

Jennifer Denise Williams

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EDUCATION

PhD English, The University of Texas at Austin, 2006
MA African and African American Studies, Clark Atlanta University, 1998
BS Psychology, African American Studies (minor), Howard University, 1993
Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2024- Associate Professor, Department of English, Howard University
2017-2024 Assistant Professor, Department of English, Howard University
2013-2017 Assistant Professor, Department of English and Program in Women's and Gender Studies, Morgan State University
2012-2013 Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Rice University
2011-2012 Visiting Professor, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Goucher College
2008-2011 Assistant Professor/Faculty Fellow, Department of English, New York University
2006-2008 Assistant Professor, Department of English and Program in African American and African Studies, Michigan State University

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Intimate Cities: Black Women's Literary Architectures of Segregation and Dreams of Freedom (in progress).

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters:

"'An Elegy of Place': Affective Mapping in June Jordan's *Civil Wars*." *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, August 2023, pp. 525-541.

"Black Women's 1930s Protest Fiction." *African American Literature in Transition, 1930-1940: Volume 10*. Eds. Eve Dunbar and Ayesha Hardison. Cambridge UP, 2022.

"Gloria Naylor, Ann Petry, and Black Feminist Regard." *Naylor in the Archives* (resubmitted; U of Mississippi Press).

"Travelin' Women: Black Feminist Migrations, Diasporas, and Cosmopolitanisms," Special Section Co-edited with Ifeoma Nwankwo. *Meridians*, vol. 15, no. 2, Fall 2017, pp. 382-388.

"Black American Girls in Paris: Sex, Race, and Cosmopolitan Desire in Andrea Lee's *Sarah Phillips* and Shay Youngblood's *Black Girl in Paris*." *Contemporary Women's Writing*, vol. 9, no.2, July 2015, pp. 238-256.

"'A Woman was Lynched the Other Day': Memory, Gender, and the Limits of Traumatic Representation." *Gender and Lynching: The Politics of Memory*, edited by Evelyn M. Simien, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 81-102.

"Jean Toomer's *Cane* and the Erotics of Mourning." *Southern Literary Journal* vol. 40, no.2, Spring 2008, pp. 87-101.
--reprinted in *Cane: Norton Critical Edition*, 2nd ed., edited by Rudolph Byrd and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., W.W. Norton and Co., 2011, pp. 404-417.

"The Performance of Trauma in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*." *Africanizing Knowledge*, edited by Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, Transaction Publishers, 2002, pp. 273-288.

Reviews, Interviews, and Bibliographic Essays:

"'They Call it Bronzeville!': Revisiting Chicago's South Side," Review Essay of *The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation* by Natalie Y. Moore, *Spatializing Blackness: Architectures of Confinement and Black Masculinity in Chicago* by Rashad Shabazz, and *South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration* by Marcia Chatelain, *The Black Scholar* vol. 47, no. 4, October 2017, pp. 69-75.

"An Interesting Woman: A Conversation with Andrea Lee," *Meridians* vol. 15, no.2, 2017, pp. 507-517.

"Ann Petry" in *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century American Fiction*, edited by Patrick O'Donnell, Justus Nieland, and David Madden, Blackwell Publishing, 2010, pp. 765-767.

"Bearing Witness: Review Essay of *Lynching Photographs* by Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle Smith and *Lynching and Spectacle* by Amy Louise Wood," *e-misférica*, vol. 7, no.1, July 2010.

Review of *South of Tradition: Essays on African American Literature* by Trudier Harris-Lopez, *Modern Fiction Studies* vol. 51, no.3, Fall 2005, pp. 686-689.

Review of *Risking Difference: Identification, Race and Community* by Jean Wyatt and *Black Women, Identity and Cultural Theory: (Un)becoming the Subject* by Kevin Everod Quashie, *American Literature*, vol. 77, no.2, March 2005, pp. 432-434.

Selected Public Scholarship:

“*Chi-Raq* and Spike Lee’s Bad Feminism,” *Msmagazine.com*, January 13, 2016.

“Consuming Sugar: Kara Walker’s Marvelous Sugar Baby,” *Msmagazine.com*, July 8, 2014.

“Anita: Still Speaking Truth to Power,” *Msmagazine.com*, March 23, 2014.

“What would bell hooks say?” An interview with bell hooks. *Ms. Magazine*, vol. XXI, no. 2, Spring 2011, pp. 40-43.

AWARDS, HONORS, and FELLOWSHIPS

2023	Inaugural Honors Faculty Fellow (COAS), Howard University
2022	Center for Women, Gender, and Global Leadership (CWGGL) Summer Research Grant
2019-2020	National Humanities Center Residential Fellowship
2018-2019	National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Research Award
2019	Summer Faculty Research Fellowship, Howard University
2016-2017	Benjamin A. Quarles Faculty Fellowship, Morgan State University
2014	Faculty Summer Enrichment Grant, Morgan State University
2008-2011	New York University Postdoctoral Fellowship for Academic Diversity
2008	Arts and Letters College Fund for International Travel, Michigan State University
2008	International Studies and Programs Special Foreign Travel Fund, Michigan State
2007	NEH Summer Seminar, “Hemispheric American Literature,” participant
2007	CASID/Women in Development Curriculum Development Grant, Michigan State
2004	Ann Plato Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Trinity College
2004	Prestigious Bruton Fellowship, The University of Texas at Austin
2004	Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Honorable Mention

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Closing Keynote, “Black Feminist Regard: Gloria Naylor and Ann Petry’s Literary Friendship,”
“With a Pen in Her Hand”: Communities in Gloria Naylor’s Fiction and Archives,” Sacred Heart University, October 19-20, 2023.

Speaker, “(re)Centering the Narrative: Black Women’s Voices of the 19th and 20th Centuries,” National Humanities Center, July 10-14, 2023.

Panelist, “The Beginning of a New Era: Virtual Black Spaces,” Black Spaces Symposium (virtual), July 13, 2021.

Speaker, “Meaningful Teaching and Learning in the Humanities Classroom” (virtual), National Humanities Center, July 5-9, 2021

Panelist, “Writing Accountability: A Conversation with Fellows” (virtual), National Humanities

Center, October 1, 2020.

Speaker, "Architextural Reparations in June Jordan's 'Skyrise for Harlem' and Gwendolyn Brooks's 'In the Mecca,'" University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of African, African American and Diaspora Studies, Chapel Hill, NC, January 29, 2020.

Speaker, "'The North's Lynch Mobs': The Afterlife of Segregation." University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Chapel Hill, NC, November 8, 2018.

Panelist, "Amplifying Feminist Voices: How to Write for the Popular Press," National Women's Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 2017.

Speaker, "Marriage Problems: Black Women's Postwar Critiques of Traditional Domesticity." Unearthing the Hidden in Women's Lives through Journals, Letters, Periodicals. Borough of Manhattan Community College, NY, NY, March 2016.

Speaker, "Sexual Geographies of New World Slavery: The U.S. South and the Caribbean in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* and Kara Walker's *Slavery! Slavery!*" Rice University's Department of Anthropology Brown Bag Series, Houston, TX, March 2014.

Course Lecturer, "Sex, Race, and Cosmopolitan Desire in Shay Youngblood's *Black Girl in Paris*." Black Paris Seminar, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, April 2012.

Speaker, "The Erotics of Travel in African American Women's Fiction." Narratives of Place and Displacement Symposium, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, March 2, 2012.

Plenary, "Cosmopolitan Desire in Black Diasporic Women's Texts." Transnational Feminism and the Black Diaspora Symposium, Brown University, Providence, RI, November 2009.

Keynote, "Reasons to Riot: Black Women's Urban Despair and Resistance in Ann Petry's *The Street*," Annual Ann Plato Lecture, Trinity College, Hartford, CT, October 2004.

CONFERENCES

Roundtable Panelist, "Intimate Renderings of Black Homeplace," American Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, November 2022.

"Gloria Naylor, Ann Petry, and Black Feminist Regard," The Gloria Naylor Archive Symposium, virtual, November 2021.

Roundtable Panelist, "The Infrastructure of Emergency," Modern Language Association (virtual), January 2021.

“‘Between the Dry Hours’: Black Feminism and the Queer Urban Domestic,” American Studies Association, Honolulu, HI, November 2019.

Roundtable Panelist, “Productive Precarity: African American Writing during the Depression Era,” Modern Language Association International Symposium, Lisbon, Portugal, July 2019.

Discussant, “Constructing Black Womanhood,” Modern Language Association International Symposium, Lisbon, Portugal, July 2019.

“‘a place where People live’: Gwendolyn Brooks’s Radical Acts of Looking,” College Language Association, Chicago, IL, April 2018.

Chair, “The Politics and Poetics of Gwendolyn Brooks,” College Language Association, Chicago, IL, April 2018.

Invited Chair, “Transfeminisms Panel,” University of Maryland, Trans(form)ing Queer Conference, College Park, MD, April 2018.

Roundtable Panelist, “Paratextual Space in Gwendolyn Brooks’s *In the Mecca*,” Modern Language Association, New York, NY, January 2018.

“‘Grayed in and Gray’: Spatial Matters of Life and Death in Black Women’s Urban Literature,” National Women’s Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, November 2017.

“To Bronzeville, With Love,” National Black Writers Conference Biennial Symposium, Brooklyn, NY, March 2017.

“‘There’s Nothing Worse than a Houseful of Women’: Parodying Urban Matriarchy,” American Studies Association, Denver, CO, November 2016.

“Mapping Black Women’s Geographies in Segregation Literature,” Celebrating African American Literature and Language, State College, PA, October 2016.

Chair, “Race and Resistance in 21st Century African American Literature,” Celebrating African American Literature and Language, State College, PA, October 2016.

“(Wo)Man of the House: Home Ownership and Gender Nonnormativity in Kristin Hunter’s *God Bless the Child*,” Society for the Study of American Women Writers, Philadelphia, PA, November 2015.

“From Harlem to Bronzeville with Love: Ann Petry’s and Gwendolyn Brooks’s Intimate Cities,” American Literature Association Symposium on the City in American Literature, New Orleans, LA, September 2015.

“‘the woman with the quilt on her back’: Unspeakable Acts in Marlon James’s *The Book of Night Women*,” Collegium of African American Research, Liverpool, UK, June 2015.

“‘The Booty Don’t Lie’: Beyoncé, Janelle Monae, and New Black Feminism,” National Women’s Studies Association, San Juan, PR, November 2014.

Roundtable Panelist, “Partus Sequitur Ventrum: Black Women and Non-Normative Family Structures,” National Women’s Studies Association, San Juan, PR, November 2014.

“‘Sister Outsider’: Andrea Lee’s Fictions of Self-Exile,” Northeast Modern Language Association, Harrisburg, PA, April 2014.

“Sexual Geographies of New World Slavery: The U.S. South and the Caribbean in Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora*,” College Language Association, New Orleans, LA, March 2014.

“‘Records are Destroyed’: The Body as Archive in the Postslavery Imagination,” American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

Chair, “Writing Resistance to Empire: African American Transnational Alliances,” American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

Roundtable Panelist, “What Happens to Africana Studies If You Put Black Women’s Studies at the Center?” National Women’s Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2011.

“The Audacity of ‘Quare’: The Practice and Politics of Black Queer Shamelessness,” The Collegium for African American Research, Paris, France, April 2011.

Invited Chair, “Crafting Queerness in Contemporary Literature,” Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, City University of New York, New York, NY, October 2009.

“Melancholy Cosmopolitanism in African Diasporic Women’s Texts,” Association of Worldwide African Diaspora Studies, Accra, Ghana, August 2009.

Chair, “The Crossroads of Race, Gender, and American Studies,” Women’s Committee of the American Studies Association, Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 2008.

“Motherless Girls: Melancholy Cosmopolitanism in Andrea Lee’s *Sarah Phillips* and Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*,” *Unsettling Women: Contemporary Women’s Writing and Diaspora*, Leicester, UK, July 2008.

Chair, “Cosmofeminisms,” Special Session of the Modern Language Association, Chicago, IL, December 2007.

“Lynching and the Gender Politics of Public Memory,” An International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Public Memory and Ethnicity, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR, October 2007.

“Ocular Aesthetics and the Ethics of Witnessing in Jean Toomer’s *Cane*,” New Directions in African American Literature, Theory, and Cultural Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, April 2007.

Chair, “Sistas and the City: Black Women’s Urban Literature and Culture,” National Council for Black Studies, San Diego, CA, March 2007.

“The Queerness of Blackness: Marlon Riggs’s *Black Is ... Black Ain’t* and Queer In/Visibility Black Cultural Interventions into Gender and Sexuality Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, March 2007.

“‘jazz songs and love’: The Theatre of Respectability in Jean Toomer’s *Cane*,” Modern Language Association, Washington, DC, December 2005.

“Lutie’s Blues and Lil’ Kim’s Blue Eyes: Black Women’s Subjectivity in Urban Space,” American Studies Association, Atlanta, GA, November 2004.

PRESENTATIONS and WORKSHOPS at HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Faculty Research Roundtable, “Centering Women’s Experiences, Voices, Perspectives, and Bodies,” Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership, October 26, 2022.

Let’s Talk Forum, “Supporting LGBTQ+ Students and Allies,” CETLA and CWGGL, September 15, 2022.

Graduate Student Funding Workshop, October 19, 2021.

Invited Talk, “The Skin We’re In: *The Bluest Eye* at 50 and the Persistence of Colorism,” Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, October 2, 2020.

MEDIA, INTERVIEWS, and COMMUNITY OUTREACH

“The ‘Don’t Say Gay’ Bill Makes School Even Less Safe for Black Students,” interview with Maya Pottiger, *Word in Black*, March 17, 2022.

Panelist, Diane Rehm Book Club: *The Prophets* by Robert Jones, Jr., February 24, 2021.

The Bluest Eye: A Community Reading, Cornell University College of Arts and Sciences, October 8, 2020.

Commenter, Breakthrough (U.S. Human Rights Group), “The Racist History of the Women’s Suffrage Movement and the Black Women Who Persisted,” October 8, 2020.

Podcast, "The Poetry and Prose of Precarious Living: Black Women Writers and the Legacy of Segregated Urban Spaces," National Humanities Center, May 2020.

Panelist, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, *The Color Purple* screening and discussion, AFI Silver Spring, MD, April 22, 2018.

"Cast Your Net Wide: Reflections on Activism and Community Engagement When Black Lives Matter," conversation with Patricia A. Matthew, *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure*, edited by Patricia A. Matthew, UNC Press, 2016, pp. 222-240.

Guest, "Intersectionality in America," WEEA: The Marc Steiner Show, October 3, 2016.

Moderator, Screening and discussion of *Vow of Silence* and *N.O.L.A. Circus* with Director Jean-Luc Anest, Baltimore Black International Film Festival, Baltimore, MD, October 11, 2015.

Guest, "Sexual Assault Allegations Against Bill Cosby," WEEA: The Marc Steiner Show, November 18, 2014.

Guest, "Tribute to Maya Angelou," WEEA: A World of Higher Education News with Beverly Burke, May 29, 2014.

Guest, "The New Black: Exploring The Campaign to Legalize Gay Marriage in Maryland," WEEA: The Marc Steiner Show, April 3, 2014.

TEACHING

Howard University:

Undergraduate

African American Literature from 1940

African American Literary Foundations

African American Realism, Naturalism, Modernism

African American Literature from the Black Arts Movement to the Present

Featured Author: Colson Whitehead

Featured Author: N.K. Jemison

Introduction to Black LGBTQ+ Studies

Topics in Literature and Writing: Black Women's Literature and the Politics of Adaptation

Graduate

African American Literature I

Independent Study: Ekphrasis and Black Writing

Morgan State University:

Undergraduate

African American Poetry
American Realism and Naturalism
Freshman Writing
Honors English
Introduction to Caribbean Literature
Introduction to Literary Criticism
The African American Novel
Understanding Feminist Theories

Graduate

African American Drama
Diasporic Literatures
Major African American Novelists
Modernism/Postmodernism
Queer Theory
Twentieth Century American Fiction

Goucher College:

Black Women in America
Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
Race, Class, and the Politics of Reproduction
Special Topics: Sistas and the City
Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance

New York University:

African American Literary Cultures
Contemporary African American Fiction
Memory in African American Literature and Culture
Postmodern Blackness
Twentieth Century African American Literature

Michigan State University:

Undergraduate

Fear of a Queer Black Canon
Introduction to Literary Studies
Postcolonial Literature and Theory

Graduate

Black Feminisms
Independent Study: Black Feminist Performance Theory
Introduction to African American and African Studies I
Sistas and the City

ADVISING

Committee Member, Catherine Saunders, *"Quiet As It's Kept": Toni Morrison and the Insurrectionary Power of African American Literature.*, PhD May 2024.

Committee Member, Barbra Chin, *Counter Aesthetics: Expanding the Canon in African American Literature*, PhD December 2022.

Committee Member, Cecily Duffie, *And Equal Consumption for All: Terri McMillan, Towards a Black Women Writers' Postmodernism*, MA May 2022.

Committee Member, Sarah Jenkins, *To Black Girls with Love: Black Women Writers' Radical Love Ethics in Rural Literature*, MA May 2022.

Advisor, John Merritt, *The American Underground: Spatial and Temporal Representations of Cultural Hegemony in African American Literature*, Howard University, BA May 2022.

Committee Member, Shaunte Montgomery, *Free Radicals: Resisting Clinical Subjectivity in Late-Twentieth Century Novels from the African American and Caribbean Literary Traditions*, Howard University, PhD June 2020.

Committee Member, Sherri Mehta, *"We Showed Our Natural Manhood": The Civil War, Black Masculinity, Black Nationalism, and a Black Male Epistolary Tradition*. Morgan State University, PhD Dec. 2019.

Committee Member, Aryn Bartley, *Encountering Democracy: The Citizen-Witness in 20th Century U.S. Literature*, Michigan State University, PhD June 2010.

SERVICE**Department of English**

2022-2024	Burch Lecture Committee (Chair 2023-24)
2020-2021	Executive Committee, HU
2020-	Faculty Elections, HU
2020-	Recruitment Committee, HU
2020-	Departmental Assessment, HU
2021-2022	Chair, Curriculum Committee, Howard University (HU)
2021-2022	Departmental Chair Job Search Committee, HU
2020-2021	African American Literature Job Search Committee, HU
2017-present	Undergraduate Studies Committee, HU
2016-2017	Student-Faculty Adjudication Committee, Morgan State University (MSU)
2016-2017	Curriculum Committee, MSU
2015-2017	Prizes and Awards Committee, MSU
2013-2017	Chair of Honors Committee, MSU
2013-2017	Graduate Studies Committee, MSU

College of Arts and Sciences

2022-2024	Executive Committee, HU
2022-2024	Distinguished Faculty and Outstanding Departments Awards Committee, HU
2020-2021	Technology Committee, HU
2017-2020	Assessment Committee, HU
2015-2016	Recording Secretary, MSU
2014-2015	Mellon Foundation Working Group, MSU

University-Wide

2023-	Program Innovation and Review Committee, HU
2023	Faculty Senate Community Relations, Student, and Alumni Affairs, HU
2022-	LGBTQ+ Advisory Council, HU
2022-	Advisor, Black Feminist Book Club, HU
2021-2024	Graduate School Judiciary Committee, HU
2016-2017	LGBTQA Advisory Council, MSU
2013-2016	Intellectual Life Committee, MSU
2007-2008	Core Faculty, Center for Women and Gender in Global Context, Michigan State

Service to the Profession and Public Humanities

2022-	Faculty Collective Member, "Black Queer . . . Everything"
2022-	<i>Ms. Magazine</i> Committee of Scholars
2022	Invited evaluator, MacArthur Fellows Program
2022	Judge, James Baldwin Essay Prize
2020	Faculty Evaluation Panelist, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
2020, 2017	Nominating Committee, National Queer Art Prize
2007-2010	Women's Committee of the American Studies Association
2007-present	Manuscript reviewer, <i>Women's Studies Quarterly</i> , <i>Souls</i> , <i>Modern Fiction Studies</i> , <i>Frontiers</i>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Training (virtual), Mindfulness Center at Brown University, April 25-June 27, 2024.

Webinar, "What AI Means for Teaching" (virtual), Modern Language Association, July 26, 2023.

Webinar, "Unlocking Success: Navigating the Promotion and Tenure Journey—A Workshop for Applicants" (virtual), Office of Faculty Development and Office of Faculty Affairs, Howard University, June 28, 2023.

Seminar, "Naylor in the Archives" (virtual), June 2022.

Small-Group Workshop, "Enclosures: Blackness and Transmutation," The Sojourner Project (US and South Africa) (virtual), May 6 and 21, 2021.

Online Certification, "Distance Learning," CETLA, Howard University, June 15, 2020.

Online Certification, "Blackboard," CETLA, Howard University, June 1, 2020.

Online Certification, "Harassment and Discrimination Prevention," Howard University, November 15, 2019.

Seminar, "Junior Faculty Writing and Creative Works Summer Academy," Howard University, 2018.

Workshop, "Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation (VONA): Nonfiction Essay," University of Miami, Miami FL, June 2016.

Scholar-in-Residence, "Faculty Resource Network," NYU, Summer 2015 and 2016.

Seminar, "The City," NYU Faculty Resource Network, Athens, Greece, January 2015.

Seminar, "Hemispheric American Literature," National Endowment for the Humanities, Columbia University, New York NY, June 18-21, 2007.

MEMBERSHIPS and AFFILIATIONS

American Studies Association

College Language Association

Modern Language Association

National Women's Studies Association

LANGUAGES

Reading competency in French and Spanish