

# AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES NEWS

## Director's Welcome

Greetings, interested reader!

As Director of African American Studies at UNCG, it is my honor to welcome you to our corner of the Black Studies world.

Since the end of the Spring 2011 semester, AFS faculty members have received university funding to present our research in the United States, Africa, and England. Our engagement with scholars from various parts of the world not only better informs our research, but also allows us the opportunity to inform colleagues of the work we do at UNCG. In addition, we have also participated in local and state academic meetings.

Needless to say, this semester has been a busy one for AFS majors and faculty. In November, AFS Ambassadors worked with Bruce Holland and me to organize a successful conference that had a record 211 people from UNCG and the community registered. Three UNCG students read papers along with a student from Bennett College for Women. Additionally, the enthusiastic AFS Ambassadors assisted me in recruiting students at campus-sponsored events. Their energy and ideas have proven valuable in making the Program more visible to current and potential UNCG students.

In addition to our annual conference, the Program hosted three Conversations with the Community. Following these, we organized a special roundtable discussion on "Race, Class, Politics, and the Occupy Movement" and Lecturer Logie Meachum directed his African American Poetry students in dramatic poetry readings.



Director, Dr. Tara T. Green

*"We are preparing leaders whose understanding of race, class, and gender through their historical, literary, political, and cultural studies will prepare them for success in an increasingly diverse world."*

One of our major accomplishments was to earn a \$20,000 planning grant focused on organizing a summer workshop for teachers. I, along with Dr. Omar Ali, are working with faculty from North Carolina A&T, Winston-Salem State, and Wake Forest to develop a grant proposal for submission to a national foundation.

Despite the cuts to UNCG's budget, we have been able to continue our efforts to offer UNCG students a competitive academic experience. Many are now preparing their applications for graduate and law school. Read further to learn the details of our accomplishments.

Best to all,

Tara T. Green, PhD

Director & Associate Professor

## AFS SPRING 2011 CONVOCATION – CELEBRATING STUDENTS



Congratulations Spring 2011 AFS!!

## AFS SPRING 2011 CONVOCATION SPECIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS



Zhayawna Johnson (*2010-2011 Outstanding AFS Student of the Year award*), Courtney Suggs (*Outstanding Student Essay*) Teshone Jones and Deryle Daniels Jr. (*Outstanding Seniors of the Year*)

Congratulations to our Fall 2011 graduates **Proudy Bailey, Angela Mitchell, Angel Chapman White, Cherrill Moore, Steve Parker, Chanron Sok, and LaTavia Walker!!**



## Student in the Spotlight



**Yasmeen Chism** is a double major in African American Studies and Women's and Gender Studies who plans to graduate in May 2012.

Yasmeen was accepted into the City Year program 2012-2013 and has been selected to read a paper she wrote in the AFS Seminar at the Popular Studies Conference in Boston, MA.

She has been a very active student. She is an AFS Ambassador and also a research assistant for the director of AFS as part of the Triad Interuniversity Project Planning Grant.

"What I have enjoyed most as an AFS major is the amount of intellectual growth my professors have helped foster. In classes I have not only been challenged through class readings and writings but through our class discussions as well. As far as future goals, I hope to attend graduate school for Women's and Gender Studies with a focus on Black feminist theory. I enjoy research on Black female aesthetics as well as the hip hop industry. The program has many classes that cause students to think critically about community issues which may ignite change."

## AFS Receives \$20,000 Planning Grant

**Drs. Tara T. Green** (PI) and **Omar Ali** have teamed up with professors from North Carolina A&T, Winston-Salem State and Wake Forest University to plan an institute for 7-12 grade teachers during the summer of 2013. The team, which regularly meets at the International Civil Rights Museum and Center, is developing a workshop that will expose teachers to Black leadership in Africa, Latin America, the Indian Ocean, and the United States.

Dr. Green submitted the Triad Interuniversity Project Planning grant proposal (TIPP) in March and it has been funded by Wake Forest as part of a joint initiative between the four universities to promote collaboration and interdisciplinarity. In addition to the scholars work, AFS major Yasmeen Chism, has been hired as a student research assistant. "I am pleased to have this opportunity to work with other Black Studies colleagues in the Piedmont area. Our collaboration has provided each of us with the opportunity to learn more about various areas of research," said Dr. Green. To support the workshop, the team plans to submit a proposal to a national foundation.



## Conversations Series

The African American Studies Program sponsored three Conversations with the Community this semester. In September, Program Affiliate Dr. Cerise Glenn (Communication Studies) led a discussion, "Still in Love and in Trouble Examining Gender Norms: Violence in Tyler Perry's Romantic Comedic Films," to a packed room. She led the audience in an analysis of the gender roles in Tyler Perry's films. Poet Demetrius Noble led the discussion, "Even Though What We Do is Wrong: Defining, Unpacking & Troubling 'Gangsta Rap'" in October. Noble asked the audience to discuss various hip-hop artists, such as Jay-Z and Ice Cube, and to define the relationship between power, race, masculinity, and privilege. In November, Professors Sarah Cervenak (WGS, AFS), George Dimock, (Art, AFS Affiliate) and Frank Woods (AFS) led a discussion on representations of African Americans in art. Inspired by an exhibit in the Weatherspoon Museum, the professors encouraged the audience to analyze works by artists such as Leonardo Drew and Kara Walker. This Conversation was co-hosted with the Weatherspoon and drew a significant number of community members. Check [www.uncg.edu/afs](http://www.uncg.edu/afs) for more information on the Spring series.

### Conversations with the Community Sponsored by UNCG's African American Studies Program

Tuesday, Sept 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011

6:00-7:30 pm

EUC, Kirkland Room

*Still in Love and in Trouble:  
Examining Gender Norms and  
Violence in Tyler Perry's  
Romantic Comedic Films*

Discussion led by:

Dr. Cerise L. Glenn



Contact [afs@uncg.edu](mailto:afs@uncg.edu)  
for more information



Cerise L. Glenn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is also an affiliate faculty member of the African American Studies program. Her research interests center on social constructions of difference (diversity), particularly identity negotiation and representations of underrepresented groups in organizational and mass-mediated contexts. She earned her doctorate in Intercultural Communication at Howard University and her Master's of Science in Organizational Communication from North Carolina State University.

### A Conversation with the Community: *Even Though What We Do is Wrong: Defining, Unpacking & Troubling "Gangsta Rap"* Sponsored by

UNCG's African American Studies Program

A Discussion led by

Demetrius Noble

Tuesday

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011

UNCG Elliot University  
Center,

Kirkland Room

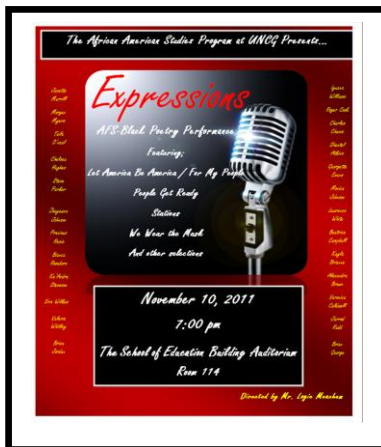
At 6:00 pm



Contact [afs@uncg.edu](mailto:afs@uncg.edu) for more  
information

This interactive, multimedia presentation and discussion will explore the various uses of and investments in what hip hop has defined as "gangsta." We will query gangsta's philosophical roots and epistemological merits. The presentation and discussion will be guided by the following inquiries: In what ways does gangsta inform cultural identity, specifically at the loaded nexus of blackness and masculinity. What is gangsta as form? As ideology? Is it culturally and politically sustainable?





**CACE Expressions:** As an opening to the annual conference, on November 10, 2011 the fall AFS Black Poetry class taught by Lorenzo Meachum held the poetry performance: "Expressions." Some students gave dramatic presentations of poems that were analyzed in class, while others sang and presented their own work. This event highlighted the various talents of our UNCG students.



Ashanti White presenting her poetry


With the aid of the AFS Ambassadors, majors, and Bruce Holland, the AFS faculty hosted another successful conference. Focused on the theme, "The Black South: From the Reconstruction Period to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on African American Experience and Culture (CACE) featured panel discussions on the activities of African Americans in the South as activists, artists, fiction writers, and leaders. Dr. Omar Ali (AFS) organized a panel discussion titled, "Independent Black Politics in the New South." Dr. Sarah Cervenak (WGS & AFS) organized a panel discussion titled, "Black/South Performances and Art 'After' Slavery." UNCG students Charles Chavis Jr., Erica McNeil, Kayla Brienne, and Bennet College student Kinyatta Dodson presented their essays on southern Black female experiences. "I have to say that it was truly an empowering experience. I learned so much from my fellow peers and members of the African American Studies Program," said AFS major Charles Chavis Jr. Following the presentations, the conference hosted its Literary Café, which featured poetry readings from AFS alumna Ashanti White, storytelling by AFS instructor Lorenzo Meachum, and a personal experience reading from Dr. Sandra Govan. The event closed with a keynote address by Dr. Chester J. Fontenot Jr., chair of Africana Studies at Mercer University. Fontenot focused on the meaning of the south to African Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. CACE had a record 211 people registered. *The Carolina Peacemaker* printed a story on the conference.

## AFS Core & Affiliated Faculty News

UNCG'S AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PRESENTS

We are the 99%?:  
Occupy Movement, Race, Class, & Politics

LOCATION: UNCG'S SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION BLDG, AUDITORIUM,  
ROOM 120 (CORNER OF SPRING  
GARDEN AND STERLING ST.)  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011  
TIME: 6:00 TO 7:30PM



What is the Occupy Movement? What influence will it have on the upcoming elections? Panelists will discuss the significance of the local and national movement from diverse opinions.

Panelists include Dr. Omar Ali, African American Studies Program, and Ed Whitfield, Sierra Dennis, and Lamar Gibson, Occupy Movement Activists.

For more information, please call AFS at 334-5507 or visit our website at [www.uncg.edu/afa](http://www.uncg.edu/afa)



On October 31, 2011, the African American Studies Program hosted a discussion on the Occupy Movement. The panel titled, "**We are the 99%?: Occupy Movement, Race, Class, and Politics**," drew a large and diverse crowd of students and community members. The panelists were Occupy activists, Sierra Dennis, Lamar Gibson, and Ed Whitfield, joined by Dr. Omar Ali. Moderated by Robert Randolph, AFS adjunct lecturer, the panelists answered questions about the impact of the movement on upcoming political races and the current political climate, how it appeals to (or not) African Americans, and the aims of the movement. In response to a video clip where Angela Davis spoke of her excitement about the Occupy Movement, Ed Whitfield, an African American Studies Advisory Board member and local activist, stated that he sees this as the most important movement of his lifetime. *The Carolina Peacemaker* published an article on the panel and Dr. Ali later received an invitation to speak on the implications of politics on the radio show, "The State of Things." (See link on AFS website under AFS in the News.) As we move closer to the 2012 national elections, we look forward to having more discussions on race relations, the political climate, and class status.

### Upcoming Spring Events

"Independent Voters and African Americans in the 2012 Election: Will there be another 'Black and Independent Alliance'?"

Patricia Sullivan Science Building, room 200, Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm

Conversations with the Community: Dr. Bill Hart will discuss "Afro-Eccentricity: Beyond the Standard Narrative of Black Religion"

Petty Building, room 136, Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 at 6:00pm

**Dr. Omar Ali** gave interviews on both NPR and CBS News affiliate Channel 2 to discuss the role of 'unaffiliated' voters in the upcoming elections and wrote an op-ed for the *Greensboro News & Record* titled, "Discrimination Denies Independent Voters Fair Access." He also appeared on CNN in August. See [uncg.edu/afs](http://uncg.edu/afs) for links to these interviews.

**Dr. Sarah Jane Cervenak** (WGS & AFS) has presented papers at the Canadian American Studies Association and at the Conference on African American Culture and Experience (CACE) in African American Studies. Her on-campus presentations have been a part of the Conversations with the Community series and the WGS Film Series. She has also had a review essay on *Travel, Humanitarianism and Becoming American in Africa* by Kathryn Mathers accepted for publication by *Transitions* magazine (W.E.B Institute for African and African American Research, Harvard). Her book manuscript is now under contract with Duke University Press.

On September 20, 2011 **Dr. Tara T. Green** presented a paper, "Looking for Love in *The Color Purple*: Harpo, Sofia, and Oprah," at a conference focused on gender and love in Oxford, England. She has signed a contract to co-edit, *Introduction to Africana Studies*, with Dr. Chester Fontenot Jr. Some of the proceeds from the book sales will be donated to the AFS Enrichment Fund for students. Her article, "Not Just Paul's Wife: Alice Dunbar's Literature and Activism," has been accepted for publication in the *Langston Hughes Review*. Additionally, her article, "The Virgin Mary, Eve, and Mary Magdalene in Richard Wright's Novels," originally published in the *CLA Journal* in 2002, has been republished in Harold Bloom's *Richard Wright*.

On September 20, 2011, **Mr. Michael Cauthen** spoke at the Office of Multicultural Affairs' Contemporary Issues Forum on "The Truth about Race and Intelligence." He also led a discussion for the Food for Thought Series of the Lloyd International Honors College titled, "Thought Experiments from the Edge of Infinity: how discoveries of twin Earths and Parallel Universes may profoundly alter our understanding of ourselves." On Sep 30<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Cauthen's paper titled, "*A Call for a Manhattan-Project Style Attack on Racial Scholastic Achievement Gaps*," was published in the SAPES (South Atlantic Philosophy of Education Society) 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Yearbook.

**Dr. William Hart's** (Religious Studies, AFS affiliate) third book, *Afro-Eccentricity: Beyond the Standard Narrative of Black Religion*, was published in the spring. His first book, *Edward Said and the Religious Effects of Culture*, was translated into Arabic.

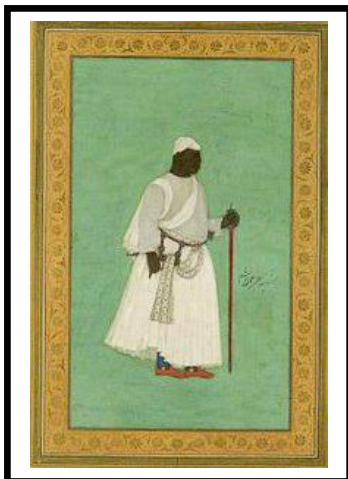


Dr. Green presenting at Mansfield College, Oxford



**Dr. Ali at the University of Dar es Salaam**

Historian and ethnographer **Dr. Omar H. Ali** traveled to East Africa in August 2011 to give a series of lectures and conduct research for his work on Islam and the African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean world. His first talk was at Addis Ababa University on the life of Malik Ambar, a seventeenth-century Ethiopian who rose from slavery to become a ruler in India. Dr. Ali's research in Ethiopia included archival work through the Institute for Ethiopian Studies and at the national archives.



**"Malik Ambar, 17<sup>th</sup> c. Deccan, India"**

From Ethiopia, Dr. Ali traveled to Tanzania, where he gave the Julius Nyerere Research Chair in Pan-African Studies Lecture, "Black Soldiers, Black Servants: The Muslim African Diaspora from South Asia to South America," at the University of Dar es Salaam. Dr. Ali next traveled to the island of Zanzibar, where he was hosted by the eminent East African scholar Dr. Abdul Sheriff, who took him through Stone Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and with whom he conducted oral history in English and Kiswahili of older members of the multicultural Muslim community (comprised of mainland Africans and immigrant South Asians, and their descendants). Dr. Ali's talk at the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute, which was attended by a cross-section of scholars, was based on his Schomburg exhibit. The exhibit has been adopted by the United Nations as part of the "Year of People of African Descent." Secretary General Ban Ki-moon provided the opening remarks for the launching of the exhibit at U.N. headquarters in New York City (while Dr. Ali was traveling).

Dr. Ali's work in East Africa has not only been a vital part of his next two book projects underway--*Islam in the Indian Ocean World: A Documentary History* (under contract with Bedford St. Martin's Press) and *Malik Ambar: From Ethiopian Slave to Ruler in India* (under contract with Westview Press)--it has also helped to inform the content of both his courses: "The Making of the African Diaspora," and Spring special topics course, "Islam, Africa, and the Diaspora."

# Post Baccalaureate Certificate in African American

## Online or On Campus

### About the Program

While earning a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in African American Studies at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, students will engage the significance of race, gender, and class in America, and develop theoretical, historical, and political foundations in the study of African Americans. Emerging and leading scholars from various academic backgrounds teach each course. The program provides support to students wishing to pursue African American Studies at the advanced graduate level.

### Who Should Apply?

- Currently enrolled graduate students at UNCG
- People with undergraduate or graduate *degrees in any field*
- Those with careers or seeking careers in education, business, non-profit organizations, and social services are encouraged to apply.
- Deadline to apply is February 15, 2012

### Admission Requirements

*All documents must be sent to UNCG's Graduate School.*

- At minimum, must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and must have been admitted by The Graduate School.
- Students already enrolled in a UNCG graduate program do not need to reapply for graduate admission, but must apply for admission to this program.
- All applicants must complete a two-page statement (approximately 500 words) describing why they are interested in pursuing a Post-Baccalaureate certificate in African American Studies, fill out an application form, send two letters of reference, and pay the non-refundable application fee.
- GRE is not required.

For more information, visit: <http://www.uncg.edu/afs> or <http://www.uncg.edu/grs>

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FACEBOOK!!!

## SUPPORT UNCG'S AFS PROGRAM

We hope that you will support our Program by making a tax-deductible donation. Your gift to AFS allows us to build our scholarship fund, to support students in need, or provide funding for our students to study abroad and/or attend conferences.

**To support AFS, please send your donation to** Advancement Services 1100 W. Market Street P.O. Box 26170 Greensboro, NC 27402 clearly marked for UNCG African American Studies Enrichment Fund or give on-line at [http://www.uncg.edu/ur/studentsfirst/give\\_now.html](http://www.uncg.edu/ur/studentsfirst/give_now.html). If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact us. No donation is too large or too small!

### Can't give money, how about your time?

We are expanding our internship program. If you own a business, especially a law office or a non-profit, that serves a significant number of African Americans and are interested in sharing your professional expertise with AFS majors, please contact Dr. Tara T. Green at [afs@uncg.edu](mailto:afs@uncg.edu) or 336-334-5507.

### AFS's Mission

The African American Studies Program (AFS) advances the university's commitment to diverse perspectives and inclusive learning environments through course offerings, programming, and community involvement. It fosters interdisciplinary study for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students by examining how people of African descent have shaped our world. As a program located in a city with a history of Black sociopolitical movements, we provide a forum to engage the complexities of Black life across African diasporas.  
Visit: [www.uncg.edu/afs](http://www.uncg.edu/afs)

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