The Department of African and African American Studies at Fordham is a multi-disciplinary department that critically investigates the multi-faceted questions of citizenship, slavery, civil rights, immigration, race, religion, urban geography, gender, culture, colonialism and nationalism. We engage students and the public to formulate a better understanding of humanity in a globalized world.

With this goal in mind, the primary objectives of the Department are to develop research agenda and courses that are of interest to students as well as to improve the quality of life of the community.

In light of the ongoing debate about the state of diversity and inclusion in colleges and universities, and the recent tragedy in Orlando, the theme of our strategic plan for 2016-17 academic year, is “Unity through Diversity: Contributions of the African Diaspora to the American Character”. We believe that the politics of racial and cultural diversity continues to play a significant role in shaping the current polarized conversations on equal entitlement and citizenship in the United States. Of course, our department should lead and facilitate the conversations at Fordham. Therefore, our department is planning to sponsor Martin Luther King Jr. Lectures in the academic 2016-17 year. These lectures will be held annually in cooperation with other interested entities in Fordham. The lectures will highlight the new inspiring work of scholars and writers who have been contributing to the debate on diversity and future of American democracy.

The Department houses an outstanding faculty whose scholarship and teaching crosses disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, our course offerings span from history, political science, anthropology, sociology, and literature, to Arts, religion, women and gender studies as well as immigration and urban development.

Our faculty have published numerous highly praised books and research articles that have generated critical reflections in their respected fields. The department continues to grow in size and direction. We recently hired a new faculty with specialization on Caribbean region.

Our undergraduate program continues to draw students from across the university and across cultures. We regularly host symposiums and public events including the Annual Student-led Conference. Our students have become leaders in arts and cultural institutions, and team leaders in community, national and international organizations and in professions such as education, journalism, law, and social work. Through research and teaching, the faculty and students are dedicated to understanding the ways in which societies can be transformed toward justice and equity.

We hope that the theme of our strategic plan for this academic year fosters constructive conversations about the consequences of acts of bigotry and racism. We invite you to join the conversation by visiting our website and joining our mailing list. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at: aaas@fordham.edu. We look forward to your participation in our public events.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amir Idris,
Professor and Chair
“Uh Oh.”

I look up from my field notes at my driver, Paul, who is looking up from the rear tire anxiously. His look says it all: we may be in trouble. We are in the southern province of Rwanda, specifically a mere five minute walk from Kibeho Parish and, more importantly, six hours of difficult road from the capital city Kigali. It was already dusk and we need the light to navigate the washed out cliff roads to get home.

At the time of this specific “adventure”, I was several weeks into a month of independent research that is required by School for International Training (SIT) programs. The institute, which emphasizes experiential learning, enabled me to study for four months in the dynamic country of Rwanda. Tucked between the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania, the nation is known most for its thriving population of mountain gorillas and a brutal genocide. It was the latter that was the reason I came to learn here.

The 1994 Genocide against Tutsi was a state organized attempt to eliminate portions of the population. The terms Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, where they had been economic and social identifiers in pre-colonial Rwanda, were manipulated by colonial powers and appropriated as ethnic labels. After decades of divisionism and various programs, the
conflict culminated in a 100 day massacre across the country that left 800,000 dead and nearly a million in prison.

Studying post-genocide reconstruction and peacekeeping, now twenty-two years after the genocide ended, was an incredible and humbling opportunity. Along with twenty-two students from around the world, I integrated into the community through a homestay and an intensive language program. Over the course of the program, we engaged in lectures from presidential advisors to genocide survivors and visited various organizations that are attempting to mend the division that is inherent in post-genocide societies. Much of our education there included NGO site visits, memorial visits, and a week-long trip to northern Uganda to contrast their efforts of post-conflict rehabilitation in relation to Rwanda. Witnessing the healing from living as a member of the society was incredibly valuable and invigorating, particularly when we came to our month of designated research time.

For the final month of the program, a month that also coincided with the beginning of commemoration for the genocide, my colleagues and I moved out of our homestays and into houses around Kigali City in order to focus fully on our individual topics. This was what I was so excited for and so grateful to SIT for requiring such an intense project of their students. My research focused primarily on the church memorials around the country, as many massacres occurred in churches during the 100 days. Through analysis of over fifteen memorials, various interviews (from priests, survivors, parish congregation, and memorial authorities), and a vast review of existing memorial literature, I expanded my own knowledge of sacred spaces and trauma memorials - enough to produce my senior thesis in anthropology.

Which brings me to Kibeho, on that dusty, red road with my anxious driver and a daunting voyage back to the capital. I had left Kigali at 6:00 am, prepared to interview priests at Kibeho Parish to discuss the massacres there and the subsequent memorials. The visit had been enjoyable, even for visiting a genocide memorial, with the priest friendly and open to conversation and the memorial being upkept and dignified in its controversial display of remains. And now, the car trouble. It being a Friday afternoon, dusk already touching the tops of the banana trees, and commemoration at that (which requires certain businesses to close in the afternoons for unity discussions and survivor testimonies) which meant garages were likely closed and many members of the community were already in meetings or at home. Ordinarily, before my experiences in Rwanda, I would have panicked. Now, I was patient. Things never work against you, you must be patient and open to the unforeseen instead. Particularly in a country such as Rwanda, where electricity was a luxury in some districts and hurdles relating to their history were evident at every glance, inconveniences in the United States became a necessary reality here.

“Studying outside of conventional locations and being able to engage with an intimate history in a healing country was invaluable to my growth as a global citizen, and inspiration to my area of academic interest.”

We eventually found a garage owner, the priest I had interviewed had been watching us anxiously and called his cousin’s neighbor. Though the day had been stressful and long, I realized just how invigorating it was so do such raw research in the field, and I am eternally grateful for my opportunity to do so.
Recent Research Activities

This past academic year I was on leave, conducting research for an upcoming publication that focuses on issues of race and religion in the United States and South Africa. Over the past year, I have travelled to South Africa, Italy, and England as well as Little Rock, Memphis, Jackson, Washington, D.C., and Boston.

Meeting Pope Francis and My Research on Race and Religion in the U.S. and South Africa

ROBERT B. ANDERSON
Associate Professor and Associate Chair

RECENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The summer of 2015 I spent over three weeks in South Africa, researching at the National Library in Cape Town. My scholarly focus there concerns issues of race and religion during the apartheid era, and the CT National Library houses many of the publications and periodicals from that time period. While in South Africa I also had the opportunity to travel a bit. I wanted to visit some of the more noteworthy sites in the country so I headed east to Durban, making a pilgrimage to the home of Chief Albert Luthuli, former ANC leader and 1960 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Chief Luthuli was banned (house arrest) at the time the award was announced but the government finally made an allowance for him to travel to Oslo in December 1961 to receive the award. In 1966 Senator Robert F. Kennedy
visited Luthuli, still banned, at his home in the outskirts of Durban. In the KwaZulu Natal region I ventured out to three crucial battlefield sites of the colonial period: Blood River, Islandwana, and Rork's Drift. Each was a turning point for either the Dutch, English or African inhabitants of South Africa, determining who would dominate the region for decades to come. My final excursion took me to the town of Sharpeville, located an hour south of Johannesburg, where, on 21 March 1960, 69 black South Africans were killed and scores others injured when the police open fired on non-violent protesters who had come to the local station to be arrested for not having in their possession the notorious “pass book” that was mandated by the government. Today a garden of remembrance commemorates the events of that day, and the local cemetery contains the remains of the victims of the massacre.

This past spring I had the opportunity to travel to Rome to conduct research in the Jesuit archives and in the archives of the Vatican's Propaganda Fide, the church office responsible for the missionary work of the church. These archives have provided insight into the missionary activities of the various European congregations and orders that served in the region until recent times.

The travels in the United States took me to church archives in Little Rock and Jackson, government archives in Boston and Washington, D.C., and civil rights sites in Memphis, Little Rock and Money (Mississippi), the town where Emmett Till was murdered in 1955 for whistling at a white woman.

I am writing this report from South Africa as the racially charged incidents of Dallas, Baton Rouge and Nice unfold. As I conduct my research on race relations in South Africa I ask myself if we have truly progressed as a people--as humans--when we continued to denigrate, insult, oppress, kill and harm one another because of what we believe or what we look like? By the time this article is published, I will have been to Europe where I will have learned how people, not too long ago, worked together, regardless of race or creed, to bring an end to a vicious and uncompromising socio-economic and political system that crushed a people as well as their hopes and dreams all in the name of God and racial superiority and purity.

“There is hope for the future if we can remember our past.”

Rome, Romans, and Me: Meeting Pope Francis

While I was in Rome this past spring, I was also fortunate enough to be able to concelebrate morning Mass with Pope Francis on Tuesday, March 15th. It was an honor and a privilege to do so. After the morning service I was able to greet the pope briefly, shaking his hand and having my picture taken with him. Needless to say I was thrilled to meet Francis, a fellow Jesuit. He comes across as very genuine and quite personable. I could see why he has held various leadership roles within the Jesuit order as well as in the church. And one will note, from the grin on his face in this picture that he even appears to understand my Spanish.

"there is hope for the future if we can remember our past."
When Historical Research Really Matters: The African Immigration Research of the Bronx African American History Project:

At the Bronx Muslim Forum at the Al-Amin Community Center, one of the most moving moments for the Bronx African American History Project staff members present came when Sheikh Moussa Drammah, who organized the event held up a “The White Paper on African Immigration” published 8 years ago by Dr. Jane Edward, African Immigration Researcher for the BAAAHP and said “I want to tell you how this document changed our lives here in the Bronx.”

“When Dr. Edward published this” Mr. Drammeh who came here from the Gambia said,

”...VERY FEW PUBLIC OFFICIALS KNEW HOW MANY AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS THERE WERE IN THE BRONX. THEY DIDN’T KNOW THAT THERE WERE MORE AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE BRONX THAN ANYWHERE IN NEW YORK CITY. THIS DOCUMENT PUT US ON THE MAP.”

We circulated it among leaders of our community, and sent it to public officials, and heads of city agencies. And it made a big difference. It helped bring needed services to our community that had not been available before.”

I was blown away by this revelation. I knew that Dr. Edward’s research was ground breaking. I knew that it had been widely circulated among scholars, as well as leaders of Bronx African communities. But I didn’t know that it had been partially responsible for helping improve public services for Bronx African immigrants.

This not only made me incredibly proud of Dr. Edward’s research, it made me proud to be associated with an oral history project which took its cues from the community it was studying and included leaders of that community in its research team, something we had done when we founded the BAAHP in 2003.

It was people in Bronx neighborhoods and schools who first told us that we needed to study the rapidly growing West African presence in the Bronx. And who encouraged us to hire a scholar who coordinated these efforts. It was as a result of their efforts that we hired the brilliant Dr. Jane Edward as coordinator of African Immigration Research, and later as a faculty member in the Department of African and African American Studies. And it is under Dr. Edward’s leadership that the BAAHP began recording and documenting the voices of the Bronx’s African Muslim leaders, an effort which led to the sponsorship of the Bronx Muslim Forum.
Spotlight on 2015-2016 Events

Race, Gender, and Culture in the Trans-Atlantic World: 5th Annual Student-Led Conference

Five years later the Department of African and African American Studies held, in October 3, 2015, another Student-led Conference for the 2015-2016 academic year. Selected outstanding students from the department presented on a variety of topics tying together or complementing works that they produced for various course offerings.

The first panel, moderated by Dr. Bentley Anderson, brought Gabrielle Turyan and Andrea Prashad together to discuss the subject of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. These students’ presentations posed several historical questions related to the history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. How did Western European trade contribute to the African slave trade? What role did Saharan trade have on the development and expansion of slavery? Did religion hinder or promote the slave trade? Internal and external factors, the presenters noted, contributed to the development of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The second panel, moderated by Dr. Jane Edward, focused on gender issues in Africa and the New World. Alexandra Brown focused on gender roles in Africa, especially after the European
encounter; while Madelyn Murphy examined the notion of masculinity in North America, using the prison convict-lease system as the paradigm for understanding this dynamic. The question and answer period was quite lively as these two papers resonated with the audience.

"The audience wanted to know and understand how and why gender roles had been challenged or were influenced by the European encounter, and they were curious to know and understand how the American prison system impacted not only the Black community but also on the White community as Black and white men appropriated gender roles based on the notion of masculinity."

After lunch, the third panel, titled "Civil and Human Rights", brought Dayna Ryan and Emma DeGrace together to examine the freedom struggles of Jews and African Americans in the United States. Dayna looked for a connection and intersection between these two peoples in their struggles for freedom, while Emma examined the leadership style and role modeling provided by the Civil Rights activist, Ella Baker. The path to freedom for both Jews and Blacks was fraught with many danger and many obstacles, including bigotry, prejudice and violence, with one group achieving their goals much more quickly than the other based on the notion of race as well as class. The other had a much more difficult time because of race and the threat of violence. Nevertheless, both groups (and both papers) highlighted the desire of Jews and African Americans in the United States: the desire to be treated as equal, regardless of who one was, what one believed, or what one looked like. The panel was moderated by Dr. Bentley Anderson.

And, finally, the fourth panel dealt with the role of art and artist in the anti-Apartheid movement. Here we had two papers dealing with the moral and ethical dimensions of apartheid South Africa. Libby Wetzler’s paper asked the question: How can artists change the public opinion of a person whom no one has seen or heard from in over twenty-five years? How can art change the public perception of a figure branded as a subversive, a terrorist? What can art do to counter the charge that someone is a communist during the Cold War era? Bridget Kilpatrick dealt with the moral responsibility artists had in fighting injustices, using Paul Simon and his use of the South African choral group Ladysmith Black Manasa in the making of the album “Graceland” as a case study. Do artists have an obligation to use their public notoriety to challenge the status quo? Should artists engage in public protests? What if artist boycotts? Is all art political? These were some of the questions our panelists grappled with in their research, writing and presentations on apartheid South Africa. The panel was moderated by Dr. Amir Idris.

A lively Q&A discussion followed the outstanding presentations. Approximately 25 students, faculty and community members attended the conference.
Spotlight on 2015-2016 Events

The Revolution WILL Be Televised: The Evolution of Contemporary Resistance and Protest

A panel discussion was held in the 12th Floor Lounge on Friday, February 29, 2016. In collaboration with the Black Student Alliance (BSA), the department organized a panel discussion to reflect on the evolution of contemporary resistance and protest. The discussion was narrated by Dr. Aimee Cox and the speakers were as follows: Nakisha M. Lewis, Senior Strategist for Safety at the Ms. Foundation, Allen Kwabena Frimpong, Organizer BlackLivesMatter NYC, and Jodi Hines, Educator and Former Fordham Black Student Alliance President.

Teaching While Black and Shapeshifters: Book Signing and Discussion

The Department of African and African Studies organized an event to celebrate the publication of two important and well regarded books- one by Department Faculty member Dr. Aimee Cox, and one by Department alumnus, Pamela Lewis. Dr. Cox’s book “Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship” is widely regarded as a landmark in urban ethnography and a work which gives agency to a group of women who are rarely allowed to speak in their own voice. It has been one of the ten best-selling books ever published by Duke University Press. Pamela Lewis memoir, “Teaching While Black” is one of the most powerful works ever published discussing the dilemmas of Black educators in urban school systems where Black teachers are a declining percentage of the teaching force. It is one of the best-selling works recently published by Fordham University Press. The event featured readings and commentaries by the authors on their works and questions from the audience. Dr. Mark Chapman and Dr. Cox led discussions on Pamela Lewis’ book, and discussions on Dr. Cox’s book were led by Dr. Jane Edward and Dr. Mark Naison. It was a great celebration of the innovative scholarship being done in our Department.
Tyeshia Maddox will receive her Ph. D in History from New York University in 2016. Her dissertation examined the significance of mutual aid societies and benevolent associations formed by Anglophone Caribbean immigrants to New York between 1890 and 1940. It explored how immigrant social organizations played a vital role in the formation of transnational identities and facilitated in community building, arguing that participation in these organizations created kinship networks that both empowered immigrants to form a collective “Caribbean” identity and unleashed a political activism among immigrants fighting alongside African Americans to insure their equality in the tumultuous era of American Jim Crow.

She received a BA in History and Africana Studies and a MPS in Africana Studies both from Cornell University. Her Master's thesis comparatively examined Caribbean American and African American social, cultural, and political interactions pre and post-World War II. Her research and teaching interests include the African Diaspora, Caribbean, Black Atlantic, Women and Gender, African American
Faculty News

“Conflict, Customary Law, and Women’s Rights in South Sudan”

Paper presented at Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, on April 13, 2016. The paper analyzes the impact of violent conflict, and customary law on the status of women’s rights in South Sudan. It draws on research findings obtained from Dr. Edward’s fieldwork carried out between July and August 2013, in Juba, South Sudan. The paper is published on the Sudan Institute for Research and Policy (SIRP) website: http://sudaninstitute.org

“Africans in the Bronx: Developing Communities Abroad and in Africa”

Paper presented during Black History Month Celebration at Hostos Community College Bronx, NY, on February 11th 2016. The paper examines strategies developed by African immigrants to overcome challenges during their adjustment to life in the Bronx. Her presentation further highlights the achievements and contributions of African immigrants to The Bronx and communities of origin in Africa.

Dr. Jane Edward’s Speaking Engagements

History, Race, Transnational Communities, Migrational Movements, Immigration, Black Identity Formation, Social and Cultural History. Currently, she is working on a book manuscript that explores Caribbean immigration and women’s roles in transnational identity formation and twentieth century political activism.

Before joining the faculty at Fordham University, she was the 2015-2016 African and African Diaspora Studies Dissertation Fellow at Boston College and the 2015-2016 Kate B. & Hall J. Peterson Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society.

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Forthcoming Events

**Fall 2016**

**6TH ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE:**
**IMPRESSIONS AND IMPACT OF HISTORICAL CONSEQUENCES**
**SEPTEMBER 17, 2016**

The Sixth Annual Student-led Conference will be held on Saturday, September 17th, at Lincoln Center, beginning at 9am. Students, upon the recommendation of his or her professor, will present their research findings based on scholarly inquiries conducted for one of their African and African American Studies courses. As in the past, a light breakfast, lunch and refreshments will be served.

**Spring 2017**

**SLAVERY AND THE CROSS:**
**SYMPOSIUM ON CATHOLIC RACE RELATIONS**
**APRIL 2017**

The Department will be hosting an event of interest to our students, faculty and alumni in spring 2017. The one-day program is titled “Slavery and the Cross”. We will have scholars well versed in the field of Catholic race relations discuss the actions of the past and the remedies for the future. Our presenters examine the issue of Catholic slave holding, Black Catholic theology, Catholics and the race question, and Catholic restitution. We know this will be an event that will generate a considerable amount of attention and dialogue. Consider attending it yourself on April 1st at Lincoln Center. Seating will be limited, but we will make every attempt to accommodate our majors, minors and alumni.
In 2015-2016 the Department proposed and received approval for the following new course in the core:


This course examines the modern Catholic Civil Rights Movement from the late 1890s through the 1970s as Black and White Catholics found their voice and their agency to bring about racial justice within and without the church. This engagement across racial lines gave rise to Catholic Interracialism, which served as a paradigm for future struggles in the quest for racial harmony.


An examination of how immigration and migration shaped Bronx neighborhoods from the Great Depression to the present. Subjects covered will include community building, racial conflict and the ways that the mixing of cultures in Bronx communities inspired cultural creativity and political activism.

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**New Core Courses**

AFAM 4148, “Race, Religion & Politics: Catholics and Civil Rights” (Interdisciplinary Capstone Core)

This Interdisciplinary Capstone Course examines Catholic Civil Rights through the prisms of race, religion, and politics from the New World Encounter of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries through the Civil Rights struggles of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century.

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**Fall/Spring 2016-2017 Course**

This is a brief listing of our course offerings for 2016-2017. To view the complete listing and descriptions, please visit our website at www.fordham.edu/aaas.

**FALL 2016**

AFAM 1600 R01 Understanding Hist. Change: Africa
AFAM 1600 L01 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
AFAM 1650 L01 Black Popular Culture
AFAM 3030 R01 African American Women
AFAM 3037 R01 Being and Becoming Black
AFAM 3115 R01 ML King & Malcolm X
AFAM 3115 C01 ML King & Malcolm X
AFAM 3141 R01 Women in Africa
AFAM 3148 R01 History of South Africa
AFAM 3150 R01 Caribbean Peoples and Culture
AFAM 3633 R01 The Bronx: Immigration, Race, and Culture
AFAM 3634 C01 Film and the African American
AFAM 3693 L01 Contemporary African Literatures
AFAM 4000 R01 Affirmative Action: American Dream
AFAM 4148 R01 Race, Religion, and Politics: Catholics and Civil Rights

**SPRING 2017**

AFAM 1600 R01 Understanding Hist. Change: Africa
AFAM 3001 L01 African American History I
AFAM 3037 R01 Being and Becoming Black
AFAM 3071 C01 African Intellectual History
AFAM 3120 R01 Black Religion and Politics
AFAM 3132 R01 Black Prison Experience
AFAM 3133 L01 Performance African Diaspora
AFAM 3134 R01 From Rock & Roll to Hip Hop
AFAM 3150 R01 Caribbean Peoples and Culture
AFAM 3154 R01 Black, White, and Catholic
AFAM 3192 L01 The US and Africa
AFAM 3692 L01 Social Construction of Women
AFAM 4890 R01 Research Seminar
Department of African and African American Studies

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