



# COLLEGE *of* CHARLESTON

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AFRICAN AMERICAN  
STUDIES PROGRAM

**Fall 2016 Newsletter**

## From the Director



**Simon Lewis,**  
Professor of English and Co-Associate Dean of the School of LCWA,  
Interim Director of the African American Studies program.

### In this issue

**Meet the Faculty**  
Pg. 3

**News of Students**  
Pg. 3

**The (In) Justice System**  
Pg. 4

**Fall 2016 Events**  
Pg. 5

**Fall 2016 Course Offerings**  
Pg. 6

**Resources in AAST @ CofC**  
Pg. 7

This newsletter is following a depressing tradition. Two years ago, Conseula Francis wrote in the wake of the shooting death of 18-year old Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO. Last year, we were trying to make sense of the mass-killing of Reverend Clementa Pinckney and eight of his fellow parishioners by a 21-year-old white supremacist. This year's news, though less violent, has hit our community even closer to home, with the sudden loss of this program's beloved inaugural director Dr Conseula Francis. Shortly before Commencement Conseula was hospitalized for a general sense of malaise; within a matter of weeks she had been diagnosed with acute leukemia and passed away on Monday May 9<sup>th</sup>. Conseula was such a force of nature it is still barely conceivable that she could be taken from us so suddenly, that she could be taken from us at all. The entire College of Charleston community grieves for her and with her wonderful family.

Conseula's impact had been felt much more widely than just here in Charleston. Immediately after her passing, tributes flowed in from all over the country. Professor Frances Gateward of Cal State Northridge wrote to say that although she did not know Consuela very well, she was just getting to know her and her work through her own research, and found her to be a "brilliant and generous scholar." Consequently Professor Gateward has been working on an online memorial with Dr. Kinitra Jallow of the University of Texas to be published online, in a blog on Black Speculative Arts, and perhaps in the first edition of the new journal for the Comics Studies Society.

Conseula had also had a huge impact on the African American Literature and Culture Society (AALCS) for which she had served as the Society's newsletter editor and second vice-president. In a tribute to Conseula at this year's American Literature Association, Professor Shirley Moody Turner announced that in honor of her dedication to AALCS and her many contributions to teaching, scholarship and service, the Society has created a new award, the "Octavia Butler Award in memory of Conseula Francis," which will recognize Outstanding Contributions to African American literary scholarship made by a woman of color. Commenting on Conseula's scholarship on Octavia Butler, Professor Turner urged her audience to "appreciate all that Consuela had brought to AALCS and to remember and honor the beautiful and joyous life she shared with us." Professor Turner concluded her tribute as follows: "As Lauren from Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, reminds us, 'it is the destiny of Earthseed to take root among the stars,' and I know, indeed, that Consuela has followed that destiny and taken root among the stars."

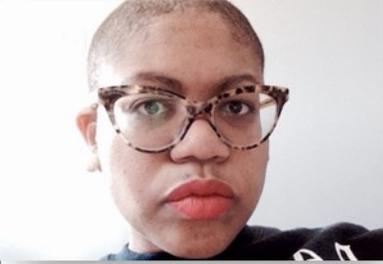
Here at the College, we are grateful beyond words to Conseula Francis for all that she did, all that she created, and all that she stood for.

We miss her dearly.



**Conseula Francis**

## Meet the Faculty



**Tara Bynum**

We are very pleased to welcome the newest recruit to the College of Charleston's African American Studies Program: Dr. Tara Bynum. A native of Baltimore, MD, Professor Bynum comes to us as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of English and will be joining us on campus in October, when she will offer two express courses (including a section of AAST200). In Spring she will be teaching four regular full-semester courses, including two sections of AAST200. Dr. Bynum is a literature specialist whose work examines 18<sup>th</sup>-century African American literature, subjectivity, and interiority. Her book project,

as a racial identity, as a cultural category, or as a mark upon the skin. At a time when Twitter responds to the deaths of unarmed black men and women with #blacklivesmatter, this work questions what makes life matter in the writings of Phillis Wheatley, John Marrant, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, and David Walker. What matters---namely, friendship, faith, love or activism---often feels good, and good feeling happens in those inside spaces where these writers can and do feel freely. Reading Pleasures contends, in effect, that even in the midst of the most painful kind of suffering, black lives---black pleasures---matter” (<http://english.rutgers.edu/729-alumni/post-doc-teacher-profiles.html>). Dr. Bynum has taught at Towson University and at Rutgers, and her research and writing have received support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the University of Pennsylvania. Her essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Criticism, Legacy, Common-Place, American Periodicals* and *The Offing*. Before joining the College Dr. Bynum was a Postdoctoral Fellow in African American literature at Rutgers University, and she is currently working on the finishing touches to her book project on a Fellowship at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. In addition to her scholarly publications Dr. Bynum's social commentary on African-American literature and culture have appeared in such on-line venues at [theroot.com](http://theroot.com). You can see her in action in a TEDx talk at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3MktQZdRw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3MktQZdRw).

**African American Studies has also begun the search for a new Director of the program.**

## News of Students



**Aisha Gallion**

Double majoring in African American Studies and Anthropology, Aisha Gallion participated in the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (MURAP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during Summer 2016. This program is a graduate-level research experience for highly talented undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds who are interested in pursuing doctorates in the humanities, social sciences or fine arts. Each summer MURAP selects 20 rising juniors and seniors in college to participate in their intensive, ten-week research experience. Aisha decided to research authenticity and masculinity in hip-hop beefs. She specifically focused on the recent Drake and Meek Mill beef. Aisha submitted a paper titled, “Gettin’ Bodied by a Singin’ Nigga: What’s Really Real? Questioning Authenticity and Masculinity in the Drake and Meek Mill Beef.” She also presented her work to her cohort and other mentors (professors at UNC Chapel Hill).

# RACE and SOCIAL JUSTICE

## A Deeper Black: Race in American

**Ta-Nehisi Coates  
Journalist & Author**

Ta-Nehisi Coates is the author of *Between the World and Me*, a No.1 New York Times bestseller and winner of the 2015 National Book Award. Also in 2015, Coates received a MacArthur Genius Grant Fellowship. Coates wrote *Between the World and Me* in the form of a letter to his teenage son addressing what it means to be black in America. He is a national correspondent for the *Atlantic* and the journalist in residence at the School of Journalism at CUNY.

**October 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm  
TD Arena**

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*"But there's very little critique about why our police operate the way they operate in the first place because that critique ultimately comes back to Americans themselves."*

- Ta-Nehisi Coates

## Unintended Intersections and Dialogues

Some would think that Dr. Ade Ofunniyin and Fahamu Pecou discussed and planned their exhibits before installing them at City Gallery and the Halsey Gallery at the College of Charleston. Both exhibits feature Yoruba influenced aesthetics and cosmology. Ofunniyin's exhibit, titled *Sixteen Crowns: Manifestations of Ase*, "amplifies the grace, majesty, and beauty of an ancient culture as reflected through art and performance, presenting paintings, drawings, textiles, and sculptures by Yoruba artists."

The work displayed in *Sixteen Crowns* is mostly from the personal collection of Ade Ofunniyin. Dr. Ofunniyin through his organization Gullah Society, Inc., supports communities of artists in Osogbo and Ile Ife, Nigeria by providing art supplies, financial support, and opportunities for the exhibition of their works.

Atlanta-based artist Fahamu Pecou's works "combine observation on hip-hop, fine art, and popular culture." Pecou explores and eloquently discusses the state of existence in contemporary USA. While his work speaks loudly to the brutality and injustices that African descendant people, particularly youth, continue to face, the message that it invokes speaks loudly to anyone concerned with turning what appear to be perilous conditions into unimagined possibilities of hope and triumph.

Stay tuned for where you will be able to see and experience part two of Dr. Ofunniyin's *Sixteen Crowns* exhibit during the Spring of 2017. Fahamu's *Do or Die* exhibit can be viewed and experienced at the Halsey gallery until October 8, 2016. Ase!

# Fall 2016 Events

## August

26<sup>th</sup> Opening of Fahamu Pecou show  
@ Halsey

## September

- 7<sup>th</sup> Brown Bag Series: Shawn Halifax  
12:00pm @ McLeod Plantation
- 12<sup>th</sup> Film Festival: Higher Learning  
7:00pm @ ECTR 118
- 19<sup>th</sup> Film Festival: A Soldier's Story  
7:00pm @ ECTR 118
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Jon Hale lecture & book signing "The  
Freedom Schools: A History of Student  
Activism in the Mississippi Civil Rights  
Movement"  
6:00pm @ Avery
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Poetry Reading: Rachel Eliza Griffiths,  
Kamilah Aisha Moon, and Natalie Diaz  
6:00pm
- 26<sup>th</sup> Speaker Nicole Maskiell  
5:15pm @ Addlestone 227
- 29<sup>th</sup> Ernest Just Prize Lecture  
@ Avery

## October

- 5<sup>th</sup> Faculty Lecture Series  
12:00pm @ Addlestone 250
- 7-9<sup>th</sup> CofC Family Weekend - Tours & De-  
mos  
@ Avery
- 18<sup>th</sup> Speaker Ta-Nehisi Coates  
6:00pm @ Alumni Center
- 19-23<sup>rd</sup> Color Festival
- 24<sup>th</sup> Film Festival: The Spook Who Sat by the  
Door  
7:00pm @ ECTR 118
- 26<sup>th</sup> Speaker Louise W. Knight  
12:00pm @ Avery
- 27<sup>th</sup> Faculty seminar by Kameika Murphy

## November

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Brown Bag Series: Damon Ford-  
ham  
12:00pm @ Avery
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Disparities Report Event
- 10<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Presentation: Charles-  
ton Syllabus: Readings on Race,  
Racism, and Racial Violence  
6:00pm @ Avery
- 14<sup>th</sup> Film Festival: Boomerang  
7:00pm @ ECTR 118

## December

- 8<sup>th</sup> Avery

### AVERY RESEARCH CENTER

The Avery Research Center hosts a wide variety of lectures, brown bag discussions, art exhibits, and other programs exploring African American history and culture. A calendar of Avery's programs can be found at <http://avery.cofc.edu/programs/>.

For more information on these events or the African American Studies Program, Check out the website at <http://african-american-studies.cofc.edu/>.

# Fall 2016 Course Offerings

## Core:

|          |  |           |           |
|----------|--|-----------|-----------|
| AAST 200 | Intro to African American Studies                    | MWF 10:00 | Crabtree  |
| AAST 200 | Intro to African American Studies                    | MWF 11:00 | Crabtree  |
| AAST 200 | Intro to African American Studies                    | TR 12:15  | Ofunniyin |
| AAST 250 | Readings in African American Social Science Research | TR 10:50  | Greene    |
| ENGL 313 | African American Literature                          | MWF 11:00 | Frazier   |
| HIST 216 | African American History to 1865                     | MWF 11:00 | Powers    |
| AAST 200 | Express II - Intro to African American Studies       | MW 7:00   | Bynum     |

## Electives:

(Majors must complete at least 4 additional courses from Elective offerings for the degree at least 3 or the 4 courses must be at the 300 level or above.)

|          |  |          |                 |
|----------|--|----------|-----------------|
| AAST 300 | ST: Mongrel America: Miscegenation, Passing, and the Myth of Racial Purity | MW 2:00  | Crabtree        |
| AAST 300 | ST: Juvenile Justice   | MWF 9:25 | Ofunniyin       |
| AAST 300 | ST: Jews, Race, and American Comic Fiction                                 | TR 10:50 | Krasnoff        |
| AAST 330 | Black Images in the Media  | TR 8:00  | Greene          |
| AAST 366 | Race-Ethnic Relations  | TR 9:25  | Greene          |
| HIST 211 | American Urban History   | MW 2:00  | Hopkins         |
| HIST 310 | ST: African American History Through Biography                             | MWF 1:00 | Powers          |
| THTR 316 | African American Theatre   | TR 12:15 | Vandervort-Cobb |

## ATTENTION: SENIOR CITIZENS

*South Carolina residents who are over 60 years old are eligible to enroll in regular College of Charleston courses on a space-available basis for a fee of \$25 for the semester. Permission of the instructor is required for African American Studies courses. Call 843.953.5620 for details.*

# Resources in AAST @ CofC

## [The African American Experience](#)

is a database in The American Mosaic series of databases created by ABC-CLIO, an information services company. The database is a searchable, full-text, online encyclopedia of historical and current information, scholarly essays on contemporary issues, primary sources, and current and historical statistics. Students and faculty can access *The American Experience* through the library's web site on the [Article Databases](#) page and the [African American Studies research guide](#).



The main content in *The African American Experience* is organized into 14 historical eras beginning with “Africa and the Atlantic, 500-1500” and continuing through “New Millennium, 2001-present.” Each era is further subdivided into shorter time periods and topics of historical significance. Each subdivision contains an overview of the period; encyclopedic articles highlighting the people and events that define the time period; primary source documents; media and visuals; and (sometimes) a glossary of terms. The articles include citations of books and articles for further reading relevant to the subjects covered. Users can browse the database by era or conduct keyword searches. There is a quick search feature and an advanced search interface. Users can print or email documents from the database, and each item comes with exportable citations in MLA, APA, and Chicago citation styles.

Another interesting portion of the database is the Idea Exchange feature. Here users can read essays authored by scholars on a wide range of important questions of today such as “How do African Americans, American Indians, and Latinos challenge racism differently?” and “What are the enduring factors that have led to a persistent overrepresentation of African Americans in crime and incarceration rates?” Each essay is thoughtfully composed and well-documented with footnotes and references and is followed by biographical information about the author.

Moreover, *The African American Experience* is also a source of statistical information. The CLIOView portion of the database allows users to find and compare state and national stats concerning a number of measures including African American population, employment, education, income, marriage, poverty, voting and voter registration, health insurance coverage, and military service. Users can choose to make bar graphs, line graphs, and pie charts based on the statistics found.

For more information about *The American Experience* database, contact Steven Profit, reference librarian, at [profits@cofc.edu](mailto:profits@cofc.edu).

With the International African American Museum coming to Charleston soon we are excited for the growth of African American Studies in the Charleston area as well as throughout South Carolina. The Museum will serve as a hub for regional heritage, sending visitors out across Charleston and South Carolina to access additional African American sites and experiences.

As we began the start of this new academic year the African American Studies program at the College of Charleston has offered its services as a clearing house for news of events relevant to African American Studies. We have currently created a calendar and listings-service drawing attention to African American-related events happening across the state. The calendar is on our website and will be providing information on events that we are aware of. To keep our calendar up to date with the latest events we invite you to submit events that you believe would be beneficial to this calendar. If you would also like to be added to our African American-related Events email list please contact Casey Smith at [smithcn1@cofc.edu](mailto:smithcn1@cofc.edu).

The **Event Calendar** can be found here:

<http://african-american-studies.cofc.edu/events/index.php>

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## Where Are You Now?

### Let Us Know What You're Up To

For 20 years the African American Studies Program at the College of Charleston has educated students in African American history and culture. We would love to hear what those students are up to now. Let us know about the exciting professional and personal milestones you've reached since leaving the College. You can email Dr. Lewis with the details at [lewiss@cofc.edu](mailto:lewiss@cofc.edu).



**not just in february**

### African American Studies

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66 George Street  
Charleston, SC 29424

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