

# LHC Newsletter

## Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Monday, October 3, 2011

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Sincerely,

Shawn Leigh Alexander  
Assistant Professor of African and African-American Studies  
Interim Director, Langston Hughes Center  
University of Kansas

## Upcoming Events

### ***Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series***

**What:** *African American Literature: Dead or Alive* – Maryemma Graham, University of Kansas

**When:** Monday, October 3 @11:30 am - 1:00 pm (11:30 –12:00 social period and brownbag lunch)

**Where:** Kansas Union, Alcove A (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** Langston Hughes Center

**About The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series:** The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag, every second Monday of each academic month, is an informal forum for the African Americanist community and those who are interested in the general study of race, culture, and American society. The forum discusses activities on campus, historical and current issues related to race, and culture and social relations in America. It offers opportunities for visiting scholars, KU faculty, and KU students to present their ongoing research.

Langston Hughes' character Jesse B. Semple, or Simple first appeared in the *Chicago Defender* on February 13, 1943. Semple became a voice, often in comic or satirical fashion, through which Hughes could comment on international relations, current events and the

everyday concerns of the African American community.

## ***Black Literary Suite***

### **What: Black Literary Suite**

**When:** October 6, 2011 @ 12:00 – 4:00 pm

**Where:** Governor's Room, Kansas Union

**Cost per person:** FREE and Open to the Public

**Sponsors of this Event:** The Project on the History of Black Writing

### **About:**

The Project on the History of Black Writing (HBW) will present a showing of selections from the 100 Novels project.

HBW is one of KU's important, but often times over-looked literary and historical resources. It has been in the forefront of research and inclusion efforts in higher education for twenty-five years. Founded in 1983 at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, HBW has over 900 novels in its collection published by African American authors since William Wells Brown's *Clotel; or, the President's Daughter* (1853). The project is dedicated to archiving every novel published by an African American.

The 100 Novels Project is a relatively new research initiative that utilizes quantitative research to enhance understandings of black literary history. As part of this initiative, The Black Literary Suite was designed to engage the public, shed new light on HBW's holdings, and stimulate discourse about the value of studying African American literature as an entire body of work. The exhibit will highlight the significance of *place* for African American writers. We will focus on New York City, specifically Harlem, in relationship to the novels and authors in our collection.

For more information about HBW and its resources, visit our webpage: [www.hbw.ku.edu](http://www.hbw.ku.edu) ; or our blog: <http://projecthbw.blogspot.com/>

## ***The Civil War and the African Freedom War***

**What: The Civil War and the African Freedom War** – Jennifer Weber, Valdenia Winn, Chester Owens, and Jimmy Johnson

**When:** October 20 @ 6:30 – 9:00 pm

**Where:** Kansas City Community College | 7250 State Avenue | Kansas City, KS 66112

**Sponsors of this Event:** Lorenzo J. Greene Chapter of ASALH, the National Archives (Kansas City Region) and Kansas City Kansas Community College

About: In recognition of the 150th year since the commencement of the Civil War a panel of scholars will examine the question: *If the African Freedom War began on the slave-ships, among captive Africans, during the Middle Passage, and culminated among captive Africans, with the victory by the North in the American Civil War, when did the African Freedom War actually end?*

## ***Thabiti Lewis***

**What: *Can Michael Vick be Forgiven? Race, Gender and Mythologies in American Sports Culture*** – Thabiti Lewis

**When:** Monday, October 24, 2011 @ 7:00 pm

**Where:** Spencer Museum of Art, Auditorium

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** The Project of the History of Black Writing; Office of Diversity and Equity, Department of Athletics, Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, School of Journalism, Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, Department of African and African American Studies

**About:** Thabiti Lewis is from St. Louis Missouri, where he grew up in West and North St. Louis and is the middle child of five. After he graduated from Sumner High School where he was a member of the Drama Club and captain of the baseball team, he attended the University of Rochester where he cultivated his interests in literature and history, graduating with degrees in both, but honors in history. The following year he obtain an M.A.T. from the University of Rochester's School of Education.

After spending a few years living between Chicago and St. Louis working as a high school teacher and university lecturer, freelance writer, newspaper columnist and radio host, he enrolled Saint Louis University where he obtained a doctorate in English in 2001, with a special focus on the Black Arts Movement literature and Black Feminist writer Toni Cade Bambara.

In 2000, he received a summer fellowship at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana and in 2008 a Lilly Library Grant. While he was a member of the English department at Willamette University he chaired and was instrumental in the development of the American Ethnic Studies Program there.

He is currently an Associate Professor of English at Washington State University Vancouver. He has published widely in the areas of African American literature, African American Studies, and sport and race. His areas of teaching are 20th century American literature, African American literature, Race and Cultural Studies. Dr. Lewis has worked as a journalist, talk radio host, and as an editor.

Thabiti Lewis has written for several newspapers, magazines, journals and magazines such as The Source Magazine, Crisis Magazine, NewsOne, The St. Louis American, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Oregon Humanities Magazine, and The Oregonian. He has also contributed several political and cultural commentaries to radio programs.

In November of 2010 he published a ground-breaking book on race and American culture, *Ballers of the New School: Race and Sports in America* (Third World Press). Prior to this he edited and co-edited special issues of journals (The Willamette Journal and AmeriQuests Journal). He is the editor of the forthcoming book *Conversations with Toni Cade Bambara* (University Press of Mississippi, Fall 2012), and is completing a book-length study of the fiction of the writer Toni Cade Bambara. He is also at work on a study of the performance of heroism, race, and masculinity in American sports museums.

### ***Tuttle Lecture***

**What: Rehearsal for Freedom: Black Professional Women's Health Care Activism**

**before *Brown*** – Darlene Clark Hine

**When:** Wednesday, October 26 @ 4:30 – 6:00 pm

**Where:** Woodruff Auditorium, Kansas Union

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** American Studies Department, The History Department, The Office of the Chancellor, The Office of the Provost, and the Hall Center

**About:** Darlene Clark Hine is the Board of Trustees Professor of African-American Studies and Professor of History at Northwestern University. She is a leading historian of the African American experience and a pioneering scholar in African American women's history. She is the author or editor of twenty-five books, including the award-winning *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950* (1989) and *Black Victory: The Rise and Fall of the White Primary in Texas* (second edition, 2003). Professor Hine is also the editor-in-chief of *Black Women in America*, three volumes (second edition, 2005). Professor Hine's scholarly accomplishments have been widely recognized. She has served as president of both the Organization of American Historians and the Southern Historical Association; she has been a fellow at both the Institute for Advanced Study at Stanford University, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; and in 2006, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Department of American Studies and friends and family of Bill Tuttle established the annual Tuttle Lecture in 2008 to honor Bill for his 40 years of academic excellence in research and teaching, as well as his service to the university, the Lawrence community, and the nation. The Tuttle Lecture focuses on Bill's primary teaching, research, and civic concerns: African American history and culture and recent American society and politics.

## In The News

### ***African American Literary Blog***

See entries from various authors at the following link: <http://projecthbw.blogspot.com/>

### ***Sylvia Robinson, Producer of Sugarhill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight,' Dies at 75***

T. Rees Shapiro | October 1, 2011 | *Washington Post*

Sylvia Robinson, 75, a singer who performed rhythm-and-blues hits in the 1950s and later found resounding success as a producer who nurtured the birth of a new musical genre — hip-hop — with Sugarhill Gang's 1979 song "Rapper's Delight," died Sept. 29 at a hospital in Secaucus, N.J. The Associated Press reported that she had congestive heart failure.

Mrs. Robinson's achievements as a record producer are difficult to overstate, said Dan Charnas, author of "The Big Payback: The History of the Business of Hip-Hop."

Read the full article at the following link: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/sylvia-robinson-producer-of-sugarhill-gangs-rappers-delight-dies-at-75/2011/09/30/gIQAdsGRDL\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/sylvia-robinson-producer-of-sugarhill-gangs-rappers-delight-dies-at-75/2011/09/30/gIQAdsGRDL_story.html)

## ***Student's Knowledge of Civil Rights History Has Deteriorated***

Sam Dillon | September 28, 2011 | *NY Times*

When Julian Bond, the former Georgia lawmaker and civil rights activist, turned to teaching two decades ago, he often quizzed his college students to gauge their awareness of the civil rights movement. He did not want to underestimate their grasp of the topic or talk down to them, he said.

"My fears were misplaced," Mr. Bond said. No student had heard of George Wallace, the segregationist governor of Alabama, he said. One student guessed that Mr. Wallace might have been a CBS newsman.

That ignorance by American students of the basic history of the civil rights movement has not changed — in fact, it has worsened, according to a new report by the Southern Poverty Law Center on whose board Mr. Bond sits. The report says that states' academic standards for public schools are one major cause of the problem.

Read the full article at the following link: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/education/28civil.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/28/education/28civil.html?_r=2)

## ***Post-Blackness***

Orlando Patterson | September 22, 2011 | *NY Times*

Much has been written on the benefits that accrued to the generation of African-Americans reaping the rewards of the civil rights revolution. But we have heard surprisingly little from those in the post-civil-rights age about what these benefits have meant to them, and especially how they view themselves as black people in an America now led by a black president. In his new book, Touré's aim is to provide an account of this "post-black" condition, one that emerged only in the 1980s but by the '90s had become the "new black."

Read the full review at the following link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/25/books/review/whos-afraid-of-post-blackness-by-toure-book-review.html?pagewanted=all>

## ***The Fallacy of Touré's Post-Blackness Theory***

Randal Kennedy | August 11, 2011 | *The Root*

African Americans fight a multifront struggle in pursuing their ambitions. Along with the difficulties that others face -- bad luck, personal deficiencies, talented competitors -- blacks face additional obstacles. On one front they encounter prejudiced Caucasians. On another they encounter Negroes who, attached to stunted conceptions of racial solidarity, habitually castigate as disloyal blacks perceived as "acting white," being "oreos," "selling out."

Blacks characteristically confront white racism with uninhibited fury. With black critics, however, they often display ambivalence. Even when chafing miserably from constraints imposed by

they often display ambivalence. Even when chafing miserably from constraints imposed by racial solidarity, many blacks nonetheless bite their tongues. They refrain from speaking openly and frankly because the rhetoric and performance of racial solidarity occupies an honored position in black American circles. It has claims on blacks' psyches even as they wrestle with the restraints that solidarity entails.

Read the full review at the following link: [http://www.theroot.com/views/fallacy-of-racial-solidarity-post-blackness-theory?wpisrc=root\\_more\\_news](http://www.theroot.com/views/fallacy-of-racial-solidarity-post-blackness-theory?wpisrc=root_more_news)

### ***Trends in median wealth by race***

Lawrence Mishel | September 21, 2011 | *Economic Policy Institute*

Last week, we highlighted that the vast majority of gains in wealth since 1983 accrued to the top 5 percent of households and actually declined for the bottom 60 percent. Perhaps the statistic that best illustrates the disparity is *median* wealth, which is the wealth of the household that has more wealth than half of households and less than the other half. If gains had been equal from 1983-2009, the typical household's wealth would have risen to \$100,900, up \$29,000 from \$71,900 in 1983. Instead, median wealth declined 13.5 percent to \$62,200.

It is also sobering to examine the racial difference in wealth trends. Wealth for the median black household has nearly disappeared, falling from \$6,300 in 1983 to \$2,200 in 2009 – a decrease of more than 65 percent. This means *half* of black households have less than \$2,200 in wealth. Among white households, median wealth has fallen substantially since 2007, but at \$97,900, remains higher than the 1983 level of \$94,100. White median wealth is now *44.5 times higher* than black median wealth.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.epi.org/publication/trends-median-wealth-race/>

## **General Information**

### **Call For Papers – Journal of Pan African Studies**

The Journal of Pan African Studies is proud to announce two new Call for Papers:

"Special Issue of the Journal of Pan African Studies - Leadership in Africana Studies " <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/announce/show.cgi?ID=188164>

"Special Issue of the Journal of Pan African Studies analyzing Manning Marable's A Life of Reinvention: Malcolm X (2011)" <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/announce/show.cgi?ID=188165>

### **Call For Papers – Journal of Africana Religions**

We are proud to announce the establishment of the Journal of Africana Religions and to invite the submission of full-length articles and review essays. This peer-reviewed journal offers critical analysis of the religious traditions of African and African Diasporic peoples as well as religious traditions influenced by the diverse cultural heritage of Africa. An interdisciplinary journal encompassing history, anthropology, Africana studies, gender studies, ethnic studies, religious studies, and other allied disciplines-and covering the religious traditions of people of African descent throughout the world-the Journal of Africana Religions embraces a variety of humanistic and social scientific methodologies for understanding the social, political, and cultural meanings and functions of Africana religions. We invite authors to examine African traditional religions, Islam, Christianity, new religious movements, and other African and

African Diasporic religious expressions and experiences.

For more information on submissions, our prestigious 33-member editorial board, and our purpose and goals, please visit our website:

[http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/religious\\_studies/index.php/joar](http://liberalarts.iupui.edu/religious_studies/index.php/joar)

### **American Studies – Special Issue Aaron Douglas and the Harlem Renaissance**

Special Issue of *American Studies*, which developed from the internationally recognized conference and exhibit, Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist <<http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu/>>.

The issue includes: William J. Harris, Gerald Early, Robert G. O'Meally, Terry Adkins, Farah Jasmine Griffin, David Krasner, Amy Kirschke, Richard J. Powell, Stephanie Fox Knappe, and Cheryl R. Ragar

For the full TOC see: <https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/amerstud/issue/view/316>

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