

Curriculum Vitae

Renee K. Harrison

Professor of African American and US Religious History

Howard University

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Renee K. Harrison, Professor of African American and US Religious History at Howard University, earned her Ph.D. from Emory University in the Department of Religion with an interdisciplinary focus on history, religion, philosophy, Black feminist/womanist thought, and African American studies. Her latest publication, *Black Hands, White House: Slave Labor and the Making of America*, documents and appraises the roles enslaved women, men, and children played in building the US, namely the nation's capital, Washington, DC. Currently, she is developing a project on Native Americans' contributions, tentatively titled *Smudging Our Way Through Broken Treaties: Native American Spirituality and American Genocide*. Her other works include *Enslaved Women and the Art of Resistance in Antebellum America* and *Engaged Teaching in Theology and Religion*, co-authored with Dr. Jennie Knight, University of Virginia. A native of Los Angeles, CA, Harrison is a former 11-year Los Angeles Police Officer and a former director of A Leap of Faith Productions, a non-profit community theatre company in Los Angeles. She is also an artist, poet, and playwright who enjoys teaching and leading healing workshops and rituals.

EDUCATION:

Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Religion, interdisciplinary studies in History, Religion, Philosophy, Feminist/Womanist Thought, and African American Studies
2000 - 2006 Emory University Atlanta, GA

Master of Divinity & Master of Religious Education Degrees with Honors
1996 - 2000 Interdenominational Theological Center Atlanta, GA

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism, with a minor in African American Studies
1979 - 1984 California State University Northridge Northridge, CA

TEACHING & RESEARCH:

Promoted/Professor, African American and US Religious History
2025 Howard University/School of Divinity Washington, DC

Associate Professor, African American and US Religious History
2016 - 2025 Howard University/School of Divinity

Tenured/Associate Professor, African American and US Religious History
2016 Howard University/School of Divinity Washington, DC

Assistant Professor, American and US Religious History
2010 - 2016 Howard University/School of Divinity Washington, DC

Assistant Professor, African American Religious Practices, Culture, and History
2008 - 2010 Payne Theological Seminary Wilberforce, OH

Assistant Professor, Senior Seminar Thesis Director
2008 - 2010 Payne Theological Seminary Wilberforce, OH

**Interim Director, Program of Black Church Studies & Visiting Assistant
Professor of African American Religious Practices, Culture, and History**
2007- 2008 Emory University Atlanta, GA

Fellow, Post-Doctoral Teaching & Research Fellowship
2006 - 2007 Emory University Atlanta, GA

**RELATED
HU COURSES
TAUGHT:**

African American Religious History (survey of the Black Sacred Diasporic traditions in the United States)
History of the Black Church (with a focus on the transatlantic slave trade and pre-colonial West African traditions and religions “transplanted” to the American colonies)
History, Religion, the Arts, and Social Change
Global Black Feminists and Womanists, and Healing Rituals (with a focus on Ifa, Dogon, Vodun, Santeria, Obeah, Kumina, Black Folk Tradition, Islam, Native American, Catholic, and Buddhist healing practices)
Sexuality and the Black Church
Introductory Writing Seminar in Theology and Religion
History, Religion, and the Slave Narratives

**FACULTY
STANDING
COMMITTEES:**

Committee Member, HU Program Innovation Review Committee (PIRC)
Service with faculty members across the university tasked with reviewing new university-wide Letters of Intent and formal proposals for new academic programs.
Provost Harvey, Director
2023 -Present, Howard University

Committee Member, HUSD Executive Committee
2023 – Present, Dean Kenyatta Gilbert
2017 – 2023, Dean Yolonda Pierce

Committee Member, HUSD Master of Arts (Religious Studies) Degree Program
2022 - Present

Committee Member, HUSD Decanal Review Subcommittee
2018 – Present

Committee Member, HUSD Appointments, Promotions and Tenure
2018 – Present

Committee Member, HUSD Honors and Awards Committee
2018 – Present (Committee Chair, 2014 – 2018)

Committee Member, Lectures and Convocation
2017 - 2019

Committee Member, HUSD Master of Divinity Degree Program
2016 - 2022

Committee Member, On-Line Learning & Distance Education

2016 - 2022

Committee Member, HUSD PhD Program

2016 - 2017

Committee Member, University Search Committee

Howard University Decanal Search Advisory Committee

President Wayne Frederick, Convener/Dr. Gina S. Brown, Chair

2016 - 2017

HUSD Alternate Member, Faculty Senate

Howard University

2014 – 2018

Committee Chair, HUSD Honors and Awards Committee

2014 – 2018

PhD/EdD/MA
COMMITTEES
(WITHIN 8-YRS):

PhD Committee Member, History Department, Howard University

“Attending the Crossing: The Spirituality of African American Midwives 1877-1955”

Kendra Woodfolk, student (Graduated May 2025)

Dr. Nikki Taylor, History Dept Chair

PhD Committee Member, History Department, Howard University

“Divided They Fall: Slavery, Separation, and Imperial Power Struggle in the Nineteenth Century”

Kerri Alexander, student (Graduated May 2025)

Dr. Nikki Taylor, Committee Chair

EdD Committee Member, Education

“A Narrative Examination of the Impacts of Virginia’s African American History and Studies Courses on African American Students”

Sean L. Miller, student (Graduated May 2025)

Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Committee Chair

PhD Committee Member, History Department, Howard University

Project focus: Reparations and the Black Manifesto

Ebonee Davis, student (ABD)

Dr. Ana-Lucia Araujo

PhD Committee Member, History Department, Howard University

“The Invisible Hands of War: A Historical Examination of the Origins of the Liberian Civil Conflicts from 1980-2003”

Elijah Zehyoue, student (Graduated May 2023)

Dr. Mohammed Camara, Committee Chair

PhD Committee Member, History Department, Howard University,

A Third Wave of Revolution

Aaron Treadwell, student (Graduated 2017)

Dr. Edna Medford, Committee Chair

PhD Committee Member, School of Mass Communications and Media Studies Program, Howard University

An Examination of Kendrick Lamar’s Lyrical Expressions of Black Masculinity, Christianity, and Black Liberation Theology

Davia Crutchfield, student (Graduated 2017)

Dr. Tia C. M. Tyree, Committee Chair

MA Religious Studies Thesis Advisor, “The Water Will Bring Us Home: The Formation of Community in 20th Century African American Women’s Literature as a Model for Healing,” Howard University School of Divinity

Janan Graham-Russell, student (Graduated 2016)

MA Religious Studies Thesis Advisor, “Historical Syncopations: Coded Messages, Negro Spirituals, and Catholicism,” Catholic University/Washington Theological Union Seminary

Stephen Sohe, student (Graduated 2015)

MA Religious Studies Thesis Advisor, “The Shaman Inside: An Exploration of the Role of Shamanism in Closing the Gender Gap,” Howard University School of Divinity LaToya Banks, student (Graduated 2015)

NOTEWORTHY PUBLICATIONS:

Smudging Our Way Out of Broken Treaties: Native American Spirituality and American Genocide (forthcoming, 2027)

“But Some of Us Are Brave: Honoring The Soul Work and Mentorship Of Randall C. Bailey”

Have Not Our Weary Feet: Essays in Honor of Randall C. Bailey, Ericka Dunbar, Kimberly Russaw, Shively Smith, Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, and et. al. (forthcoming, 2025)

Stones from the Jordan, The Dynamism of FTE From 1954 - 2024

(Forum for Theological Exploration, 2024)

Black Hands, White House: Slave Labor and the Making of America

(Fortress Press, November 2021)

“The D.C. Compensation Act as Precedent for Reparations”

Reparations and the Theological Disciplines, Michael Barram, Drew G.I. Hart, et al. eds., (Lexington Press, 2023)

“Among the Cloud of Witnesses: Rosemary Radford Ruether”

Lisa Isherwood, Megan Clay, eds
(Journal of Feminist Theology, 2023)

“Think Your Vote Doesn’t Count? Then Why Are People Trying to Suppress It?” Washington Post, November 7, 2016

Engaged Teaching in Theology and Religion

(co-authored with Dr. Jennie S. Knight, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Enslaved Women in America: An Encyclopedia Daina Berry and Deleso Alford
Washington, eds., selected entries, (Greenwood Press, 2012)

Enslaved Women and the Art of Resistance in Antebellum America
(Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

**NOTEWORTHY
PUBLIC TALKS/
PARTNERSHIPS**

Audio Guide/Voice Over, “MLK at Howard”

Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington DC

Ongoing Exhibit, 2022 – Present

Consultant, *Nutopia*, a London-based television production company
2025 London, England (virtual)

**Guest Speaker and Resident Historian,
“Building Up A New World: Where Do We Go From Here?”**

Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice

2025, Friday, January 10 @ 1:00 PM (recording)

**Workshop Leader/Facilitator, Black History Month Retreat
“Songs of Freedom”**

Bon Secours Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

2025, Saturday, February 15, @ 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Workshop Leader/Facilitator, Juneteenth Day Retreat

Bon Secours Retreat Center, Marriottsville, MD

2024, Saturday, June 22, @ 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Podcast Interviewee, Black Hands, White House

Beyond the Gatekeepers, Podcast/Virtual Event

Hosts Bishop Yvette Flunder and Bishop Vanessa Brown

2024, Wednesday, May 8, @ 8:00 PM

Speaker, Celebrating Seventy Years, FTE’s 70th Anniversary

The Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE), Virtual Event

2024, Friday, April 29, @ 12:30 PM

Interview, Monuments, and Enslaved Labor

ABC NEWS Interview

2024, Friday, March 1, @ 11:30 AM

Speaker, Black History, Black Hands

Nurturing Justice, Black History Program

2024, Friday, February 29, @ 7:00 PM

Keynote Speaker, Dogon History & Cosmology: Benjamin Banneker as Seer

St Paul Community Baptist Church, Brooklyn, NY

2024, Friday, January 12, @ 6:00 PM

Workshop Leader, Canvas Training and Online Support for HUSD Faculty

Conducted several online workshops throughout the academic year

Howard University School of Divinity
2023-2024

Keynote Speaker, “This Nation Under God? The Gettysburg Address 160th Years Later,”

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Gettysburg, PA
2023, Saturday, Nov 4, @ 10:00 AM

Panelist/Ritualist, Monuments of the FUTURE. “Our Role in Reshaping Public Monuments in Public Spaces,” with artist and community facilitator

Jessica Valoris

GOETHE Institut DC 3-day gathering discussing monuments for the Future.
2023, Thursday, Nov 2, @ 6:00 PM

Keynote Speaker, “A Memorial to Enslaved Laborers in the District of Columbia,” Special Service Honoring Black people who worked as enslaved laborers on the land on which the church now sits.

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Washington, DC
2023, Sunday, Oct 29 @ 10:30 AM

Guest Speaker and Resident Historian, “Reflections on *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram Kendi”

Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice

2023, Wednesday, Oct 25, @3:00 PM & @ 7:00 PM, virtual

Speaker, Season 1; Episode 9, “Make it Make Sense for Teens – The Black Religious & Spiritual Experience in Christianity,”

BOON Podcast, The Black Next Gen Network with hosts Candice Austin Wynn and Robert Purvey, theBOONCommunity.com, virtual
2023, Friday, October 23, @11:00 AM

Roundtable Participant, “Artivism: The Political Mandate of Art”

GOETHE Center Roundtable Discussion with Nikita Dhawan, Maria do Mar Castro Varela, and DC artists
2023, Oct 11, GOETHE Center, Washington, DC

Keynote Speaker, Virtual Juneteenth Celebration.

The Professionals National Society
US Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC
2023, June 21, 2:00 pm

Speaker, Symposium: Rethink and Reload Monuments in 21st Century Democracies Between Iconoclasm and Revival. Sponsored by the Goethe-Institut, DC

Center for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany
2023, June 28 – July 1

Moderator/Panelist, Juneteenth Commemoration Webinar. UCC, Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice

2023, June 15, 3:30 pm

Consultant, Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice Campaign

Rev Velda Love, United Church of Christ National and International Organization
2022, June - present

Working-Group Participant Queering Pedagogy

Round table conversation centered on queering pedagogy and self-care
2023, May 24 -26, Wabash Center, Chicago, IL

“Historical Context: Journeying Toward Racial Justice with Ibram X. Kendi.”

Video Lecture Series

Join the Movement Toward Racial Justice, UCC All Church Read—*How to Be An Anti-Racist*--in Preparation for General Synod

April 2023 – May 2023

Panelist, C-Span Book TV

Southern Festival of Books

Black Hands, White House: Slave Labor and the Making of America

Nashville, TN

2022, October 15, 10:00 am – 11:00 am

Lecturer, “Legitimizing Black and Brown Trauma: Land, Labor, and Death”

Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Annual Continuing Legal Education on Diversity, Olympia, WA

2022, September 14, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Moderator, “Revealing Hidden Histories”

UCC Church National, Inaugural Juneteenth Event, New York, NY 2022, June 17, 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Inaugural Keynote Speaker, “What to the Descendants of the Formerly Enslaved is Juneteenth?”: Revisiting Stolen Labor, Economic Injustice and Racialized Violence

Department of the Treasury, Inaugural Juneteenth Event, Washington, DC

2022, June 16, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Podcast Interviewee, The Law in Black and White, Juneteenth Book Talk

Legal Innovators by Greenblatt and Parker, Inc.

2022, June 14, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Speaker, Faculty Major Publication Lecture

Howard University, School of Divinity

2022, Feb 7, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Book Lectures, Signings, and Events (Various Venues)

Black Hands, White House: Slave Labor and the Making of America

Locations Throughout the US

2021, Nov – present

Tour Guide, DC Enslaved Labor Walking Tours

DC Iconic Buildings

2022 - Summer

Consultant, *Colin in Black and White*, film (Provided Feedback on Film for Eden Digital Group, Los Angeles, CA)

2021, Netflix Private Screening

Consultant, *Respect*, film (Provided Feedback on Film for Eden Digital Group, Los Angeles, CA)

2021, Netflix Private Screening

Lecturer, Spirituality & Social Justice Activism in African Amer Traditions

2021, June 3, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, IL

Speaker, “Invisible Wounds: The Church & Slavery in the Nation’s Capital”

2020, December 6 and 13, Georgetown Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC

Panelist, Religion, Race, and Democracy Lab

2020, October 24, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

“From Rods to Snakes: Black Magic in the Era of Trump”

2020, February 9, Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, DC

“Your Name is Written: The Historical Case for Excellence”

2019, September 11, School of Divinity Pinning Ceremony, Washington, DC

Consultant, *Harriet*, film (Provided Feedback on Film for Eden Digital Group, Los Angeles, CA)

2019, DC Press Screening and Walking Tour, Washington, DC

Consultant, *Waves*, film (Provided Feedback on Film for Eden Digital Group, Los Angeles, CA) 2019, November 10, Screening, African American History

Museum, Washington, DC

Research Leave in Europe for Black Hands Publication(Fall 2018 – Spring 2019)

Visited Capital cities of key European countries involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, France, The Netherlands, and Denmark. Also, conducted research in Berlin, Germany, at the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*.

Planner/Convener, HUSD Open Mic Nights

Howard University School of Divinity

Fall 2019

Judge, HU Research Day

2017, April 13, Howard University, Blackburn Center, Washington, DC

Speaker, Operation Understanding DC: Leading Change, Strengthening Identity, Exploring History. Working Towards Eradicating Racism, Anti-Semitism, and All Forms of Discrimination

2017, March 12, Temple Micah, Washington, DC

Speaker, “DMV Interfaith Youth Summit on Racial Justice”

2016, April 30, Youth Summit, St. John’s Baptist Church, Columbia, MD

Co-Facilitator, “Engaged Teaching Workshop” with Jennie Knight UVA

2016, April 29, WTC Consortium Faculty, Howard University, Washington, DC

Faculty Exemplar, HU Board Trustee Dinner

2016, April 14, Smithsonian National Portrait Museum, Washington, DC

Judge, HU Research Day

2016, April 14, Howard University, Blackburn Center, Washington, DC

**Lecturer, “Black Hands: Hidden Histories and Cultural Responsibility”
Nannie Helen Burroughs Annual Lecture**

2016, March 7, Howard University, School of Divinity, Washington, DC

Speaker, Women’s Healing Workshop

2016, March 5, Covenant Baptist Church, Washington, DC

Speaker, The School for Ethics and Global Leadership

2016, March 2, The School for Ethics and Global Leadership, Washington, DC

Planner/Convener, Faculty-Student Colloquium Series

Convened scholars, community practitioners, and student respondents across the university and DMV area

Howard University School of Divinity

2015 - 2017

Panelist, “History, Rebellion and Reconciliation: Communities Mobilized for Social Change”

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

2015, April 25, Smithsonian National Museum of American Indian, Washington, DC

Plenary Speaker, “Hidden Histories: Honoring Those Who Helped in Building A Just and Loving Community”

Lecture presented in observance of its 150th anniversary

2015, March 11, First Congregational Church (FCC), Washington, DC

Keynote Speaker, “Ancestral Ingenuity: Freedom in the Improv”

Lecture presented, Women’s History Month

2015, March 11, Community Center, Guilford College, NC

INDUCTIONS:

Morehouse College Collegium of Scholars

2022, Oct 13, King Chapel, Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA

CREATIVE
WORKS:
(WITHIN 7-YRS)

A Requiem for Black Bodies – Theatre Production
Producer, Director, Creator (2020 - 2024)
Various locations, Washington, DC

God's Trombones Revisited - Theatre Production
Producer, Director, Adapter (2013 - 2015)
Various locations, Washington, DC

REFERENCES: Available upon request