

# AAS *Newsletter*

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES AT  
YORK COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



## *Celebrating 25 Years of the African American Resource Center*

On February 25, as part of Black History Month, York College celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> year of African American Studies and the African American Resource Center. Leaders in the greater Jamaica community joined forces with some of York College's finest faculty and alumni to issue a challenge to the current generation of students and community at York College to carry on the legacy of community empowerment and activism.

Reverend Charles Norris led off with an invocation, and a powerful speech recalling the history of the college's founding. Norris and other Black clergy leaders led a series of protests: sit-ins and a march to

Borough Hall to bring the new CUNY campus to South Queens, to its current home of Jamaica. The civil rights movement provided a good background, as Jamaica and South Queens is home to a large and politically active African American and Caribbean community. Norris pledged continued support in the revitalization of the Center.

The Drama Club presented a segment of a performance of a stirring *I Am Pan Africa*, a play encouraging dialogue and collaboration. *I Am Pan Africa* was performed for the campus community at large.

York College AAS Alumnae Beatrice P. Mills-Henry gave a riveting one-woman perform-





ance piece discussing the Middle Passage from the point of view of a boat captain's assistant rounding up the slaves. Once the slave master was out of the picture the narrative switched to people's resistance and pride.

Jonathan Quash and the Gospel Choir led the group in "Lift Every Voice and Sing," the "Black National Anthem" by James Weldon Johnston. Following this they performed another number.

The U.S. Census Bureau was represented by Haitian American Elsy Guibert. Guibert brought informational materials and t-shirts. She also

discussed the importance of filling out the survey, particularly for racial minority groups that tend to be excluded and underrepresented from public service and government. A discussion ensued about the perceptions of fear by immigrant people and also the inherent arbitrariness of the racial categories.

York College Distinguished Lecturer Ron Daniels ended the event giving a typically energetic and powerful presentation about the history of the struggle for equal rights. Daniels impressed upon the crowd the importance of unity and of staying organized. Daniels used his own career of

activism as well as the story of the Haitian Revolution to illustrate.

The event energized the people in attendance, particularly students. Assistant Director of Campus Activities Anthony Andrews, the event's MC, also spoke of the history of organizing at York College. Andrews was one of the original leaders of the African American Studies Club, and he invited students to continue the effort and revive the club. Students who are interested in joining the AAS club can either stop by the Center or e-mail [aandrews@york.cuny.edu](mailto:aandrews@york.cuny.edu)

***Stop by the newly-remodeled Center! It's there for your use: books, computers, original manuscripts, and meeting space. Hours on the calendar.***



## Mapping African History: Fieldtrip to the New York Public Library

Jackie Southern

On Saturday, February 27, students in Introduction to Africa (AAS172M) went on a field trip to the Map Division of the New York Public Library, where we met on the main steps between the library's iconic lions Patience and Fortitude.

The purpose of our trip was manifold. At the simplest level, it was to introduce students to an unparalleled resource in the city for their research. Students are both pursuing individual research on specific countries and working in groups to prepare presentations on the regions of Africa. In addition, the trip was meant to illustrate and elaborate on questions of epistemology and method. Maps—prepared over time by different kinds of mapmakers for different kinds of purposes—leave an important record of knowledge, perception, bias, and self-interest in representations of Africa. What assumptions underlie today's received wisdom? What sorts of representation have shaped both common and scholarly ideas of Africa, and whose needs have they served? How have changing relationships of power affected forms of knowledge about Africa?

Nancy Kandoian and Artis Wright, two librarians of the Map Division (most commonly known simply as the “map room”), welcomed us warmly. It was their first time hosting a tour for York College students and, as Artis pointed out, his own first chance to delve into the library's Africa collection. As cartographic specialists, they were very familiar with the “maps and power” theme in scholarship, and Artis had prepared for the tour by pulling about twenty vivid and telling examples of both historical and contemporary European and American maps of Africa. Our tour was scheduled before opening hours so that they were able to give us their undivided attention. When we arrived, the maps were already laid out flat on long tables: a perfect selection illustrating the state of European knowledge about the world before and during the Renaissance; maps illustrating both imagined and charted Africa during the Age of Exploration and the colonial encounter; maps developed for wide-ranging social, political, and economic purposes, including the partition of

Africa and Europeans' resource exploitation during the colonial era; and contemporary ethnographic maps of the peoples whose customary territorial rights often differ from the bounds of the postcolonial nations. After a guided tour of the tables, the students were encouraged to wander among them, looking at the maps more carefully.



In addition, the students were introduced to how to use the map room's resources. Artis demonstrated the use of the digital database, which consists of a gallery of maps that students can download for their papers and presentations. He also showed them how to use Google Earth to look at their individual countries more closely, and demonstrated use of new software that lets them reposition maps on the globe on Google Earth, correcting for the distortions in flat maps and producing some extraordinarily beautiful, printable maps for student use.

Many more maps are in the library's collection than can be found in the database. Nancy showed students how to use the library catalogue to search for maps of interest, and she led them into the inner recesses of the map room where maps are filed in flat cases. She discussed the multiple potential uses of maps in their research, not just to determine location but to study social questions like distributions of income or health, changing characteristics of a place over time, and other possibilities.

The students reported afterward that they found the map room a pretty fascinating place. They liked the display of maps, and they were very happy to learn about the wealth of research resources they could use easily, for free, in person or on line. Artis announced that he would maintain all the maps he had pulled in a folder for York

College; anyone can go in for the rest of the semester and ask to view that folder. In addition, he sent everyone home with two cartobibliographies he had compiled for the students on maps and map scholarship on Africa.

## Macarthur Recipient Edwidge Danticat Electrifies York College



Photo: Karen Clements, Jamaica Examiner

On Monday, September 14, world renowned Haitian American novelist Edwidge Danticat – awarded a prestigious Macarthur Fellowship a week later – shared an intimate evening of her powerful writing at York College’s Performing Arts Center. Kicking off the year’s Provost’s Distinguished Lecture Series, Danticat was brought to campus by the African American Resource Center and co-sponsored by the English, Foreign Languages, and Social Sciences Departments. Outside of York College,

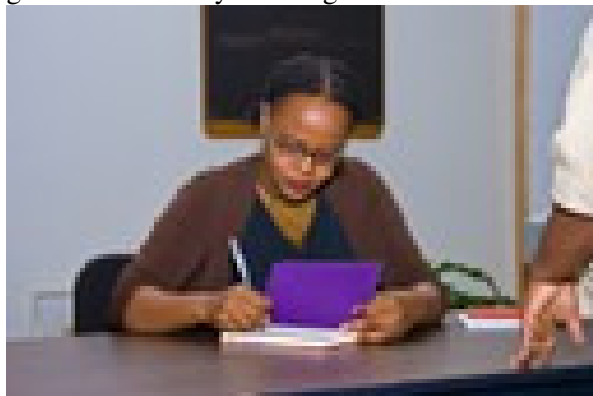
a hearty reception of Haitian food was provided by Good Taste Catering with generous contributions from Fonkoze, HABETAC, Haiti Support Project, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, the Lambi Fund of Haiti, and Tèt Ansanm Productions.

As Karen Clements wrote, “Edwidge Danticat was an apropos choice to open York College’s Distinguished Scholars lecture series. Edwidge

works are far reaching yet representative of the Jamaica Queens York College Community which struggles with many of the themes in her writings – racism, displacement, negative images and mistreatment.

For the lecture, Edwidge read three short pieces, one as yet unpublished and two from her noted works *Brother I'm Dying* and *The Farming of the Bones*. They were brought to life in front of a rapt audience through her tone inflections and the personal history connected to each work. The lecture included questions from participants and neither her noted status nor accolades and awards inhibited her from connecting to audience members of shared experiences. She graciously received thanks and admiration of participants and encouraged one woman of a similar Haitian background to know her core self as a means to dispel surrounding negativity. She had sound advice for potential writers, shared her own writing processes and administered sage advice thoughtfully and with care. Edwidge was a living testimony to successfully overcoming ones circumstances.”

The interest both at York College and in the greater community was so great that we had to



move from the Little Theatre to accommodate the well-over-capacity crowd, which Performing Arts Center staff accomplished without a hitch. City Council Member Comrie presented Danticat with a proclamation honoring her for her life's work and contribution to the Haitian community and New York overall.

Author of many books and recipient of many awards, Danticat's recent work centers on the

politics of memory, self-making, self-representation, and reconciliation. Danticat read from several of her works, including *the Farming of Bones*, a powerful testimony to the 1937 massacres of Haitian people at the hands of Dominican dictator Trujillo and her most recent work, autobiographical *Brother I'm Dying*.



*Brother, I'm Dying*, is a powerful piece of non-fiction, an autobiography of the man she knew as father for much of her youth, who died in captivity in a Homeland Security detention facility in Florida. There is an active issue of differential treatment of Haitian Americans; some 30,000 people are at risk of deportation because Haitians are not granted “temporary protected status” as other migrants are and as the U.N. requires.

In addition to her readings, Danticat answered many questions from students, faculty, administration, and community members, ranging from her inspiration, her advice to students wanting to become writers – and budding writers generally – the role of writing in activism and social change, and her next project(s). Danticat was generous, sincere, and humble with her responses. Danticat also signed copies of her books, and information from community organizations and Haitian handicrafts were available.

This event was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Provost and the hard work of the many cosponsoring groups mentioned above. Special thanks to Holger Henke, Nate Moore, and Kwame Clarke, and especially to event co-organizers, Prof. Fabiola Salek (Foreign Languages) and Valerie Anderson (English).

## **The Power of One: Questioning *Jamaica for Sale***

Suhaila Saduddin-Singh

The African American Resource Center and Professor Kelly Baker Josephs of the English Department presented the documentary film, *Jamaica for Sale*, at York College on March 3, 2010. This documentary, produced by Esther Figueroa and Diana McCaulay, brought to the York community an enriching yet appalling analysis of a nation that was literally built to fail. But, what has influenced this failure? Tourism (which was once considered the solution to the economic crisis in Jamaica) is cited as the source of Jamaica's ecological, social, and cultural ruin. In the film, sociologist Mimi Sheller of Swarthmore College addresses the ecological impact of tourism. She discusses spatial fixation, which is the idea that the production of hotels has established a fixed environment, an environment in which the natural habitat (consisting of trees, turtles, fish, corral and birds) has been permanently

destroyed. *Jamaica for Sale* also questions the idea of tourism as a source of wealth for the working class by explaining in detail the loss of jobs for fishermen and the dissent among construction workers where their average salary is \$3,700 JA/wk or \$51 US/wk.

Given this situation, Jamaica must depend upon other countries for survival because tourism makes up 50% of the island's foreign exchange earnings. With this dependency in mind, the film-makers stress the concept that those outside Jamaica must share responsibility for the impending ecological and economical crisis. This is exactly what was discussed during the post-film discussion led by Professor Josephs. The room was filled to capacity and the audience consisted primarily of students, many of whom were Caribbean or of Caribbean descent. Michelle Gibbs, an English

major at York College, in dialogue with Dr. Henke Holger, Assistant Provost of York College, examined the disproportionate economic stratification system as the source of Jamaica's unsustainable environment. Also, the audience discussed what the future holds for Jamaica and other Caribbean countries that depend on tourism. Many audience members suggest that tourists could have the biggest impact on the economy. By refusing to accept the negative stereotypes of Jamaican natives and actually visiting and buying from the local communities, the wealth would become more evenly distributed and the natives of the land could actually prosper. The audience was left without firm answers, but some expressed the belief that their own choices about where and how to spend their vacation dollars could make a difference.

### **A Talk on Immigrant Voting Rights by Professor Ron Hayduk**

Michael Sharpe

On Wednesday November 18, 2009, the York College/ CUNY Political Science Program and African American Resource Center hosted "A Talk on Immigrant Voting Rights" by Professor Ron Hayduk, Associate Professor of Political Science, Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY). Professor Hayduk is an expert on voting rights, social movements, immigration, and race. The talk took place to a jam packed audience at the African American Resource Center. Professor Hayduk talked about the history of immigrant voting rights in the United States and its deep relationship with African American history. Professor Hayduk has written about American politics in the areas of voting rights, social movements, immigration, and race including as author of *Democracy for All: Restoring Immigrant Voting Rights in the United States*.



## York College students visit African Burial Ground

Jackie Southern



Despite living in cosmopolitan New York, few New Yorkers know the city's geographies of race and their relation to an extensive African American history. Many important sites are familiar mostly to specialists, unmarked and unremarked in the urban landscape. In September, students in AAS101S, Introduction to African-American Studies, made a trip to the African Burial Ground. This is a hallowed place from the colonial period where enslaved Africans buried their dead outside the city walls, often consistent with burial practices and symbolism from their homes in Africa.

Today their graveyard lies under six acres of the financial district where, through the perverse chance of having been covered

by landfill to level the hilly ground for buildings, the graves remained largely intact despite two hundred years of development. Their rediscovery in 1992 and subsequent study, preservation, memorialization, and designation as a National Monument—under pressure of community groups and activist African American scholars and elected officials—have transformed understanding of lower Manhattan and the city's deep connections to slavery and the Triangle Trade.

Before embarking on this field trip, students prepared by reading several articles on colonial slavery and the African Burial Ground, including studies by lead anthropologist Michael Blakey and project archaeologist Warren Perry. Still, it was hard to comprehend the scope of Manhattan's

slaveholding past until the students walked the streets of lower Manhattan on a tour led by National Park Service ranger Cyrus Forman.

The tour made tangible the physical intimacy of the preindustrial city, where slave labor, leisure, insurrection, and reprisals defined its internal boundaries and nodes; it also vividly exposed the dependence of the city's economic growth on the slave trade and profits from slave commodities. As one student said, "Africans have always dealt with boundaries and limitations throughout history, but have always persevered." By the time the tour concluded at the African Burial Ground, the students were prepared to understand its profound human and spiritual significance, and to appreciate those who were found and reburied there.

Reflecting on the field trip, students described the changes in their understanding of their own city. One said she had formerly looked at Manhattan only "as a tour area or a shopping and party area." Another wrote, "Before this tour my eyes were almost closed." One commented, "Coming into the African Burial Ground I wasn't interested. I thought it was going to be a tour around a place I was already familiar with. Instead I was introduced to a place I've always seen but

never thought about its past and what lies under it.”

One student caught the sentiments of many: “Taking the trip down to Wall Street helped me realize a lot of history that was never taught to

me. I have always learned that slavery took place in the South. So I’ve been walking in the path of slaves for the past 20 years of my life and never knew, and also walking in the path of people who treated these African Americans wrong.” For

the students, the abstractions of economic history became humanized and grounded, changing their grasp of the reality of kidnapping, enslavement, and the accumulated wealth of slavery far from Southern plantations.

## Spring 2009 Events:

### **Distinguished Lecture: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Slavery and Modern-Day Slaves**

On May 6, 2009, the African American Resource Center and the Social Sciences, History, and Biology Departments worked with the Provost’s Distinguished Lecture Series to bring Zoe Trodd, a lecturer at Harvard University to discuss modern-day slavery.

Most people think slavery is a thing of the past, discussed in history textbooks. While the U.S. formally abolished slavery with the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, after most European countries already had, slavery is very much a current phenomenon. There are 27 million slaves alive in the world today—more than at any point in history. Furthermore, these slaves can be anywhere in the world, including in the U.S. and as close to us as in Long Island (as evidenced by the trial of Varsha and Mahender Sabhani that spanned 2007 and 2008).

Drawing on new research and dozens of narratives by slaves and former slaves, Trodd discussed 21<sup>st</sup>-century slavery, the modern-day slave narrative, and today’s abolitionist movement. She also compared

today’s slavery with 19<sup>th</sup>-century slavery and set contemporary slave narratives in the tradition of 19<sup>th</sup>-century slave narratives and protest literature.

Zoe Trodd got her Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization at Harvard University. A top-flight researcher and prolific writer, Ms. Trodd is a young scholar with few peers. She co-authored the forthcoming book *Modern Slavery: The Secret World of 27 Million People* and has co-edited several others, including *To Plead our Own Cause: Personal Stories of Today’s Slaves* (Cornell University Press, 2008) and *Meteor of War: The John Brown Story* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004). Her journal articles and book chapters number in the dozens and are matched by the invited lectures and conference presentations she has given since 2003. Two years ago she was a Research Fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Institute on American History and, at present, is concluding a stint as an Andrew Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies Fellow. She is widely recognized as one of the world’s leading experts on

contemporary slavery.

Examples of faculty responses are the following:

“I heard from nearly all of the faculty present at Zoe’s talk that they really enjoyed it. I also heard many of the students discussing the talk in very serious, positive terms. As Zoe and I were leaving the building last night, a young man came up to her to thank her and ask her a few questions.”

“The speaker was eminently worthwhile for the message that she brought, that slavery is alive and well in the world today. Many thanks for bringing her to York.”

“The first thing in our class after the lecture that night was to discuss what she said in her talk in relation to our class topic on social change. Students did say that they were shocked by what she presented. We discussed the comparison she made between today’s and the previous slave systems and why some are changed and others remain the same.”



# Open House on Tuesday, February 24, 2009

## THE EVENT CELEBRATED THE 100-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE

oldest civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), on February 12, 1909. The NAACP was the organization that successfully desegregated U.S. public schools through the landmark *Brown versus Board of Educations* Supreme Court decision, among its another achievements. The community has come a long way in the past 100 years. A month ago, the first African American president took the oath of office. While there's been

much progress, much more still needs to be done.

Students, particularly those taking African-American Studies courses this semester or in the past or students within the African Diaspora, as well as York College faculty and staffs and the greater Jamaica community were cordially invited to attend an Open House as part of York College's Black Heritage Month. People were welcome to browse the center's library, to get know other members of the community, learn about

upcoming events in the center, or propose their own ideas and discussions.

It was a successful event; Sociology Adjunct Lecturer, Angela Jones, whose dissertation was on the NAACP and the Niagara Convention, engaged the audience with the discussion on the history of NAACP. There was intense participation. Issues regarding the Great Dubois/ Booker T. Washington Debate were central: people brought home the idea of what kind of public education we want here at York College.

## OPERATION CROSSROADS AFRICA

Michael Sharpe

On Wednesday, April 22, 2009 the African American Resource Center and the Political Science Program presented Operation Crossroads Africa.

Dr. Reginald Hughes, MD, from the African- American Cultural Exchange/ Jamaica Hospital spoke about opportunities to volunteer in Africa with Operation Crossroads Africa. Operation Crossroads African provides college students with opportunities to volunteer on short term development projects in Africa over the summer.

America's premier cross-cultural exchange program, Operation Crossroads Africa was established in 1958 by Dr. James H. Robinson, who foresaw a "clear, honest, hard hitting program" in which young North Americans would work at the grassroots level with young Africans. He envisioned young people "building bridges of friend-ship to Africa," and his extraordinary vision was embodied in Operation Crossroads Africa. The organization's motto is "make a difference for others, see the difference in yourself."

Dr. Hughes is Director, Family Medicine Obstetrics Mount Sinai of Medicine/ Jamaica Hospital Family Medicine Residency pro-gram. He is a former Crossroads Africa and the heads of his own nongovernmental organization called the African Cultural Exchange, providing year round opportunities to volunteer in Africa.

The AAS Center was full, and quite a few of the participants expressed their interests in the Operation Crossroads Africa.

## South African scholar discusses “Magical Universe of Art”

On February 19, 2009, the African American Resource Center celebrated Black History Month through an interesting event on an African artist: “The Magical Universe of Art: The Ethiopian Artist Zerihun Yetmgeta’s Works.” The guest speaker was Dr. Abebe Zegeye/ Yale University and the University of South Africa. The event was co-sponsored by the Departments of Social Sciences, Art, and English.

Ethiopia has a culture tradition, and an artistic heritage that go back many centuries. One of this fascinating African country’s most prominent artists, Zerihun Yetmgeta, has decided to exhibit his works in home town, the city of Addis Ababa. Yetmgeta’s exhibition *The Magical Universe of Art*, is a collection of works that looks back over the artist’s shoulder upon 40 years of dedicated work.

It follows the maturation of his artistic passion over the years, right up to the present. His art, always exceptional, has grown more fulsome, his talent for transposing traditional motifs of Ethiopian Christianity- its legends, magical

practices, belief in spirits and demons and ‘evil eyes-into contemporary art. Over time, his work has become more prodigious, more intricate and more laden with hidden meaning.

Dr. Zegeye’s presentation provided further insights by exploring Yetmgeta’s extra-ordinary talent. Dr. Zegeye is the Primedia Chair of Holocaust and Genocide studies at the Graduate school of the University of South Africa. This

year he is the Rice Family Foundation Visiting Professor at Yale University. Professor Zegeye is the author of four books on South Africa,



ethnicity, politics, and the environment. In 2009, he will publish three other books, building upon his expertise in art and holocaust studies. He has been the editor of numerous journals and books. Dr. Zegeye is the founding editor of *African and Black Diaspora*, and was founding co-editor of *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and culture*.

## MEET OUR FACULTY

**Valerie K. Anderson** is Associate Professor and Chair of English. She teaches college composition, survey literature, early African-American literature, and multicultural studies courses. Professor Anderson's research field is African-American English Education history from the colonial American era to the post Civil War or Reconstruction era. Her research has been supported by University grants, and she has presented papers at such forums as the Institute for Research on The African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean (IRADAC), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

**Mesfin Araya** is Associate Professor of African Studies at York College/ City University of New York, where he teaches about . He has produced numerous scholarly works on Ethiopia and Eritrea, from a political science perspective; his next book analyzes Eritrean nationalism.

Dr. **Martin Atangana** holds a Ph. D. in History from the University of Paris 1-Sorbonne (France), a M.A. in History from the University of Paris X-Nanterre (France), and a B.A. from the University of Yaoundé (Cameroon). He is currently an Associate Professor of History at York College and The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. His research interests focus on the relationship between West Africa and Europe with a special emphasis on Franco-Cameroonian relations. He is the author of *Capitalisme et Nationalisme au Cameroun au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*; *French Investment in Colonial Cameroon*; and articles published in *Matériaux Pour l'Histoire de Notre Temps*, *African Studies Review*, and *The Canadian Journal of African Studies*. He is currently working on a new book analyzing *The End of French Rule in Cameroon*. In addition to doing research and teaching, Dr. Martin Atangana is an accomplished musician who had worked with artists such as Paul Simon, Jean Luc Ponty, Many Dibango, and Ronald Shannon Jackson. He frequently performs with his band "African Blue Note". His solo albums include *Oyenga Fam* and *Mot Songo*.

**Coleen Clay** is Assistant Professor and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education, York College, City University of New York (CUNY). Dr. Clay teaches courses in literacy development, child and adolescent development and teaching and learning in urban schools and supervises student teachers. From 1999- 2001 she was an Associate Professor of Education at CUNY Medgar Evers College. From 1994-1999 she was the Coordinator of Educational Programs and Research at the Caribbean Research Center, Medgar Evers College. Early in her career she was a member of the Faculty of Education and Educational Research at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, WI where she taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in child development and education. She is a member of the Editorial Board of WADABAGEI, a scholarly journal of the Caribbean and its Diaspora. In the 1990's she served on the New York City and New York State Committees on Education of Caribbean Creole Students and the Bilingual Special Education Advisory Council.

As former Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights and a veteran social and political activist, **Ron Daniels** an extensive familiarity with issues and policy affecting African Americans and other people of color. In addition, Daniels is conversant with First Amendment issues, the Patriot Act, torture, rendition and related issues. As former Deputy Campaign Manager for Rev. Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign and a former independent candidate for President, Daniels regularly comments on electoral and political issues in weekly column Vantage Point and a WBAI show. His principal international work is Haiti via the Institute of the Black World 21st Century and the Haiti Support Project. Daniels is conversant with U.S. policy towards Haiti and political trends in Haiti.

**Kelly Baker Josephs** is an Assistant Professor of English at York College, CUNY. She teaches courses in Anglophone Caribbean Literature, Postcolonial Literature and Theory, Literatures of the African Diaspora, and Gender Studies. Prof. Josephs is also Managing editor of the journal *Small Axe*. She is currently working on a book manuscript, tentatively titled "Disturbers of the Peace: The Aesthetics of Madness in Caribbean Literature," which considers the ubiquity of madmen and madwomen in Anglophone Caribbean literature between 1959 and 1980.

Dr. **Tania Levey** is an assistant professor of sociology at York College. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology and a Certificate in Women's Studies in 2006 from the Graduate center, City university Of New York. Her primary research interests are in sex and gender, race and ethnicity, social stratifications, higher education, and work and occupations. Dr. Levey contributed to *Passing the Torch: Does Higher Education for the Disadvantaged Pay Off across the Generations?* (Russell Sage, 2007). In *Passing the Torch*, Paul Attewell, David Lavin, Thurston Domina, and Tania Levey follow students admitted under the City University of New York's "open admissions" policy, tracking its effects on them and their children, to find out whether widening college access can accelerate social mobility across generations. Her co-authored article in *Journal of African American studies* was reprinted in *Free at last? Black America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, edited by Juan Jose Battle, Michael Bennett and Anthony J.Lemelle (Transaction Publishers, 2006). Dr. Levey is also published in *Sociological Forum International*.

For over a decade Dr. **Mychel J. Namphy** has been lecturing, teaching, and writing about African American literature, culture, and politics, in such diverse venues as churches and mosques, police academies and drug treatment centers, Ivy League colleges, graduate schools, high schools, elementary schools, and prisons. His B.A. is from Columbia University, and he completed his Ph.D in English and African American literature at Princeton. Dr.



Namphy currently has a book manuscript, titled *Malcolm's Mood Indigo: A Theodicy of Literary Contests*, being reviewed by various academic presses. This book is a study of Malcolm X as an aspect of contemporary history, and a close analysis of Malcolm's collaboration with Alex Haley that in 1965 produced *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, one of the most dynamic spiritual and political autobiographies of our time. Dr. Namphy has held teaching positions at Princeton University and at Rutgers University. At York College, he teaches courses on African American and Native American literature, art, and music, and constantly encourages his students to explore the connections between our cultural practices and our struggle for freedom, justice, equality, and dignity.

Dr. **Selena T. Rodgers** is currently an Assistant Professor of Social Work at York College of The City University of New York, where she also holds an appointment as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Medgar Evers College at the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Her research focuses on the intersection of posttraumatic growth, social support, and spiritual well-being in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic groups who have experienced forced migration, childhood sexual abuse, and vicarious trauma. Her peer-reviewed book chapters are guides aimed at helping professionals wishing to understand the link between Afro-centric perspectives, race and gender oppressions and intimate partner violence. Dr. Rodgers is the faculty advisor for the York College Social Work Club; is a member of the York College African-American Center (AARC) Interdisciplinary Committee, York College Presidential Committee for Ceremonial Events, York College CUNY Proficiency Examination Advisory Committee, and York Early College Academy (YECA) Planning Team. She is also a board member of Rochdale Social Services Advisory Board. Dr. Rodgers is the recipient of several awards and honors. In December 2009, she was named a National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Emerging Leader Honoree, New York City Chapter. Professor Rodgers has served as a volunteer with the *African Genesis Corrective History Education Institute d'Zert Club*, escorting youth on an educational journey to Egypt. Subsequent to her academic appointment, she was the Associate Vice President for Safe Horizon's Queens Community and Criminal Justice Programs, one of the nation's leading agency in the field of victimization. Dr. Rodgers earned her Ph.D. in Social Work from Adelphi University and her Masters Degree in Social Work from Syracuse University. She is also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-R).

**Mark Schuller** is Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology. In addition to understanding contemporary Haiti, Schuller's research contributes to globalization, NGOs, civil society, and development. Winner of the APLA paper prize, Schuller has published a half-dozen peer-reviewed articles and a couple book chapters about Haiti in addition to several articles in public media including *Counterpunch*, *Common Dreams*, and the *Center for International Policy*. He co-edited *Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction* (2008, Alta Mira) and *Homing Devices: the Poor as Targets of Public Housing Policy and Practice* (2006, Lexington). Schuller is also co-producer and co-director of documentary *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy* (2009, Documentary Educational Resources). He chairs the Society for Applied Anthropology's Human Rights and Social Justice Committee and is active in a range of grassroots efforts, including earthquake relief. For his analysis of the current situation and the aid response, visit his blog on *Huffington Post*.

Dr. **Michael Sharpe** is Assistant Professor of Political Science in the Department of Behavioral Sciences. His areas of specialization are comparative politics and international relations and his research interests include looking comparatively at globalization, the politics of international migration, immigrant political incorporation, and political transnationalism. The research analyzes the factors that propel migrations of postcolonial citizen and coethnic immigrants and what limits or facilitates their political incorporation and political transnationalism in liberal democratic host societies. To examine this, Dr. Sharpe focuses on post-colonial citizen Dutch Caribbean immigrants in the Netherlands and Latin American Nikkejin (Japanese descendant) immigrants in Japan. The research challenges long held assumptions about the forces that produce migrations and the relationships among shared legal citizenship, coethnicity, immigrant political incorporation, and political transnationalism. The research has thus far been published in a journal, encyclopedias, and forthcoming chapters in books. Dr. Sharpe volunteered with Operation Crossroads Africa in Kajiado, Kenya when he was an undergraduate and remains interested in the African diaspora all over the world. He is a board member of the United Nations affiliated non-governmental organization, the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR).

Dr. **George White's** first book *Holding the Line: Race, Racism, and American Foreign Policy Toward Africa, 1953-1961* was published in 2005. His second book will be an edited volume of the papers of a World War II Chaplain, entitled "On the Battlefield For My Lord: The Papers of Rev. Robert Boston Dokes in World War II." In addition to his Ph.D., Dr. White also has a J.D. from Harvard Law School and has taught courses or portions of courses on the impact of the American legal system on society.