

# LERHONDA S. MANIGAULT-BRYANT

Associate Professor of Africana Studies  
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## EDUCATION

- 2007 Ph.D., Religion, Emory University  
2002 M.Div., Candler School of Theology at Emory University  
1999 A.B., (with honors) History, Duke University

## SPECIALIZATIONS

*religious experience of the African diaspora; race, media, and popular culture; black feminist and womanist thought; ethnographic methods; music and performative memory; gender and religion; race, gender, and science fiction*

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

- 2014 *Womanist and Black Feminist Responses to Tyler Perry's Productions*, co-edited with Tamura A. Lomax and Carol B. Duncan. New York and London: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- 2014 *Talking to the Dead: Religion, Music and Lived Memory among Gullah/Geechee Women*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- 2009 Research Contributor, *The Papers of Howard Washington Thurman. Vol. 1: My People Need Me, June 1918-March 1936*. Walter Earl Fluker, Senior Editor. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

### Chapters, Articles, & Reviews

- 2018 "I Had a Praying Grandmother: Religion, Prophetic Witness, and Black Women's Herstories. In *New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition*, edited by Keisha Blain, Christopher Cameron, and Ashley Farmer, 115-130. Northwestern University Press.
- 2018 "Getting Over the Hump: Continued Professional Development for Mid-Career Faculty," co-authored with Denise K. Buell, Lee Y. Park, and John P. Gerry, in *Success After Tenure: Supporting Mid-Career Faculty*, edited by Vicki Baker, 202-220. Stylus Press.
- 2018 "Religion" in *Keywords in African American Studies*, edited by Erica R. Edwards, Roderick A. Ferguson, and Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, 174-179. New York University Press.
- 2018 "But Sometime Between: Living Archives and the Power of Black Agency" *Journal of Africana Religions*. Vol. 6, No. 2: 269-271.
- 2017 *Televised Redemption: Black Religious Media and Racial Empowerment* by Carolyn Moxley Rouse, John L. Jackson, Jr., and Marla F. Frederick. New York University Press, 2016. *Review of Religious Research* 59 (575-576). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-017-0305-6>

- 2017 [“An Open Letter to White Liberal Feminists”](#) in *Wolf Whistle Politics: The New Misogyny in America Today*, edited by Diane Wachtell, 97-100. The New Press.
- 2016 “Where Black Bodies Lie: Historiography, Race, and the Place of Eros” in *Theology & Sexuality* Vol. 22, No. 3: 165-174.
- 2016 “Conjuring Pasts and Ethnographic Presents in Zora Neale Hurston’s Modernity,” co-authored with James Manigault-Bryant. *Journal of Africana Religions* Vol. 4. No. 2, (Summer): 225-235.
- 2016 “African and African Diaspora Religions: Religious Syncretism, Erotic Encounter, Sacred Transformation” in *Religion: Embodied Religion*, edited by Kent L. Brintnall, 183-201. 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Macmillan Reference, USA.
- 2015 “Hallelujah.Film.” In *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, edited by Dale Allison Jr. et al. Volume 11. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 54-56.
- 2015 *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*, special issue on “Religion and Fat,” co-edited with Lynne Gerber and Susan H. Hill. Vol. 4, Issue 2 (Spring): 82-207.
- 2015 “Religion and Fat=Protestant Christianity and Weight Loss? On the Intersections of Fat Studies and Religious Studies,” co-authored with Lynne Gerber and Susan H. Hill. *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*. Vol. 4, Issue 2 (Spring): 82-91.
- 2014 “‘Don’t Make Me Hop After You...’: Black Womanhood and the Dangerous Body in Popular Film” in *Black Women and Popular Culture: The Conversation Continues*, by Adria Goldman, VaNatta Ford, Alexa Harris, and Natasha Howard, eds. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- 2013 “Fat Spirit: Obesity, Religion, and Sapphimmabel in Contemporary Black Film.” *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*. Vol. 2, Issue 1 (Spring): 56-69.
- 2010 *The SAGE Handbook of African American Education*. Edited by Linda C. Tillman. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009. *Teaching Theology and Religion* Vol. 13, Issue 3 (July): 297-299.

### **Online, Media, & Op-Ed**

- 2018 [“Who Desegregated America’s Schools? Black Women.”](#) Review of Rachel Devlin’s *A Girl Stands at the Door*. *The New York Times* Book Review, August 1. (Printed as “The Women Who Sparked a Movement” *New York Times Sunday Book Review*, p.20).
- 2018 Citation: [“The Difference Between Cultural Appropriation and Appreciation is Tricky. Here’s a Primer”](#) by Julia Bruculieri, *Huffington Post Style and Beauty*, February 7.
- 2017 [“American Feminism in the Age of Trump”](#) Roundtable with Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Susan Chira, and Moira Weigel. *The Sunday Edition* with Michael Enright, January 15.

- 2017 [“Do Not Look for Me at the Women’s March on Washington,”](#) *The New York Times* Room for Debate, January 9.
- 2015-2017 Monthly Blogger, [Black Perspectives](#), a blog of the African American Intellectual History Society. Select contributions:  
[“An Open Letter to White Liberal Feminists”](#) (November 2016)  
[“Intellectual Hunger vs. Academic Thirst: On the Culture of Immediacy”](#) (May 2016)
- 2014 “#dangerousbodies #blackwomen #scifi,” TEDx Conference, Williams College  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trxGZMm4nBQ>
- 2012 “Tyler Perry’s Museum of Blackness,” co-authored with Sevonna M. Brown, Religion Dispatches. October 1, 2012.  
[http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/culture/6352/tyler\\_perry’s\\_museum\\_of\\_blackness](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/culture/6352/tyler_perry’s_museum_of_blackness)
- 2008 “Color-Blind America?” Religion Dispatches. November 19, 2008.  
<http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/election08/748/>

### **Works in Progress**

- Under Review “The ‘Church of Oprah’ and the Rise of Sapphimmabel: Race-ing Fatness in Contemporary Culture,” *The Black Scholar*
- n.d. *Pushing Weight: Religion, Popular Culture, and the Implications of Image*
- n.d. “‘A Key to the Whole Racial Situation in America’: Mason Crum, the Gullah, and the Social Gospel Movement.” *Journal of Southern History*
- n.d. “Saved From Silence: Womanist Ethnography and the (Re)Interpretation of Black Feminist Thought.” In preparation for submission to *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*

### **TEACHING & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **Williams College, Williamstown, MA**

- present **Associate Professor of Africana Studies**  
Courses taught: Touring Black Religion in the ‘New South’ (travel course); Dangerous Bodies: Black Womanhood, Sexuality, and Popular Culture; Sacred Cinema: Black Religion and the Movies; Womanist/Black Feminist Thought; Race, Gender, and the Alien Body: Octavia Butler’s Science Fiction; Introduction to Africana Studies
- Advising Honors Theses: Q. A. Tucker Shabazz (2017); A. Greene-Hayes and C. Williams (2016); S. Brown (2015); J. Jolly (2014)
- 2016-2018 **Associate Dean of the Faculty**  
 Responsibilities included: championing interests of academic faculty; developing and implementing strategic initiatives related to faculty professional development and mentoring (especially mid-career faculty); partnering with students and relevant administrative and staff offices to augment faculty professional development; fiscal

and budgetary oversight of faculty resources covering over 30 academic units and 60 areas of study; developing forward-thinking initiatives and programming for faculty; promoting the values of a Liberal Arts education and the College's academic mission

- 2011-2014     **Assistant Professor of Africana Studies**  
Courses taught: Introduction to Africana Studies; Womanist/Black Feminist Thought; Ethnographic Approaches to Africana Studies; Blackness 2.0: Race, Film, & New Technologies; Crafting Research: Methods in Africana Studies; Dangerous Bodies: Black Womanhood, Sexuality, and Popular Culture; Touring Black Religion in the 'New South' (travel course); Race, Gender, and the Alien Body: Octavia Butler's Science Fiction
- Advising       Honors Theses: N. Parham and J. Carter (2013); N. Ngcobo (2012); C. Fitzpatrick (second reader, 2012)
- 2011-present   Faculty Affiliate in Religion and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

### **Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC**

- 2007-2011     Assistant Professor of Religion, Wake Forest University  
Courses taught: Introduction to Religion; Womanist/Black Feminist Thought; Religion and Music; Ethnography of Religion
- 2009-2010     Visiting Scholar, Department of Africana Studies, Brown University
- Advising       Theses: M. Little (B.A., 2009); M.A.K. Elvey (M.A., 2009); L. Randall (M.A., 2008)

### **Williams College, Williamstown, MA**

- 2006-2007     Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation Fellow, Department of Religion  
Course taught: Ethnography of Religion

### **Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA**

- 2003-2005     Research Associate, Howard Thurman Papers Project

## **PRESENTATIONS, LECTURES, & PANELS**

### **Invited Presentations:**

- *Panelist*, "Fully Fleshed Out: Religion, Womanhood, and Blackness in Contemporary Media." Symposium of Religious Literacy and Media: Business and Entertainment, Harvard Divinity School, September 2018
- *Keynote Address*, "Radical Love and Revolutionary Acts of Freedom." Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Regional Conference, Williamstown, MA, September 2017
- [On Nick Cave's Until](#), with Nick Cave (artist), Lori Lightfoot (Head of Police Board and Task Force on Police Accountability, Chicago) and Denise Markonish (curator), Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA, April 2017
- *Keynote Address*, "Radical Love: Blackness, Embodiment, and Revolutionary Acts of Freedom." Harvard Humanist Hub, Cambridge, MA, April 2017
- *Keynote Address*, "Singing the Soul Free: Gullah/Geechee Religion and Practice," Department of Religion, College of Charleston, April 2016

- *Keynote Address*, “Honor, Honor: The Black Body as Sacred Text,” Duke University Divinity School, March 2016
- *Skype Lecture*, *Talking to the Dead*, in the course Ritual Performance in Congregations, taught by Nichole Phillips. Emory University, September 2015
- *Speaker*, “Between the Living and the Dead: Writing History, Popular Culture, and Lived Religion,” Tuesday Teas: Conversations with Authors about Writing and Publishing. Williams College, May, 2015
- *Keynote Address*, “Jesus Just Saved Your Life: Black Women’s Navigation of Popular Spiritual Terrains,” Center for Black Diaspora Annual Lecture Series. DePaul University, November 2014
- *Facilitator*, “The Biopolitics of Black Women’s Bodies and Rights,” a conversation with Dorothy Roberts on *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Williams College, October 2014
- *Discussant*, Screening of Tyler Perry’s *I Can Do Bad all By Myself* (2009), Religion and Film Series, Initiative for the Study of Material and Visual Cultures of Religion. Yale University, April 2014
- *Keynote Address*, “Bad All By Myself: Consuming Black Women in Popular Culture,” Black History Month Lecture. Mount Holyoke College, February 2014
- *Panel Discussant*, “Scene and Un(Seen): Writing the Black Female Body in A Modern Context,” Symposium on Critical Feminist Thought and the African Diaspora. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, February 2014
- *Skype Lecture*, “Womanist Thought and Tyler Perry,” in the course Womanist Theology, taught by Andrea White. Emory University, April 2013
- *Panel Discussant*, “Mediated Experience: George Shulman’s *American Prophecy* and the ‘Problem’ of Location,” Caribbean Philosophical Association. Rutgers University, October 2011
- *Lecture*, “Funny Black Men, Fat Black Women: Masculinizing the Feminine in Popular Film,” Black History Month Faculty Lecture Series. Rhode Island College, February 2011
- *Lecture*, “Hair, Color, and Community: Contemporary Debates on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Black Identity,” Introduction to Africana Studies. Williams College, November 2010
- *Panel Discussant*, “The Politics of Graduate School,” Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program. Williams College, November 2010
- *Panel Discussant*, “Troubling Black Religion: Changing Times and the Study of Black Religion,” Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion. Atlanta, GA, March 2010
- *Panel Discussant*, “The Future(s) of Africana Studies.” Brown University, December 2009
- *Lecture*, “‘It’s Not Science Rasputia’: Masculinity, Femininity, and Representation in *Norbit*,” Treehouse Lecture Series. Wake Forest University, March 2009

- *Lecture*, “Down Payment on the Dream: A Cautionary Warning,” Library Lecture Series. Wake Forest University, January 2009
- *Panel Discussant*, “The Benefits of the Mellon Program” Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, Southeastern Regional Conference. Duke University, November 2008
- *Panel Discussant*, “The First Year,” New Faculty Orientation. Wake Forest University, August 2008
- *Discussant*, Screening of *The Language You Cry In*, National History Day Summer Teacher’s Institute. Savannah, GA, July 2008
- *Faculty Mentor*, Alumni Mentoring Workshop, Fund for Theological Education. Atlanta, GA, June 2008
- *Panel Discussant*, Modern Day Ministry. Wake Forest University Divinity School, April 2008
- *Speaker*, “Life after the Mellon Program,” Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program. Duke University, March 2008
- *Lecture*, “Spaces ‘Over There’: Death in the Lives of Gullah/Geechee Women,” Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. University of Virginia, February 2008
- *Lecture*, “Listening to the Dead Speak: Gullah/Geechee Women and the Ethnographic Imagination,” Race and Religion Workshop. University of Chicago, October 2007

#### **Conference & Workshop Presentations:**

- *Panelist*, “Such You are Called to See: Nate Parker’s the Birth of a Nation among the Religionists,” Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November 2016
- *Panelist*, Author-Meets-Critics Session for *Womanist and Black Feminist Responses to Tyler Perry’s Productions*, Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA, November 2015
- *Discussant*, “But I Had a Praying Grandmother: (E)Merging Histories of Black Female Sexuality,” Religious Narratives of Black Sexuality in the New World panel, “Are the Gods Afraid of Black Sexuality” Conference. Columbia University, October 2014
- *Organizer and Panelist*, Author Meets Critics Session for *Seeking the Straight and Narrow: Weight Loss and Sexual Reorientation in Evangelical America* by Lynne Gerber, PCA/ACA Annual Meeting. Washington, DC, March 2013
- *Presider*, “Rethinking Classics: The Best New Scholarship in Afro-American Religious History,” Annual Meeting of the AAR. Chicago, IL, November 2012
- *Presenter*, “Selling Drag on a R&B/Gospel Soundtrack: The ‘New’ Black Woman as Scripted by the Music of Tyler Perry’s *I Can Do Bad All By Myself*,” MESEA Bi-Annual Conference.

Barcelona, Spain, June 2012

- *Organizer and Panelist*, “The ‘Church of Oprah’ and the Rise of Sapphimmibel: Race-ing Fatness in Contemporary Culture,” Eat, Pray, Suffer: Fat and Its Religious and Moral Dimensions panel, PCA/ACA Annual Meeting. Boston, MA, April 2012
- *Panelist*, Author Meets Critics Session for *Eating to Excess: The Meaning of Gluttony and the Fat Body in the Ancient World* by Susan Hill, PCA/ACA Annual Meeting. Boston, MA, April 2012
- *Presenter*, “Effective Incorporation of Contemporary Medias & Technologies” Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Pre-Tenure Faculty Workshop. Wabash, IN, June 2010
- *Presenter*, “Masculinizing the Feminine/Feminizing the Masculine: Women, Religion and Embodiment in Contemporary Comedic Film,” Annual Meeting of the AAR. Montréal, Canada, November 2009

### **AWARDS, GRANTS, & HONORS**

2018-2021 *Andrew Mellon Foundation New Directions Fellowship*, Williams College  
2013-2014 *Hellman Fellows Grant for Assistant Professors*, Williams College  
2012 *Class of 1957 Summer Research Assistant Recipient*, Williams College  
2010-2011 *Career Enhancement Fellowship*, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation  
2010 *Summer Fellowship*, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning  
2009-2010 *Postdoctoral Diversity Fellowship*, Ford Foundation  
2009-2010 *First Book Grant for Minority Scholars*, The Louisville Institute  
2008-2009 *Archie Fund Grant for Faculty Excellence*, Wake Forest University  
2007-2008 *Presidential Trust Collection Development Grant*, Wake Forest University  
2006-2007 *Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation Fellowship*, Williams College  
2002-2007 *Doctoral & Dissertation Fellowships*, Fund for Theological Education  
2002-2007 *Graduate Diversity Fellowship*, Emory University

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

2011 Mellon Mays Postdoctoral Fellows Retreat, San Diego, CA. Social Science Research Council  
2009 Mellon Mays Postdoctoral Fellows Retreat, Scottsdale, AZ. Social Science Research Council  
2009-2010 Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology & Religion Workshop for Pre-Tenure Faculty of African Descent, Wabash, IN  
2007 Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology & Religion Dinner for New Teachers, San Diego, CA

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

#### **Department & Institutional Service, Williams College**

2015-2016 Faculty Fellow, The Davis Center  
2014-2016 Faculty Coordinator, Mellon Mays and Alison Davis Undergraduate Fellowships  
2014-2016 Representative, Liberal Arts Consortium for Online Learning Advisory Council  
2013-present Faculty Advisor, *Kaleido[scopes]: Diaspora Re-imagined*, Student Journal  
2013-2014 Member, Faculty Steering Committee (Elected)

- 2012-2015 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Faculty Advisor (J. Jolly, S. Brown, and C. Williams)
- 2012-2013 Member, Committee on Diversity and Community
- 2012, 2013 Faculty Participant, Human Library Project, “Feminist/Womanist”
- 2012-2016 Advisory Board Member, Black Student Union
- 2011-2016 Advisory Board Member, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- 2011, 2012 Faculty Participant, Divisions Recruitment Dinner for First-Generation Students
- 2011-2012 Search Committee Member, Transnational Queer Studies, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

**Department & Institutional Service, Wake Forest University**

- 2008-2010 Board Member, Religion and Public Engagement Initiative
- 2008-2010 Member, Undergraduate Advisory Committee
- 2008-2009 Steering Committee, Magnolia Scholars Program for First Generation Students
- Fall 2007 Working Group Participant, Provost’s Strategic Plan Initiative for Diversity

**Profession-at-Large**

- 2018 Reviewer, University of Georgia Press and *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*
- 2013-2018 Steering Committee Co-Chair, Afro-American Religious History Group, AAR
- 2014-2017 Editorial Board Member, *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society*
- 2016 Reviewer, Rutgers University Press and Lexington Books
- 2015 Reviewer, *Journal of Africana Religions*, *Journal of Men’s Studies*, *The Black Scholar*
- 2010-2013 Steering Committee Member, Afro-American Religious History Group, AAR
- 2007-2013 Steering Committee Member, Music and Religion Consultation, AAR
- 2013 AALAC Workshop Proposal, “Africana Religious Studies,” co-organized with Yvonne Chireau of Swarthmore College
- 2011 Reviewer, Palgrave Macmillan Press
- 2011 Focus Group Participant, Status of Women in the Profession, AAR
- Summer 2010 Conference Faculty, Leaders in the Academy Conference, Fund for Theological Education, Chicago, IL
- 2008-2009 Steering Committee Member, Religion in America Group, Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (a division of the AAR)

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- American Academy of Religion (AAR)
- ASWAD (Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora)
- Caribbean Philosophical Association (CPA)
- National Council of Black Studies (NCBS)
- National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA)
- Popular Culture and American Culture Associations (PCA/ACA)
- The Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and Americas (MESEA)
- The Society for the Study of Black Religion (SSBR)