

The Griot Institute for the the Study of Black Lives & Cultures

Bucknell
UNIVERSITY



Faculty, staff and student intellectual and creative engagement with the interdisciplinary investigation of the cultures, histories, narratives, peoples, geographies and arts of Africa and the African diaspora



The Griot Institute for the Study of Black Lives & Cultures

GRIOT: A central figure in many West African cultures. Historically, the griot held many functions, including community historian, cultural critic, indigenous artist and collective spokesperson.

The Griot Institute for the Study of Black Lives & Cultures provides faculty, staff and student intellectual and creative engagement with the interdisciplinary investigation of the cultures, histories, narratives, peoples, geographies and arts of Africa and the African diaspora.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Griot Institute for the Study of Black Lives & Cultures is a collaborative enterprise to ensure meaningful campus-wide engagement annually with programming devoted primarily to the interdisciplinary exploration of the aesthetic, artistic and scholarly cultural products and intellectual currents of historical and contemporary Africana communities. The Griot Institute embraces narrative as a thematic and theoretical framework for its projects and programming.

CYMONE FOURSHEY, Director (2020-22)

Professor Fourshey teaches Africa related topics in the Department of History and the Department of International Relations. Her research focuses on environment, agriculture, gender and hospitality in early African Histories. She was the Acting Director of the Griot Institute for 2019-20 and is the Carmen Gillespie Director for 2020-22.



MICHELLE LAUVER, Programs Manager

Michelle received her Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Lebanon Valley College and Master's degree in Educational Development and Strategies from Wilkes University. After several years of public school teaching and being a home educator, Michelle is happy to serve as the Griot Institute's Programs Manager. She enjoys overseeing the Griot's programs, events and daily business, as well as helping to provide unique opportunities for the Bucknell community to better understand the African diaspora. A native of Central Pennsylvania, Michelle lives in Winfield with her husband and two children.



CARMEN GILLESPIE, Founding Director (2010-19)

Carmen Gillespie, Director and founder of the Griot Institute, received her Ph.D. from Emory University. In addition to many individual scholarly articles and poem publications, she was the author of the literary critical works, *A Critical Companion to Toni Morrison* (2007), *A Critical Companion to Alice Walker* (2011), and was the editor of *Toni Morrison: Forty Years in the Clearing* (2012). Carmen also published a poetry chapbook, *Lining the Rails* (2008) and three poetry collections, *Jonestown: A Vexation*, which won the 2011 Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Prize, and *The Blue Black Wet of Wood* (2016), the winner of Two Sylvia's Wilder Series Poetry Prize, and *The Ghosts of Monticello: A Recitatif* (2017), which was the winner of the 2016 Stillhouse Press Prize for Poetry. Carmen's awards included an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship for Excellence in Poetry and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Mellon Foundation, the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. She is a Cave Canem Fellow and a Fulbright scholar. *Essence* magazine named Carmen one of its 40 favorite poets in commemoration of the magazine's 40th anniversary. Sadly, Carmen passed away unexpectedly at her home in August 2019.



GRIOT INSTITUTE OBJECTIVES

1. To address the issues noted in the 2011 campus climate report regarding diversity and inclusiveness, particularly as it pertains to the identification of feelings of alienation and isolation;
2. To use campus-wide programming to educate the Bucknell campus community about issues of race, racism, and discrimination in an effort to transform problematic elements of our campus climate;
3. To assist Bucknell in its efforts to become a more diverse and inclusive institution as described in The Plan for Bucknell 2025;
4. To strengthen institutional ties with Bucknell's black alumni;
5. To engage the Bucknell campus community as active participants in learning and the creative process;
6. To serve as a catalyst and model for curricular transformation through programming and scholarship devoted to in-depth investigation and exploration of the study of Black lives and cultures. In addition to campus lectures and guest performances, the Griot Institute seeks to fill a vacuum in Bucknell's campus life by providing opportunities for sustained investigation of an academic question or problem through installations, interdisciplinary course collaborations, serial discussion groups, and other meaningful endeavors that emerge;
7. To enhance Bucknell University's practice of excellence and to support its mission through the implementation of innovative interdisciplinary scholarship and programming that highlights the University's specific commitment to intellectual pursuits and general dedication to interdisciplinary exploration, study, research and performance;
8. To engage Bucknell students, staff and faculty in collaborative projects with recognized and emerging artists, intellectuals, and scholars in order to create and investigate innovative points of disciplinary and theoretical connection and disconnection involving the study of Black lives and cultures;
9. To bring innovative artists, intellectuals, and scholars to campus to allow students to undertake ambitious projects and to earn course credit, and to strengthen programmatic ties among individual departments, programs, and other campus and community entities;
10. To encourage students, staff and faculty to explore and cross-fertilize the undeveloped and unimagined intersections between Africana studies and the arts, humanities, social sciences, and other disciplines;
11. To provide innovative and unique opportunities for the Bucknell University and Lewisburg communities to engage with and to experience the intellectual and artistic endeavors and cultural products of the Africana world.



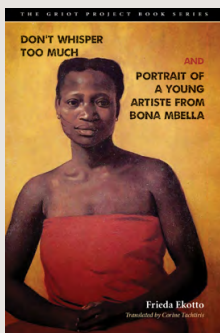
THE GRIOT PROJECT BOOK SERIES

Editor, 2010-19: Carmen Gillespie, Professor of English and Director of the Griot Institute

The book series is published in partnership with the Bucknell University Press and the Rutgers University Press. The publications of the Griot Project Series consist of scholarly monographs and creative works devoted to the interdisciplinary exploration of the aesthetic, artistic and cultural products and intellectual currents of historical and contemporary African America and of the African diaspora using narrative as a thematic and theoretical framework for the selection and execution of its publications. The series considers potential publications in Africana studies from a wide range of disciplines. Of particular interest are collections by African-American poets.

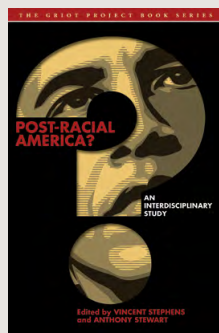


TITLES IN THE SERIES



Don't Whisper Too Much and Portrait of a Young Artist from Bona Mbella

Freida Ekotto, University of Michigan (2019)



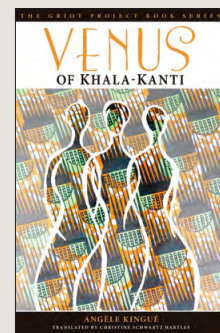
Post-Racial America?: An Interdisciplinary Conversation

Anthony Stewart, Bucknell University, and Vincent Stephens, Dickinson College, eds. (2016)

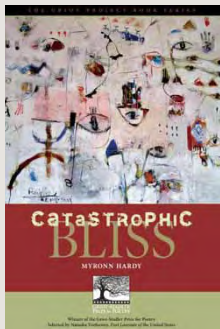


In Media Res: Race, Identity, & Pop Culture in the 21st Century

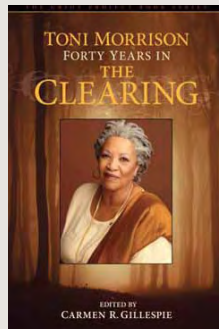
James Braxton Peterson, Ed. (2015)



Venus of Khala-Kanti Angèle Kingué (2015)



Catastrophic Bliss Myronn Hardy (2012) Winner of the Griot-Stadler Prize for Poetry



Toni Morrison: Forty Years in The Clearing Carmen R. Gillespie (2012)



African American Arts: Activism, Aesthetics and Futurity University of Cincinnati professor Sharrell D. Luckett, editor (2019)



Testimony: Found Poems from the Special Court for Sierra Leone Shanee Stepakoff, University of Rhode Island (2021)



ANNUAL LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE SERIES

Each academic year the Griot Institute offers the Bucknell community a series that focuses on a question or issue of concern central to the study of Black lives and cultures, and seeks to explore and examine various questions in terms of their historical and contemporary resonances and significances. The series interrogates these questions from multiple disciplinary perspectives and employs the expertise and artistry of guest lecturers and performers in order to navigate their intellectual nuances and moral and ethical dimensions. Events are free and open to the Bucknell community, as well as the general public.

SPRING 2022

Technologies of Disruption: Aesthetics, Innovations and Narratives of Blackness

During Spring 2022 The Griot Institute will curate the series Technologies of Disruption: Aesthetics, Innovations and Narratives of Blackness. The theme allows the community to raise critical questions, engage with thought leaders, and delve into the academic, artistic, and professional issues related to how people and systems leverage technologies for and against human creativity, sovereignty, and community building. How have thinkers such as like Ruha Benjamin, Octavia E. Butler, André Brock, Bill T. Jones, John Muollo III, Safiya Noble, Nsé Ufot and Boris Willis marshalled their voices, disrupted the narrative, and pushed audiences to imagine alternative pasts, presents, and futures through a wide range of technologies?

SPRING 2021

The Griot: Artists, Agitators & Visionaries – Chronicling Our Stories

In 2021, The Griot Institute celebrated its 10th year anniversary!

The theme sought to promote the narrativity of artistic, political and historical expression as a means of better understanding and recording history. Due to the pandemic, the 2021 Griot Spring Series events were held virtually on Zoom.

Guests in this series included Rudolph Ware, Yacouba Sissoko, Coco Fusco, Nathaniel Hunt and Kia Corthron.



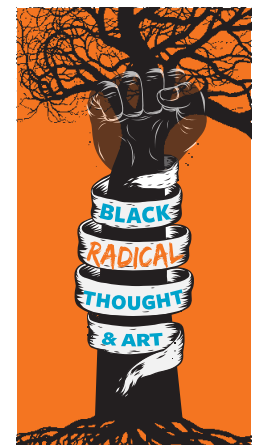
SPRING 2020

Black Radical Thought and Art - Multidisciplinarily Considered

This series explored aspects of *black radical thought* as a continuing presence in the historical and contemporary discourse(s) on “racism.” At the turn of the last century, historian, sociologist, and activist W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that “the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color-line.” Du Bois’ identification of systemic racism as the most significant issue of the last century was not only prescient, but also describes the racial realities of the current century. Many black thinkers and artists have considered and wrestled with “racism” and how to address it. One constellation of thought is often referred to as *black radical thought*. The series reflected on the meanings, significances and impacts of this ever-expanding and multifarious realm of thought in confronting the intractable presence of racism in and as the American project.

Guests in this series included Nikki Giovanni, Darrick Hamilton, and Antoinette Nwandu.

Due to COVID-19, this series was cut short, and Dayo Gore and Ishmael Reed were unable to present.



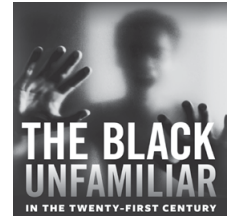
ANNUAL LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE SERIES

SPRING 2019

The Black Unfamiliar in the Twenty-First Century

This series asked the campus community to consider, in the face of the new century, the ways that scholars, artists and practitioners have reconsidered familiar aspects of black culture, intellectual inquiry, and artistic production and have troubled traditional notions of black familiarity. These endeavors range from a reimagining of black theological traditions in terms of secular humanism, demythologizing the realities of contemporary black immigration and asylum policy, and rewriting Confederate histories in light of black experience.

Guests in this series included Edwidge Danticat, Christy Coleman, Carol Wayne White, DeShuna Spencer, Margo Natalie Crawford, Rochelle Spencer, and Baz Dreisinger.

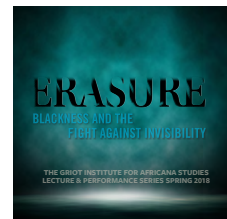


SPRING 2018

Erasure: Blackness and the Fight Against Invisibility

This series engaged the topic of erasure from multiple disciplinary, artistic, and intellectual perspectives. Centering Percival Everett's novel *Erasure* as a focal point, the series brought to campus a wide array of scholars and artists to consider the impacts of this eviscerating phenomenon of erasure.

Guests in this series included Rebecca Moore, Percival Everett, C. Riley Shorton, A Band Called Death, Scott Ellsworth, Jason Osder, Dread Scott, and Pamela Newkirk.



SPRING 2017

The Black Body (Re)Considered

This series engaged the campus community and beyond in an extended conversation about the black body from multiple disciplinary perspectives. It is rooted in questions about the intersections of identity, race, gender, sexuality, historical context and agency.

Guests in this series included Bayo Holsey, Nona Faustine Simmons, Rosamond King, Harriet Washington, Nyle Fort, Harvey Young, Abby Dobson, Dorothy Roberts, and George Yancy.



SPRING 2016

African American Art, Activism and Aesthetics/Honoring the Legacy of James Baldwin

This series was rooted in questions about the intersections of identity, race, gender, sexuality, aesthetics, and activism as they affect and inform a wide range of African American artistic expressions.



SPRING 2015

Post-Obama Paradigms

The aim of the Griot Institute's Spring 2015 series was to extend the conversation and narrative about the myriad significances, meanings, and cultural transformations(?) available to America now that it has elected its first African American president. Particularly, we were interested in deliberating the symbolic, ideological, iconographic impacts on Americans' conceptions of themselves as a people.



ANNUAL LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE SERIES

SPRING 2014

Civil Rights Series

The Griot Institute offered the University and local community an opportunity to examine the histories of the American civil rights movement in an effort to extend the conversation and to acknowledge and define the necessity and current trajectories of the primary goal of the movement: to enable the US to fulfill its articulated principles, guaranteeing equality to all of its citizens.



SPRING 2013

Jonestown Reconsidered

Marking the 35th anniversary of the Jonestown tragedy, this series offered an interdisciplinary examination of the narratives that surround the Jonestown massacre from multiple perspectives — a narrative that engages fundamental questions of religion, race, nationality, power, civil rights, sexuality, poverty, aspiration, and identity that are not disconnected from the dilemmas of the present moment.



SPRING 2012

Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson

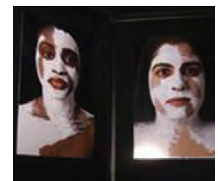
In this series we explored and examined the various narratives of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson in terms of their historical and contemporary resonances and significances. The series offered multiple disciplinary perspectives and employed the expertise and artistry of guest lecturers and performers in order to present the various nuances and dimensions of the tale.



SPRING 2011

FACEing Race

Visiting artist E. Patrick Johnson led students and staff in a three-day performance workshop. The workshop resulted in participants performing monologues concerning issues of race, gender, and identity in the 21st century as part of an interactive artistic installation. Another main feature of the installation was visual art and poetry on the same theme, created by students in the courses of Professors Fennell, Gillespie, Long, Martincich, McCallum, Peterson, Ponnuswami and Williams. E. Patrick Johnson closed the event with a performance of his one-man play, *Pouring Tea*.



CONFERENCES

The Griot Institute has held several on-campus conferences on relevant themes. The first conference, *Post-Racial America?*, was held in the fall of 2012. In the fall of 2014, the Griot Institute held its second conference, *Freedom & Justice: Reflections on the 50th Anniversary of the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. The fall of 2016 saw the Griot Institute's third on-campus conference, *African American Arts: Aesthetics and Activism*.

2016 CONFERENCE

African-American Arts: Activism and Aesthetics

In the fall of 2016, participants engaged in critical conversations as activists, scholars, and/or artists reflected on the intersections between African-American art, activism, the creative process, and questions of aesthetics. Saxophonist Jimmy Greene provided Friday evening entertainment, and keynote speaker, Carrie Mae Weems, presented on Saturday, and there was a reading by poet and playwright Ntozake Shange.



2014 CONFERENCE

Freedom and Justice: Reflections on the 50th Anniversary of the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The National Economic Society (NEA), American Association of Hispanic Economists (ASHE) and The Griot Institute at Bucknell collaborated on a conference entitled *Freedom and Justice: Reflections on the 50th Anniversary of the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* which was held August 1-2, 2014 at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa.



“Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within. Freedom is never granted; it is won. Justice is never given; it is exacted. Freedom and justice must be struggled for by the oppressed of all lands and races, and the struggle must be continuous, for freedom is never a final act, but a continuing evolving process to higher and higher levels of human, social, economic, political, and religious relationships.” — A. Philip Randolph

The conference called attention to the words of A. Philip Randolph, labor activist and civil rights leader as it marked the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Randolph and other activists linked racial justice with economic justice for all. The conference provided a forum for discussion of ongoing racial-ethnic economic disparities and policy recommendations designed to counter them.

2012 CONFERENCE

Post-Racial America?: An Interdisciplinary Conversation

The Griot Institute hosted a mini-conference entitled *Post-Racial America?: An Interdisciplinary Conversation* on Nov. 9-10, 2012, at Bucknell University. Farah Jasmine Griffin, the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies at Columbia University, was the keynote speaker.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WEEK

The Griot Institute works with the MLK Week Committee to bring scholars and activists to campus to engage our communities in conversation that reflects Dr. King's legacy and philosophies.

MLK WEEK 2022: *Mighty Causes Calling: Community, Coalition & Radical Revolution* is planned for January 17-23.

MLK WEEK 2021: *Lessons in Resistance* Due to the pandemic, the events in this series were virtual and took place throughout the spring 2021 semester. An array of events were designed to raise awareness and empower participants to enact individual and community change. Following a year of mass organizing, community building and heightened awareness of the injustices people of color face in the United States, it was important to take time to reflect on lessons we can gain from resistance movements. There is a great deal we must be attentive to as we work to undo racist systems and create more just communities. Presenters included Judy Richardson, Rudolph Ware, Soul Fire Farm and Amira Rose Davis. Events included student snaptalks, a multifaith celebration, a Stono:StepAfrika performance, an intergenerational panel and a piano series featuring Black composers.

LESSONS IN
RESISTANCE MLK WEEK 2021

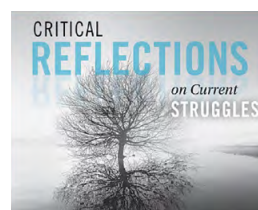
MLK WEEK 2020: *Time to Break the Silence* took place Jan. 20-26 and included a charitable gift drive as well as an array of events designed to raise awareness and empower participants to enact individual and community change. Presenters included Julian Agyeman, Opal Tometi, Toshi Reagon, Amanda Gorman, Lois Moses and Allison Miller.



MLK WEEK 2019: *Facing Change* took place Jan. 21-27, 2019. James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." To that end, our community engaged in critical conversations about contemporary issues, such as racism, immigration, and the history of the lynching of Mexicans, while considering the continuing legacy of Dr. King in relationship to these issues. Presenters included Richard Boddie, Jason Sokol, Patrisia Macias-Rojas, Nicholas Villanueva and Ibram Kendi.

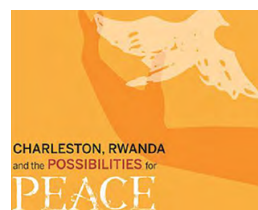


MLK WEEK 2018: *Critical Reflections on Current Struggles* took place from Jan. 15-21 and included a charitable gift drive and an array of events designed to raise awareness and empower participants to enact individual and community change. Presenters included Eddie S. Glaude, Khalid Latif, Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, Cornel West and Robert George.



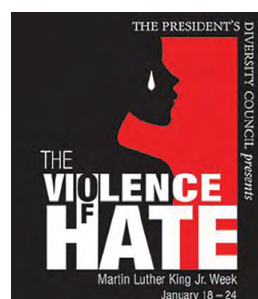
MLK WEEK 2017

Bucknell's 2017 Martin Luther King Jr. Week brought to campus social justice leaders to discuss King's legacy of peace and nonviolence. The 2017 series, ***Charleston, Rwanda and the Possibilities for Peace***, took place from Jan. 16-22 and included a charitable gift drive and an array of events designed to raise awareness and empower participants to enact individual and community change. Presenters included Sharon Washington Risher, Joseph Sebarenzi and Arun Gandhi.



MLK WEEK 2016

In 2016, the President's Diversity Council, with assistance from the Griot Institute, presented a mini-series for Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Week intended to engage our community in a conversation about Dr. King's legacy and philosophies and the intractable and interrelated problems of violence, racism and hatred. ***The Violence of Hate*** theme was chosen in response to the growing frequency of violent events in our country. The week included lectures, discussions and workshops as well as a day of service, a screening of *A Force More Powerful: Nashville, We Were Warriors*, the annual Beloved Community Dinner and "A Service for Peace and Justice" at Rooke Chapel. Presenters included Haider Hamza, Mark Barden, Ian Hockley, Jeremy Richman, David Wheeler, Jack Levin, Nyle Fort, Jim Lawson and Jennifer L. Pozner.



PROJECTS AND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Each year the Griot Institute works closely with a Presidential Fellow, a graduate student, and a group of undergraduate students to build on past research projects as well as to pursue new research endeavors. The aim is to teach students research skills, allow them to practice those skills, and to disseminate the findings and data via digital platforms to larger audiences.

Current student-led projects include:

Black History at Bucknell Timeline

The Griot Institute created and manages the Black History at Bucknell timeline with the intention of detailing and highlighting some significant milestones in Bucknell University's African-American history.

Marissa Calhoun '10, began collecting data for the timeline as part of her independent study course work during the spring of 2009. Much of the material featured in the timeline was uncovered in the University archives and also derives from the testimonies of Bucknell students, staff, and alum. The information presented serves the purpose of providing essential information about Black Bucknell. The timeline is updated as needed and is currently being moved to a different application.



Civil Rights Project

The Bucknell Civil Rights Project is an archive of Bucknell's records from the Civil Rights era. It provides documentation of civil rights issues at Bucknell, Bucknell's NAACP chapter and scholarship opportunities for black students, information on African American speakers that visited the University, materials on exchange programs Bucknell participated in with historically black universities, the University's ongoing attempt to increase diversity, and the difficulties that black students attending predominantly white universities during this time period often faced. Current Griot students are working with Digital Humanities staff to organize and enhance the accessibility of this project.



The Sugar Mills Project

This project involves researching, mapping, historicizing, and narratizing the sugar mills of Antigua. As part of a summer 2016 course in the Caribbean, Carmen Gillespie and a group of students began surveying the land on the island of Antigua with a keen eye towards the island's history. Since then, the project has been interested in the numerous sugar mills on the island, which totaled about 200 despite the size of the space — about the same size as Union County! Many Bucknell in the Caribbean groups have had the good fortune to meet Agnes Meeker, an independent historian, who has spent decades cataloging the location and histories of each of the mills on Antigua. In 2018, a group of Bucknell student engineers worked with the Griot to create a template for this project, which is an interactive, web-based map of Antigua that includes each of its six parishes and every sugar mill that existed in its history. The interactive map provides information about each mill, its ownership chronology, additional details about the mill, and, in several cases, specifics about the enslaved peoples who worked there. Current students are working with Digital Humanities staff to enhance the map and continually update the data with new information from Agnes.



Past projects:

Caribbean Outreach Partnership

Griot students have been working to establish partnerships connecting Lewisburg and the islands of Antigua and St. Kitts and Nevis in the Caribbean.

Fall Supply Drive for St. John Hospice of Antigua

The St. John Hospice is a charitable, not-for-profit organization in Antigua. They provide care and respite for the terminally ill. The Hospice is a charity funded body, and, as such, they rely heavily on the generosity of businesses and individuals in the form of donations. The Hospice is the only one in Antigua. They are continuously in need of equipment and supplies to better enable them to serve the people and communities of Antigua.



Spring Supply Drive for Violet O Jeffers Nichollas (VOJN) Primary School in Nevis

Each year the Griot Institute sends generously donated school supplies from the Bucknell and Lewisburg communities to Nevis to benefit the activities and education of children who attend the school.

Charles Bell Genealogy Project

Born in Rumley, Virginia [now West Virginia] on December 11th, 1827, Charles R. Bell was a former slave who fled to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Bell escaped from slavery in 1851 and fled to Canada, taking along with him his wife. Bell returned home to West Virginia after the Civil War. According to legend, on the way back to his wife and new home in Canada, Bell encountered then Bucknell University president, Justin Loomis, who asked him to work on the campus felling trees and other tasks necessary to the University's growth and development. For the next forty years, Charles R. Bell served as a highly-regarded employee of Bucknell University. Bucknell undergraduate research students are working with Bucknell professor emerita Marj Kastner in order to find descendants of Mr. Bell, with the ultimate hope of honoring Mr. Bell by presenting his family with an honorary degree in his name.



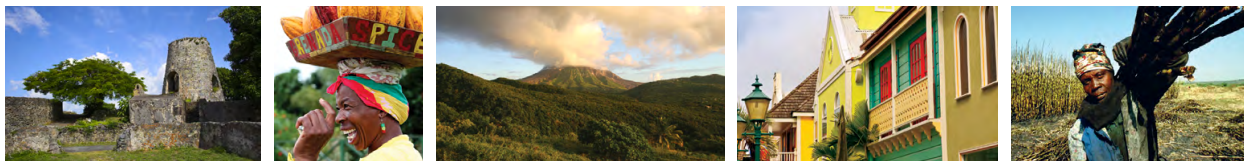
Multicultural Female Playwrights

The goal of this project was to provide all theatre admirers, dramatic literature fanatics, aspiring directors or actresses, and future English or Theatre majors at Bucknell with a resource for learning more about multicultural female playwrights.

The Storytelling Project

A traditional griot is an interdisciplinary storyteller – at once poet, artist, historian, economist, sociologist and musician. Bucknell's Griot Institute takes as a metaphor for its central function the characteristics of the griot. The Bucknell Griot Storytelling Project allowed the Institute to add to its many projects the role of functioning as a griot for Bucknell. The project gathered oral narratives designed by professors as pedagogical projects, as well as free form narratives from members of the Bucknell community in an effort to define who we were at that moment in our collective history.





BUCKNELL IN THE CARIBBEAN

From 2016-19 Bucknell in the Caribbean was under the direction of Carmen Gillespie.

Through readings, lectures, field trips, volunteer projects, attendance and participation in cultural performances, ethnographic interviews, as well as analytical reflections on their experiences, Bucknell in the Caribbean provides first-hand information about the literatures, histories, and cultures of the Caribbean. Students explore the long-term cross-cultural impacts of slavery, colonization, independence and tourism. The three islands of Antigua, St. Kitts, and Nevis serve as our classroom.

Program Information

Students participating in Bucknell in the Caribbean spend the majority of their stay on the beautiful and historic island of Nevis in the Caribbean. Along with traditional literary analyses, the course explores oral narratives from a range of Caribbean people living on the islands. With its distinctive synthesis of British, Spanish, French and West African cultures, its history as one of the most profitable locations for sugarcane production, its preservation of the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, its role as slave market and as a locale where thousands of Africans were subjected to lifetimes of enslavement, and its proximity to the islands of St. Kitts and Antigua, the island of Nevis is an ideal location to begin exploration of the vast complexity of the region known as the Caribbean. Bucknell in the Caribbean students earn one credit for completing the course, the Literatures, Histories, and Cultures of the Caribbean (ENLS 227), in three weeks between mid-June and early July.



ADDITIONAL EVENTS, PROJECTS AND AFFILIATIONS

Griot Institute Opening Event

Each year, the Griot's opening event is a celebration to welcome students, staff, and faculty into the new academic year. If weather permits, the event is held outdoors with food and entertainment and includes a performance by a professional African drum and dance ensemble.



The Dancing Mind Challenge

The Griot Institute created and hosts the Dancing Mind Challenge to urge the campus and community to 'unplug' from all distractions and electronics — computers, cell phones, sound devices, television, etc. — for eight or four consecutive hours and commit to spending that time reading. Inspired by Toni Morrison's reflections in her essay, "The Dancing Mind," the challenge is an exercise in self-reflection and a personal litmus test, an intellectual marathon, that allows participants to engage fully in the act of reading — the dance of the mind.



Brawley/MLK Bust Project

In the spring of 2017, the Griot Institute was a partner in the establishment of the Brawley bust, located in the garden in front of Vaughn Literature Building. The bust commemorates the 1875 graduation of Bucknell's first black graduate, Edward McKnight Brawley, and the 1958 visit to campus of Dr. Martin Luther King. Professor Joe Meiser, (Art & Art History) designed and sculpted the commemorative bust. The project was made possible through the generous support of the Office of the President and the Black Alumni Association. The Brawley Bust Project was a collaboration between Joe Meiser, Provost Barbara Altmann, the Griot Institute, University Advancement, Communications, Facilities and the Samek Art Museum.



Griot Sponsored Trips

Each year, the Griot Institute sponsors trips to various historical, cultural, and/or artistic venues and/or events that are relevant to its mission and provides the university and local community with opportunities unavailable on-campus or in the immediate area. Recent trips have been to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a performance of Step Afrika!, and the New York Underground Railroad and Slavery Tour.



Griot Sponsored Book Reading/Film Viewing Groups

In conjunction with our other programs, the Griot Institute hosts book reading and/or film viewing groups. Recent book groups read and discussed *Embodying Black Experience* by Harvey Young, *Let It Burn* by Michael Boyette and Randi Boyette, *Death in a Promised Land* by Scott Ellsworth and *Erasure* by Percival Everett. In Fall of 2018, the Griot Institute sponsored "Danticat-in-Depth," a series of four book groups based on the works of Edwidge Danticat. In 2019-20 the Griot Institute sponsored *Morrison Meditation* events to celebrate the life and literature of Toni Morrison. This included viewing *The Pieces That I Am* and reading *Beloved*.



West African Drumming Lessons

The Griot Institute offers the campus community a unique experience to learn West African drumming. The Institute offers approximately ten lessons per semester as a fun and educational means of better understanding West African music and culture.



African Studies Minor

The Griot Institute supports students and faculty in the interdepartmental African Studies minor, which gives students an understanding of Africa's rich histories, diversity, and role in the world today, while contributing an international focus to the liberal arts education.

Africana Studies Program

Africana Studies is the study of interrelated histories, arts, politics, intellectual currents and cultural products of Africa and the African diaspora. The Griot has long supported students in the African Studies minor and more recently the Africana Studies major through research projects, study abroad in Ghana and the Caribbean, and internships.

The history of Africa cannot be separated from the history of the West. The work we do, the music we listen to and the foods we eat have all been shaped by the interactions between African peoples, their descendants and Western Europe.



Yale University Black Solidarity Conference

The Black Solidarity Conference at Yale brings undergraduates of all colors together to discuss issues pertaining to the African Diaspora. Through discussions, panels, networking, and social gatherings, over 700 students from across the country analyze issues affecting black communities and explore solutions to undertake at their respective college campuses. BSC is the largest conference held at Yale University and continues to grow each year. The conference is student run and hosted annually in February. The Griot Institute sponsors and organizes the trip for a group of Bucknell students each year.



HONORS AND AWARDS

Black Student Union Kwanzaa Award

In 2017, the Griot Institute was honored by the Black Student Union who awarded us their Nia Award for building and supporting the University community.

National Endowment for the Humanities/Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

In 2014, the Griot received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in support of our Civil Rights lecture/performance series.

Monticello

Following the Griot's 2012 Sally Hemings/Thomas Jefferson series, including our visit to Monticello and our interaction with curators there, Monticello developed a specific Sally Hemings tour and credited our interactions with its creation.

Barry R. Maxwell Award

In 2010, the Griot Institute was honored with a university Maxwell Award for its creation and implementation of the Dancing Mind Challenge.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Faculty, staff and emeriti who help guide the Griot Institute's narrative



Cymone Fourshey, Acting Director (2019-20), Director (2020-22)

Serving as a faculty member in both History and International Relations, Professor Fourshey focuses on environment, agriculture, gender and hospitality in early African Histories. She is the Carmen Gillespie Director of the Griot Institute for 2020-2022.

Hildreth-Mirza
570-577-2124
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Muhammad Ali

Muhammad Ali is the Bucknell University Muslim Chaplain.

Elaine Langone Center
570-577-1061
maao34@bucknell.edu



Nicholas Brady

Nicholas Brady is an assistant professor in the Africana Studies program.

305 Academic West
570-577-3021
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Margaret Cronin

Peg Cronin is a writing and teaching consultant in the Writing Center.

Carnegie Building
570-577-3141
mcronin@bucknell.edu



Rafe Dalleo

Professor Dalleo teaches world literature in the English department, with a particular focus on the Caribbean.

209B Vaughan Literature Building
570-577-1653
r.dalleo@bucknell.edu



Chris Dancy

Professor Dancy teaches in the Computer Science department in topics ranging from Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science to CS & Society. His more recent research has focused on understanding Blackness in the context of developing and using Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science systems.

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570-577-1907
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Robert Gainer

Professor Emeritus Robert Gainer served as chair of Bucknell's Department of Theatre & Dance. His interests include stage direction, acting, dance, multi-disciplinary performance/arts and modern British theatre and culture.

gainer@bucknell.edu



Anjalee Deshpande Hutchinson

Anjalee Deshpande Hutchinson is a professor of Theatre & Dance with teaching interests in acting and directing, devising, and the Chekhov acting technique.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Maisha Kelly

Maisha Kelly is in her 10th year as senior associate director of athletics and senior woman administrator at Bucknell. Kelly is a key member of the department's leadership team, where she holds a sport supervisory role and has played a significant part in the department's long-range planning initiatives. She also has reporting oversight for the Office of NCAA Compliance and Student Services, and she is an important liaison with the Bucknell faculty and deans as well as with the offices of Human Resources and Admissions and Financial Aid.

Athletics
570-577-1712
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Barry Long

Professor Long directs the jazz ensemble and teaches coursework in jazz and music theory. He is currently working on a recording project inspired by spirituals and iconic Civil Rights photography.

212 Sigfried Weis Music Bldg.
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Elena Machado

Professor Machado Sáez teaches courses on contemporary American, US Latino/a, and Caribbean diaspora literatures.

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Dustyn Martincich

Professor Martincich's research areas are in the intersections of dance and theatre performance, communication of narrative through performance, and in the roots of jazz dance, social dance, and musical theatre.

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Terri Norton

Professor Terri Norton serves the college of the engineering leadership team as the Associate Dean for Students and Strategic Initiatives and the executive director of the Engineering Success Alliance. She supports the academic experience of all engineering students. She is also a professor of civil and environmental engineering. Her technical expertise is in the area of structural dynamics and structural vulnerability and her research involves evaluating the effects of hazards on the built environment, debris management, and disaster recovery.

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Chet'la Sebree

Professor Chet'la Sebree teaches poetry in the Creative Writing Program and serves as the Director of the Stadler Center for Poetry & Literary Arts. Her research and writing primarily focus on race, gender and identity.

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Hiram Smith

Hiram Smith is an assistant professor of Spanish and Linguistics in Bucknell's Spanish department. His research focuses on marginalized speech communities in creolophone, Spanish-speaking and anglophone America. He has published articles on the Afro-Hispanic creole language, *Palenquero*, which is spoken in northern Colombia; he also published the first major study on the history and usage of the n-word in society. An integral part of Professor Smith's research philosophy is that community members take part in the scientific study of their own community, whenever possible, and that researchers should always put science in the service of the community.

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570-577-1763
hls019@bucknell.edu



Jaye Austin Williams

A specialist in the melding of drama theory and performance with critical Black studies, Professor Williams travels internationally, lecturing and teaching interdisciplinary seminars on the analysis of structural racism(s) and their myriad performances, both subtle and overt, in modernity. Her current research focus is on Black dramatists' treatments of these performed antagonisms.

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Thelathia 'Nikki' Young

As a social justice advocate and black queer ethicist, Associate Provost Nikki Young grounds her scholarship and teaching in the promotion of equity, inclusion and liberation. At the core of her work and practice is the ethical interrogation of social, political and material disparities related to embodied difference (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, social class, national origin, religion) and their connection to larger systems of privilege, power and oppression.

230 Marts Hall
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Amine Zidouh

Prof. Zidouh's teaching and research focus on decolonial studies, along with issues of language and power. He is currently working on a documentary film tackling issues of racial injustice and urban segregation in France.

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amine.zidouh@bucknell.edu



Meenakshi Ponnuswami – Emeritus Board Member

Professor Ponnuswami's interests include modern drama, theatre history, and performance theory. Her publications focus on post-war British theatre, most recently on the work of black British and British Asian playwrights.

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Griot Institute
for the Study of
Black Lives & Cultures

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Bucknell Griot Institute