

# ROBIN BROOKS

University of Pittsburgh, Department of Africana Studies  
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## EDUCATION

**Ph.D.** University of Florida, English, 2009-2014  
**M.A.** University of Wisconsin-Madison, Afro American Studies, 2005  
**B.A.** Florida State University, English, (*magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa), 2003  
Minor: African American Studies

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor	University of Pittsburgh, Department of Africana Studies, 2016-Present
Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow	University of San Diego, Department of English, 2015-2016
Provost's Postdoctoral Scholar	University of South Florida, Department of English, 2014-2015

## RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

20th and 21st Century African-American, Caribbean, African, and American Multi-Ethnic Literatures, Africana Studies, Black Feminist Theory, Postcolonial Studies

## PUBLICATIONS

- “The Power of Black Feminism: Shaping a Journey to Destiny.” *Lifewriting Annual: Biographical and Autobiographical Studies* 5.1. Forthcoming.
- “The Educational Value of Black Memoirs: Reading Stephanie Y. Evans’ *Black Passports: Travel Memoirs as a Tool for Youth Empowerment*.” *College Language Association Journal* 61.1. Forthcoming.
- “Black, Female, and Teaching Social Justice: Transformative Pedagogy for Challenging Times.” *Black Women and Social Justice Education: Legacies and Lessons*, edited by Stephanie Y. Evans, Andrea Domingue, and Tania Mitchell. New York: SUNY Press, Forthcoming.
- “Manifestations of Ogun Symbolism in Paule Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow*.” *Journal of Africana Religions* 2.2 (2014): 161-183.
- “Uptown and Downtown: A Conversation on Class Stratification with Diana McCaulay.” *Jamaica Journal* 35.1-2 (2014): 94-99.

“New Dance Steps to a Jamaican Beat: A Conversation with Olive Senior.” *Caribbean Women: Riding the Waves of Resistance*. Spec. issue of *ProudFlesh: New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* 8 (2013): 61-68.

Review of *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America* by Shirley Wilson Logan. *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory* 31.1-2 (2011): 390-394.

### **Digital Humanities Publications**

“Critical Commentary on Olive Senior’s ‘Ogun: God of Iron’” with Hyacinth M. Simpson. *Gardening in the Tropics Ryerson University (Canada) Digital Humanities Project and the Digital Library of the Caribbean*, April 2017, <http://www.ryerson.ca/olivesenior/poems/ogun.html>.

“Teaching Folk Culture: Images of the Nine Night Traditional Ritual in Zee Edgell’s *Beka Lamb* and Michelle Cliff’s *Abeng*.” *Digital Library of the Caribbean*, October 2010, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00103097/00001>.

“Teaching Merle Hodge’s *Crick Crack, Monkey*: A Lesson Plan.” *Digital Library of the Caribbean*, October 2010, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00103096>.

### **Works in Progress**

*Class Interruptions: Inequality and Division in African Diasporic Women’s Fiction*. Book Manuscript.

“R.I.P. Shirts *or* Shirts of the Movement: Reading the Death Paraphernalia of Black Lives.” M4BL and the Critical Matter of Black Lives, special issue of *Biography*. Abstract accepted.

“Looking to Foremothers for Strength: A Brief Biography of the Colored Women’s League.” Under review with *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*.

“The Haves and the Have-Nots: Globalization and Human Rights in McCauley’s *Dog-Heart*.” Under review with *Journal of West Indian Literature*.

“Tavis Smiley, Iyanla Vanzant: Slave Narrative Traditions and Contemporary Memoirs.” Journal article in preparation for submission to *African American Review*.

“Alternative Facts and Faulty Citations: Urging Students to Use the Library.” Op-ed in preparation for submission to *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

## **GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & HONORS**

2017	Hewlett International Grant, University Center for International Studies, Pitt
2016	Building Future Faculty Program Scholar, North Carolina State University
2015, 2016	Enhanced Student-Faculty Interaction Grant, University of San Diego
2014	“How Class Works” Conference Scholarship, SUNY Stony Brook
2009-2014	McKnight Doctoral Fellowship
2014	WCSA Young Scholars & Activists Initiative Mini-Grant
2013	SAMLA George Mills Harper Fund Travel Grant
2013	Doctoral Support Award, UF
2012	Graduate Student Council Travel Grant, UF
2011-2013	Diversity Enhancement Scholarship, UF
2011	Service Leadership Award - UF Black Graduate Student Organization
2009-2010	Office of Graduate Minority Programs Scholarship, UF
2002-2003	Honors in the Major Program, Florida State University
2002	Golden Key “Circle of Gold” Award
2002	Lambda Iota Tau Literary Honor Society
2001-2003	William and Haskell McMannis Scholarship
2001-2002	W.E.B. Du Bois Academic Award
2000-2003	Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
2000-2003	National Campaign for African American Achievement Scholarship
2000-2001	Miami-Dade Urban Bankers Association Scholarship
2000-2001	Milton Littman Memorial Scholarship
2001	Golden Key International Honor Society
2001	National Society of Collegiate Scholars
2000	Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society

## **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

### *Conferences*

- 2017 “Rivals?: Contesting African American and Caribbean Strife via Fiction.” Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) Conference. Nassau, Bahamas. (June).
- 2017 “A Social Justice Approach: Teaching Africana Literature in a Smartphone Era.” National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) Conference. Houston, Texas. (March).
- 2016 “True Life Stories: (Un) Performing Destructive Family Legacies.” The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) Conference. Charleston, SC. (March).
- 2015 “Portrayals of Working Class Life in Toni Morrison’s Literary Works.” Fighting Inequality - Joint Conference of the Labor and Working-Class History Association and the Working-Class Studies Association. Georgetown University. Washington, D.C. (May).

- 2015 “Tavis Smiley, Iyanla Vanzant: Slave Narrative Traditions and Contemporary Memoirs.” College Language Association (CLA) Conference. Southern Methodist University. Dallas, TX. (April).
- 2014 “Globalization and Changing Class Positions in Contemporary Literature.” South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAML) Conference. Atlanta, GA. (November).
- 2014 “Nature versus Nurture: Class Factors in Parenting Styles and Childhood Socialization.” How Class Works Conference. Working Class Studies Association. Stony Brook, NY. (June).
- 2013 “The Wrong and Right Sides of the Tracks: Mapping Intra-racial Class Dynamics in African American Literature.” South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference. Atlanta, GA. (November).
- 2012 “Class and Literary Culture: Examining Working-Class Portrayals in Caribbean Literature.” How Class Works Conference. Working Class Studies Association. Stony Brook, NY. (June).
- 2012 “Marxist Insights in Caribbean Literary Works.” University of Florida Marxist Reading Group Conference. Gainesville, FL. (March).
- 2012 “Class Ideology in Merle Hodge’s *Crick Crack, Monkey*.” Florida Education Fund Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference. Abstract published in conference proceedings. Tampa, FL. (February).
- 2011 “Vestiges of West African Cosmology: The Ogun Trope in Paule Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow*.” The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS) Conference. Florida Atlantic University. Boca Raton, FL. (April).
- 2011 “African American Intellectual Discourse: Examining Texts on the Outskirts of the Canon.” University of Florida Graduate Student Council Interdisciplinary Conference. Abstract published in conference proceedings. Gainesville, FL. (February).
- 2010 “Paule Marshall: African Traditions in Her Literary Work.” University of Florida Graduate Student Council Interdisciplinary Conference. Abstract published in conference proceedings. Gainesville, FL. (February).

### ***Invited Talks***

- 2017 Workshop. “R.I.P. Shirts *or* Shirts of the Movement: Reading the Death Paraphernalia of Black Lives.” University of Hawai’i. Honolulu, Hawai’i. (August).
- 2017 “Transnational Relations in Afro-Cuban Poetry: The Case of Nicolas Guillen.” Revolutions and Rebellions: Resistance and Race in Cuba – Study Abroad Program for the University of Pittsburgh. Guest lecturer. Havana, Cuba. (May).

- 2016 “What’s Class Got to Do with It?: Inequality and Division in Contemporary Literature.” University of San Diego. Public Lecture. San Diego, CA. (April).
- 2016 “Beyond the 1%: Class Relations in the African Diaspora.” North Carolina State University. Department of English. Raleigh, NC. (April).
- 2015 “After the PhD: Pursuing Postdoctoral Fellowship Positions.” Scholarly Research and Writing Doctoral Seminar. University of South Florida. Tampa, FL. Invited Talk. (March).
- 2014 “Class in the African Diaspora: *Dog-Heart* and ‘The Lesson.’” William Paterson University. Department of English. Paterson, NJ. (March).
- 2013 “Beyond the ‘Class’ Room: The Entanglements of Class and Education in Caribbean Societies.” University of the West Indies, Mona. Department of Literatures in English Staff/Post Graduate Seminar Series. Kingston, Jamaica. (April).
- 2013 “Examinations of Olive Senior’s Gardening in the Tropics.” Campion College. Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies. (February).

### ***Panels Organized & Chaired***

- 2017 “Interpreting Letters from the Caribbean.” Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) Conference. Panel Chair only. Nassau, Bahamas. (June).
- 2017 “Pedagogy and Social Justice Practices.” National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) Conference. Panel Chair only. Houston, TX. (March).
- 2015 “From Local to Global: Narratives of Inequality and Power.” Symposium by the University of South Florida Provost’s Postdoctoral Initiative in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Co-organizer and Panel Chair. Tampa, FL. (March).
- 2014 “Sustainability and Working Class Studies around the Globe.” Special Session. South Atlantic Language Association (SAML A) Conference. Organizer and Panel Chair. Atlanta, GA. (November).
- 2013 “Contemporary American Women Writers: Confronting Changing Times.” Women’s Studies Panel. South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAML A) Conference. Organizer and Panel Chair. Atlanta, GA. (November).
- 2013 “Las Voces Latinoamericanas y Caribeñas: The Past, the Present, and Cultural Subjectivity in Contemporary Literature.” Humanities Panel. Florida Education Fund Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference. Organizer and Panel Chair. Tampa, FL. (February).

***Other Presentations & Panel Participation***

- 2015 Humanities Panel- Literature and Interior Design. Florida Education Fund Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference. Tampa, FL. Panel discussant. (February).
- 2014 “Critical Perspectives on Literature and Race.” Humanities Panel. Florida Education Fund Mid-Year Research and Writing Conference. Tampa, FL. Panel discussant. (February).
- 2013 Dunoon Technical High School. Literature Course. Spoke on importance of education. Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies. Guest Speaker. (February).
- 2012 UF Office of Academic Support. Graduate Prep Workshop. Spoke on how to gain admission and prepare for graduate school. University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Invited Panelist. (April).
- 2011 UF Graduate School. Campus Visitation Program. Doctoral student experiences. University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Invited Panelist. (September).
- 2011 English Graduate Organization “State-of-the-Field” American Literature Lunch Series. University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Facilitator. (April).
- 2010 “Writing with Power: The Personal Essay for College Admission.” Springhill Church College Preparatory Workshop. Gainesville, FL. Presenter. (April).
- 2010 English Graduate Organization “State-of-the-Field” Postcolonial Studies Lunch Series. University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Facilitator. (April).
- 2010 Image Next: Visions Past and Future Conference. “Image Text and the City.” University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Facilitator. (March).
- 2010 English Graduate Organization Publishing Workshop. University of Florida. Gainesville, FL. Facilitator. (March).
- 2008 Department of English and Modern Languages Workshop Series. Bowie State University. Bowie, MD. Facilitator. (October).

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE****University of Pittsburgh, Department of Africana Studies, Assistant Professor, 8/16 to pres**

- Introduction to Africana Studies – AFRCNA 0031 (Fall 2017)  
 Africana Urban Woman – AFRCNA 0242 (Fall 2017)  
 World Literature in English - AFRCNA 1306 (Summer 2017)  
 Introduction to African Literature - AFRCNA 0522 (Spring 2017)  
 Man/Woman Literature - AFRCNA 0454 (Spring 2017)  
 Contemporary Caribbean Literature - AFRCNA 1349 (Fall 2016)

**University of San Diego, Department of English, Postdoctoral Fellow, 8/15-7/16**

African American Literature - ENG 225 (Fall 2015 and Spring 2016)

American Multi-Ethnic Literature - ENG 358 (Spring 2016)

**University of South Florida, Department of English, Postdoctoral Scholar, 8/14-5/15**

African American Literature - AML 3604 (Fall 2014) - "*Survey of African American Literature*"

African American Literature - AML 3604 (Spring 2015) - "*Life Writing: Journeys of Life in African American Literature*"

**University of Florida, Department of English, Teaching Assistant/Associate, 2010-2014**

Survey of American Literature - AML 2070 (Summer-Fall 2010, Fall 2011 & 2013, Spring 2014) - "*American Multi-Ethnic Literary Explorations*"

Studies in Twentieth-Century American Literature & Culture - AML 4242 (Summer 2012) - "*The Rich, Poor & In-Between: Class Portrayals in Twentieth Century American Literature*"

Issues in American Literature and Culture - AML 2410 (Spring 2011) - "*Social Class in Black Women's Literary Works*"

Survey of World Literature - LIT 2120 (Spring 2012)

**Bowie State University, Department of English and Modern Languages, Lecturer and Writing Assistant, 8/08-5/09**

English Usage and Mechanics - ENG 100

Composition and Literature I - ENG 101

Writing Assistant: Responsibilities included assisting students enhance their writing skills through one-on-one consultations, delivering writing center orientations for classes, providing workshops on writing and grammar skills, and facilitating newsletter production

**Anne Arundel Community College, English and Communications Department, Adjunct Instructor, 8/08-7/09**

Composition and Introduction to Literature I - ENG 111

Composition and Introduction to Literature II - ENG 112 (two sections)

**Lincoln University (PA), English and Mass Communications Department, Adjunct Instructor, 8/07-12/07**

Basic Writing Skills I - ENG 100

**North Carolina Central University, English and Mass Communications Department,  
Lecturer, 8/06-5/07**  
Arts & Humanities I - HUM 2410 (four sections)  
Arts & Humanities II - HUM 2420 (four sections)

**University of Wisconsin- Madison, Department of Afro American Studies, Teaching  
Assistant, 8/04-12/04**  
Masterpieces of African American Literature - AFROAMER 227

### **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

- 2017            Havana, Cuba**  
Conducted research at Casa de las Americas, The Jose Martí National Library of Cuba, and the University of Havana on relations between African Americans and Cuban citizens (particularly Afro-Cubans or *los negros*) with emphasis on African diasporic connections, socio-cultural links and civil and political rights.
- 2016            Trelawny, Jamaica, University of San Diego - International Faculty  
Development Program in Jamaica**  
Selected to be a part of a cohort of professors and administrators to visit the town of Duncans in Trelawny, Jamaica to research how to further incorporate immersion and community engagement opportunities in the university's service-learning study abroad programs
- 2012-2013      Kingston, Jamaica, University of the West Indies, Mona, Department of  
Literatures in English**  
Specially-admitted during doctoral studies to conduct research: interview writers, participate in university and community-based cultural events (participant observation), and volunteer with local schools and the Sistren Theatre Collective

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & SECONDARY TEACHING**

**University of South Florida, College Reach Out Program, Instructor, Summer 2015**  
Develop syllabus and overall course structure on Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S. for college-bound high school students (grades 9-12), as well as prepare students for the SAT and ACT exams

**University of Florida, Upward Bound Program, Instructor, Summer 2011**  
Develop syllabus and overall course structure on African American and Caribbean literary works for college-bound high school students (grade 12), as well as prepare students for successful completion of their language arts class and for admission to a postsecondary institution

**University of Florida, Board of Education Graduate Fellows Peer Advisor, Summer 2010**  
Advise incoming graduate fellowship recipients for the Board of Education Summer Program. Responsibilities included advising students on course selections, aiding students with making field-appropriate university contacts, and meeting weekly to advise students on general concerns.



**Shepard IB Magnet Middle School, Humanities Teacher, 8/05-6/06**

Prepare and teach a range of lessons in social studies to sixth grade students on topics ranging from Ancient History to Modern Europe and prepare students for state exams

**UW-Madison Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence Project Assistant, 1/05-5/05**

Develop English and History enrichment assignments for high school students and supervise undergraduate tutors

**UW-Madison Afro-American Studies Project Assistant, 2003-2004**

Research archives for information on the Joan Little Project facilitated by Dr. Christina Greene and other historical events concerning African Americans

**UW-Madison, College Access Program, Instructor, Summer 2004**

Develop syllabus and overall structure on American Multi-Ethnic Literature course for college-bound high school students (grades 9-11), as well as prepare and give lectures on issues of subjectivity, community, language, and gender

**EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE & NEWSLETTER PUBLICATIONS**

“Publish or Perish: Support for Being a Productive Scholar.” *Faculty Voices*, Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence, University of South Florida, 2015

*African Studies Quarterly*, Editorial Committee Member, 2010-2012

UF Black Graduate Student Organization, Newsletter Editor, 2010-2011

Selected Articles Written:

“Engaging the African American Studies Program: An Interview with Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans.” *Ashé: BGSO Newsletter* 1.1 (2010): 1, 2.

“Conversations with Your Committee Director: Scholarly Advice from Dr. Faye Harrison.” *Ashé: BGSO Newsletter* 1.2 (2010): 1, 5.

“History-Making Surrounds Us: An Interview with Dr. Sally Williams.” *Ashé: BGSO Newsletter* 1.3 (2011): 1, 5.

“Navigating Grad School Challenges: An Interview with Dr. Duane Dede.” *Ashé: BGSO Newsletter* 1.4 (2011): 1, 2.

Bowie State University Smith Vidal Literacy and Language Center, Newsletter Editorial Assistant, 2008-2009

Articles Written:

“Providing Students with Access to Success.” *Staccato* 1.2 (2009): 1.

“Bowie’s Legacy: Don S. S. Goodloe.” *Staccato* 1.2 (2009): 4.

**PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP**

“Lessons from a Class Straddler: Upward Mobility in Literature.” *Classism Exposed* [Boston, MA], 18 July 2013. (Invited Publication) <http://www.classism.org/lessons-class-straddler-upward-mobility-literature>

“‘Wishing for Heaven’: Cross-Class Relationships and Contemporary Culture.” *Classism Exposed* [Boston, MA], 1 Nov. 2012. (Invited Publication)  
<http://www.classism.org/wishing-heaven-crossclass-relationships-contemporary-culture>

“Christmas and Class Status.” Editorial. *Gainesville Sun* [Gainesville, FL], 10 Dec. 2011.

“Become Heartened, Not Hardened.” Editorial. *Gainesville Sun* [Gainesville, FL], 12 Jan. 2010.

“African American Families: Can Obama's Presidency Put a Dent in the Divorce Rate?”  
Editorial. *Afro American Newspaper* [Washington, D.C.], 2 June 2009.

## **INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE**

### **University of Pittsburgh**

Equipoise, Young Professionals Committee, 2016-present

### **University of San Diego**

National Society of Black Engineers, 2015 - Provided resume reviews and conducted mock interviews for undergraduates in engineering and technology-focused fields

### **University of South Florida**

Black Faculty and Staff Association, Member, 2014-2015

### **University of Florida**

Graduate Student Council, *Grants Committee Member*, 2011-2012

Black Graduate Student Organization, *Community Service Chair*, 2010-2012

Established Partnership with UF Black Student Union Mentorship Program

Established Partnership with St. Francis House Homeless Shelter, Gainesville, FL

English Graduate Organization, *Professional Development Coordinator*, 2010

English Graduate Organization, *Workshop/Conference Committees Member*, 2010-2012

Graduate Student Grants and Fellowships Conference, *Volunteer*, 2011

Institute of Black Culture Director Search, *Living in Gainesville Panelist*, 2011

### **Bowie State University**

Access to Success Committee Member, 2008-2009

Duties: Develop plans with members of the English Composition committee to help boost retention and graduation rates for incoming freshmen students, construct common syllabus for Composition courses, and create common final exams for Composition courses

### **North Carolina Central University**

English and Mass Communications Department, Arts & Humanities Committee Member, 2006-2007

Duties: Review textbooks and compose pre-tests to facilitate examination of student learning outcomes

**University of Wisconsin-Madison**

Composition/Rhetoric Research Group Member, 2004

Duties: Examine the role of African Americans and other minorities in the history of U.S. Rhetoric and Literacy with a professor and graduate students in the subject area

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER SERVICE**

**Harvard University**, Graduate School of Education, 2015

“Including Ourselves in the Change Equation: Personal Learning for Organizational Performance,” twelve-week online professional development program focused on teaching educators about mindset transformation for enhanced professional practice

**Regional Service (Southeast USA)**

South Atlantic Modern Language Association Harper Fund Committee, nominated to the position, 2014

**Durham Public Schools**

Professional Staff Development Liaison, Durham, NC, 2005-2006

Duties: Deliver information concerning teacher professional development between teachers at Shepard and the professional development department head of Durham Public Schools

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Modern Language Association (MLA)

College Language Association (CLA)

National Council for Black Studies (NCBS)

The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States (MELUS)

Working Class Studies Association(WCSA)