book "Despire the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools. In summer 2016 she was honored with the Eduardo Bonilla-Silva Outstanding Book Award. She was also promoted to full professor.

David Stovall Professor of African American Studies and Educational Policy Studies

In spring 2016 David published "Born Out of Struggle: Critical Race Theory, School Creation, and the Politics of Interruption (Suny Series, Praxis: Theory in Action)." In spring 2016 he also co-authored a study on black college students and mental health which can be read here.

Barbara Ransby Professor of African American Studies, Gender & Women's Studies, and History

On April 26, 2016 Barbara was honored with the LAS Distinguished Professor Award. She also created a new Black Lives Matter summer course with Charlene Carruthers of Black Youth Project 100.

Johari Jabir Associate Professor of African American Studies

Johari was promoted to associate professor and wreceived the LAS Dean Award for Research in the Humanities for his work on "Dorsey Convention: Gospel Archive and Oral History."

At IRRPP Book Party, January 2016

Faculty Spotlight: **Professor Amanda Lewis**

Dr. Lewis' research focuses on how race shapes educational opportunities and how our ideas about race get negotiated in everyday life. She is the author of Race in the Schoolyard: Negotiating the Color-line in Classrooms and Communities (2003). She is the co-editor (with Maria Krysan) of The Changing Terrain of Race and Ethnicity (2004), and co-author (with Mark Chesler and Jim Crowfoot) of Challenging Racism in Higher Education: Promoting Justice (2005). She also published (with John Diamond) Despite the Best Intentions: Why racial inequality persists in good schools (Oxford, 2015).

Continued...

Q: Could you discuss your undergraduate experience?
A: I had a meandering journey in my college career. I went in thinking I would be a high school chemistry teacher and so started out as a chemistry major. But then I discovered I really liked physical chemistry instead of organic chemistry. So I got more and more interested in the teaching part of it. The institution I went to at the time had a pretty open curriculum. So there were lots of opportunities to create an individualized major of sorts. So I majored in Educational Studies and ended up taking a lot of interdisciplinary classes in African American Studies and Urban Studies and various social sciences...

For more on this interview click here.

With Beth Richie, Professor of African American Studies & Criminology, Law & Justice, Author Cathy Cohen and Katherine Acey, co-founder and Executive Director emeritus of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

Student Spotlight: **Ash Stephens**

Ash at a Hull House panel, Sept. 2014

Ash is a PHD student in the Department of Criminology, Law & Justice & a TA in the Department of African American Studies. On March 3, he received the Grace Holt Award from our department based on his contributions to volunteer organizations that have held true to "analysis, education, and organizing around tightly interconnected issues of racial justice and gender justice by focusing on issues that disproportionately affect African American women and gender non-conforming people, as well as African American people involved with the criminal legal system," said Ash.

Continued...

Q. Where are you from? How did this inform the way you were raised?

A. I was born in Warner Robins, GA, I lived in the Atlanta, Georgia area most of my life, but I spent about 6-7 years in Texas as a kid too. I think growing up Black in the South influenced a lot of how I was raised. I grew up learning about Black people's contributions to the American South, in particular. I grew up with easy access to parks and outside sports and activities that allowed me to explore a range of possibilities. I think this also gave me a different kind of independence. Growing up close in distance (for most of my life) and in connection to most of my family also informed how I bond with people, I think.

For more on this interview click here.

Ash, Dr. Angela Davis, and Dr. Beth Richie at the INCITE! Color of Violence 4 Conference, March 2015

Student Spotlight: **Travell Williams**

Travell showing a photo of himself as a child at the Thomas Allen Harris lecture, Feb. 25, 2016

Travell Williams is a senior African American Studies major who received the 2016 Grace Holt Departmental Award for his contributions to public service. He co-founded the Sankofa Fellowship in the North Lawndale Library which aims to bring together community members in support of them learning to read around black texts. He has also worked in partnership with the Department of African American Studies to collect archives on Grace Holt.

Continued...

Travell with Department Head Jane Rhodes at the Thomas Allen Harris Lecture, Feb. 25 2016

Q. Where are you from? How did this inform the way you were raised?
A. In a geographical sense I was born in Chicago, IL. In a cultural sense I am from the south (non specifically Montgomery, AL). The map is somewhere between my tongue and heart.

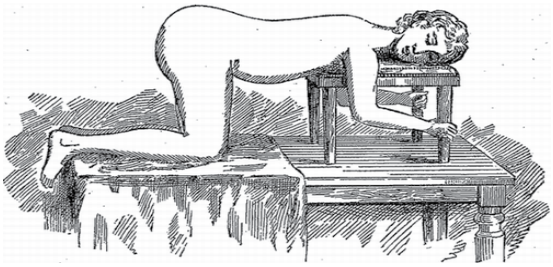
For more on this interview click here.

Upcoming Events!

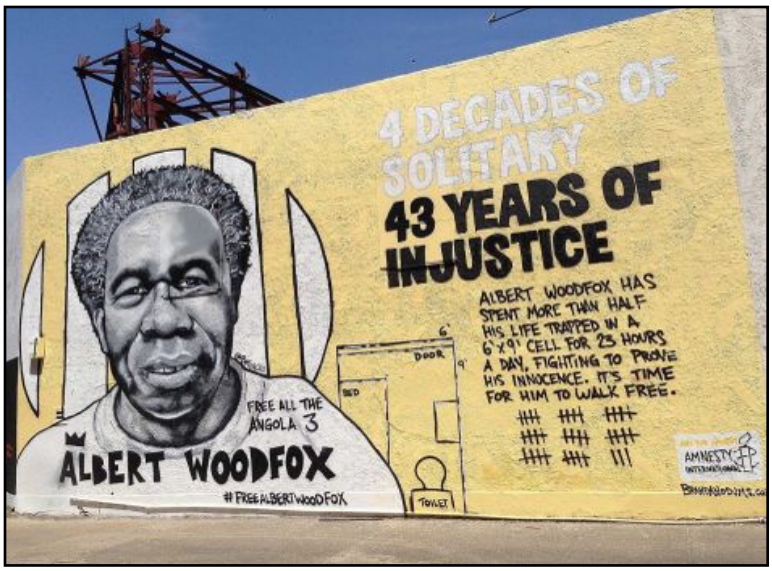
Souls Journal presents...

SOULFUL THURSDAYS
October 13, 2016
12-1PM
UH Room 125
601 S. Morgan

Read Souls' recent issue "Black Women's Labor: Economics, Culture and Politics," Vol. 18 #1 here.



Please mark your calendar and feel free to bring your lunch. Refreshments will also be provided.



A Conversation with Albert Woodfox
Wednesday, Sept. 21, 6-8PM
Gallery 400, 400 S Peoria St.
Event link here.

Join the Social Justice Initiative as Woodfox speaks on his journey for justice in conversation with Beth Richie.

Stay in touch!

aast.uic.edu