



What's new at ACMRS

2022-23

ASU Arizona Center for Medieval
and Renaissance Studies
Arizona State University



**Engage
the past.
Define
the future.**



Ayanna Thompson

Director & Regents Professor

Since 2018, ACMRS has become a leader in transforming the research about and teaching of premodern literature, history and culture. We have changed the types of dialogues we have in premodern studies, and we have made the dialogues much more inclusive. In a moment when many scholars, teachers and institutions are looking for inclusive research, pedagogy and historical information, ACMRS is a guiding light and a source of both leadership and inspiration. We have new partnerships with the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Newberry Library and the Huntington Library, and many other organizations are clamoring to partner with us on events like RaceB4Race precisely because we are viewed as a harbinger in inclusive historical work.

We have also transformed ACMRS Press which is now a member of the Association of University Presses. Partnering with the ASU

Library, ACMRS Press now publishes all of its titles in an open access fashion so there is no financial barrier to obtaining the best research in premodern studies. Moreover, our online open access journal, *The Sundial*, publishes cutting-edge research that has been accessed over 70,000 times.

Looking ahead, inclusive access will continue to be ACMRS's north star. Through our undergraduate internship program, our predoctoral fellowship program and our postdoctoral fellowship program, ACMRS continues to strive to bring a diverse range of students into premodern studies.



Enacting scholarly justice.

RaceB4Race

RaceB4Race started in 2019 as a small research symposium by and for scholars of color working on issues of race in premodern literature, history and culture. Now, RaceB4Race is a wide reaching community of scholars, students, researchers, theater practitioners, curators, librarians, artists and activists who are looking to the past to imagine different, more inclusive, futures. RaceB4Race has become a model for social justice programs in academia around the world. By influencing journals and presses to reevaluate their editorial practices to be more inclusive, providing models for

antiracist pedagogies and showcasing the most expansive and innovative scholarship in premodern studies, RaceB4Race has caused a seismic shift in the field.

RaceB4Race is brought to life by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in partnership with The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Division of Humanities, the Hitz Foundation and the Mellon Foundation.

RaceB4Race: Sustaining, Building, Innovating

In the fall of 2021, ACMRS was awarded \$3.5 million by the Mellon Foundation to diversify the curricula, academic pipelines, popular narratives and public-facing media and personnel for premodern literature, history and culture. Through curriculum development, scholar support and mentoring, social media training and content creation, as well as supporting a robust network of premodern critical race scholars, ACMRS has been hard at work laying the groundwork for this ambitious project.

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

RaceB4Race is developing, piloting and disseminating a useful range of higher education curricula and pedagogy for educators at all stages of their careers. All of our created teaching materials will be freely available. In the spring of 2022, the RaceB4Race team gathered data from a far-reaching needs assessment survey of premodern professors and scholars and began meeting with scholars to develop initial concepts for this curriculum. Throughout 2022 and 2023, ACMRS will continue to craft curricular materials that offer more complete and accurate narratives about the past and its modern uses.

MENTORSHIP NETWORK

Building and strengthening connections within the academic community engaged with premodern critical race studies means creating a horizontal community of care. Directed by Patricia Akhimie at Rutgers University, 15 mid-career scholars will work with early career scholars and engage in a semester-long interdisciplinary and cross-institutional reading and research group. This community of care addresses many inflection points in a scholar's career: isolation in their field or institution, under-advisement about what it takes to turn research into a book, and navigating the institutional demands of the tenure track. The first cohort of mentors and mentees begin in the fall semester of 2022.

FIRST & SECOND BOOK INSTITUTES

RaceB4Race seeks to address a glaring need to support early and mid-career scholars through the process of publishing their first and second books, key critical junctures in an academic career. During the spring of 2022 and under the direction of Patricia Akhimie at Rutgers University, the RaceB4Race First and Second Book Institutes provided a cohort of 23 scholars from around the world with the opportunity to focus on their monograph projects with a group of invested scholars and an expert institute leader. This program will continue to run during the spring semester every year for the duration of the grant.



SOCIAL MEDIA FELLOWS

Due to the public nature of this work, RaceB4Race scholars and students must be trained in digital, personal and institutional safety. In the spring of 2022, under the direction of Dorothy Kim at Brandeis University, a cohort of 10 RaceB4Race community members received specialized training from digital humanists, lawyers and other experts. The RaceB4Race Social Media Fellows program gives scholars the tools they will need as they share RaceB4Race-produced materials, give public appearances, or engage on other platforms that bring broader public attention to narratives about race in the past and its modern uses. The program will continue to run during the spring semester every year for the duration of the grant.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATION

Research shows that many members of Gen Z value and prioritize non-hierarchical teaching and learning models, especially through social media. In the fall of 2022 Postdoctoral Research Scholars, Predoctoral Research Fellows, and Undergraduate Research Aides will join the ACMRS RaceB4Race team to create peer-to-peer social media content that explores premodern globalism and the earliest constructions of racial formations.

PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Just as important as social media training is for scholars, media and public intellectual training gives scholars a way to communicate the importance of premodern critical race studies in the face of extreme backlash and opposition. Starting in the fall of 2022, RaceB4Race will support the development of premodern critical race scholars as public intellectuals through year-long virtual workshops. Literary agents, editors, radio and television producers, etc. will work with the cohort as a group and individually to coach scholars on the steps involved in becoming an acknowledged, public expert.

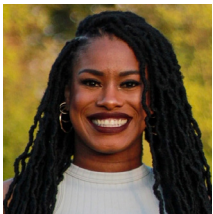
Needs Assessment and Strategic Data Collection

Funded by the Mellon Foundation, the **RaceB4Race: Sustaining, Building, Innovating** project aims to expand premodern critical race studies by focusing on curricular development, field diversification, academic mentorship and making the humanities relevant and accessible to public audiences. A major initiative of the Mellon-funded project is to create curricular materials that would enhance premodern studies courses. To determine the

need and focus of these materials, ACMRS collected information from scholars who teach courses in premodern studies. The results of this survey and all other data collected during the **RaceB4Race: Sustaining, Building Innovating** project is freely available on the ACMRS Website.



Welcome our Postdoctoral Research Scholars



Cornesha M. Tweede recently received her PhD in Romance Languages with a specialization in African Studies from the University of Oregon. Particularly, she studies early modern Spanish and Portuguese literature and the place of Africa within its culture and identity. Her interests are Blackness, race, gender and postcoloniality. Her research interests invite us to embrace the legacy of Blackness on the Iberian Peninsula, and to address the ways in which it has been suppressed within conventional, canonical scholarship, criticism and pedagogy of the early modern period. She holds a B.A. and an M.A. in Spanish Language, Literature and Linguistics.



Eduardo Ramos holds a PhD in English Literature from Penn State University and an MA in Medieval Icelandic Studies from the University of Iceland. He specializes in medieval English and Icelandic literature, with an emphasis on cross cultural contact in the North Atlantic region. He also examines the misuse of the Middle Ages by white supremacists and its connections to the academy. His work has appeared in *Postmedieval*, *Comitatus*, *CLS*, and *What is North?*

RaceB4Race publications

Journal issues

Race and Periodization - *New Literary History*
- Summer/Autumn 2021

Race Before Race: Premodern Critical Race
Studies - *Literature Compass* - October 2021

RaceB4Race: Critical Race Studies of the Premodern

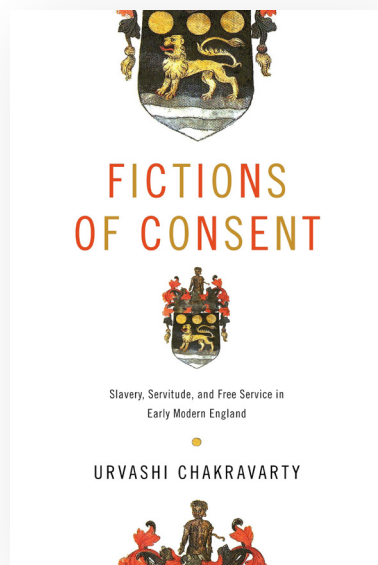
book series published by the University of Pennsylvania Press

Books in the RaceB4Race series focus on topics from antiquity to the eighteenth century and aim at enabling larger historical and theoretical narratives to emerge about the ways race has been constructed and operates in the literature, history and culture of the global West and beyond.

Fictions of Consent: Slavery, Servitude, and Free Service in Early Modern England

by Urvashi Chakravarty

In Fictions of Consent Urvashi Chakravarty excavates the ideologies of slavery that took root in early modern England in the period that preceded the development of an organized trade in enslaved persons.



Scripts of Blackness: Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race

by Noémie Ndiaye

Scripts of Blackness shows how the early modern mass media of theater and performance culture at-large helped turn blackness into a racial category, that is, into a type of difference justifying emerging social hierarchies and power relations in a new world order driven by colonialism and capitalism.



RaceB4Race symposia

The first RaceB4Race symposium in 2019 was originally imagined to be a small group of scholars engaged in premodern critical race studies in conversation with each other. In actuality, it was a gathering of three hundred undergraduate students, faculty, university staff, graduate students, community college students, high school teachers, administrators, artists and members of the community.

By creating a space to engage with questions of race in premodern history, literature, art and culture, RaceB4Race filled a long unmet need. Since then, RaceB4Race has convened six times, expanding its reach and offering opportunities for scholars around the world to learn, develop in their careers and engage with a community of rigorous and ground-breaking scholars.

Partner Institutions

Folger Shakespeare
Library

Brandeis University

Rutgers University

University of Chicago

The Newberry Library

University of Toronto

Shakespeare's Globe

King's College London

Upcoming Events

Genealogies: A RaceB4Race Symposium

September 22-24, 2022
University of Toronto

What are the genealogies of racial formation? How do our histories of race-making, of imperialism and enslavement, live on in our present moment? What does it mean to excavate the historical, cultural and political genealogies of race, and what does such a methodology look like? This symposium explores the multi-layered and interwoven strands of premodern racial formation. Even as it unfolds the critical genealogies that scaffold our understanding of race today, it places pressure on the intellectual and disciplinary conventions that will continue to inform our future.



Register



Recent RaceB4Race symposia

Politics

hosted by Brandeis University, May 2021

This symposium invited scholars of history, literature, and other disciplines in the premodern eras to consider how the past frames the politics of race, how the politics of the past have influenced race in our disciplines and how the politics of the present intrude upon, expropriate and capitalize on these trends.



View the recordings



View the recordings



Region and Enmity

hosted by Rutgers University, October, 2021

This symposium offered a virtual audience a dynamic lens for tracing the racial repertoires that developed in response to increasingly hostile contention between premodern cultural and political forces. Scholars were invited to take up the intersection between region and enmity, and to examine how belief in difference, or the emergence of polarizing structures and violent practices, configured race thinking and racial practices in ways that are both unique to different territories and that transcend them.



**Making
knowledge
accessible
to all.**

ACMRS Press and Open Access Initiatives

ACMRS Press publishes, disseminates and promotes the most forward-looking and innovative research in premodern studies. We publish projects that are historically grounded and theoretically expansive, with the aim of fostering dialogues that reach into the present moment and point us to different, more inclusive, futures.

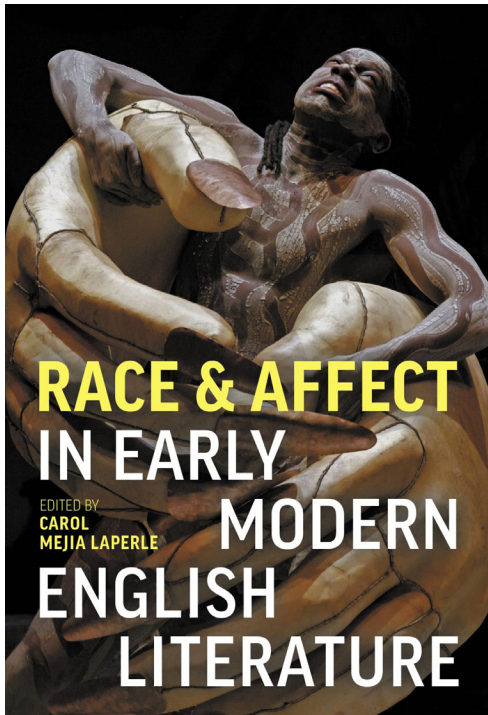
We must transform the way premodern texts are taught so that every person can see themselves in the archive. The problem,

however, remains access. Most academic books, including ones about how to best teach the past, are prohibitively expensive and fewer and fewer libraries have standing orders to purchase them. If our vanguard research and pedagogy remain behind a paywall, only those who can afford access can truly participate in new knowledge creation. Therefore, our press publishes this scholarship in an open access format.

New from ACMRS Press

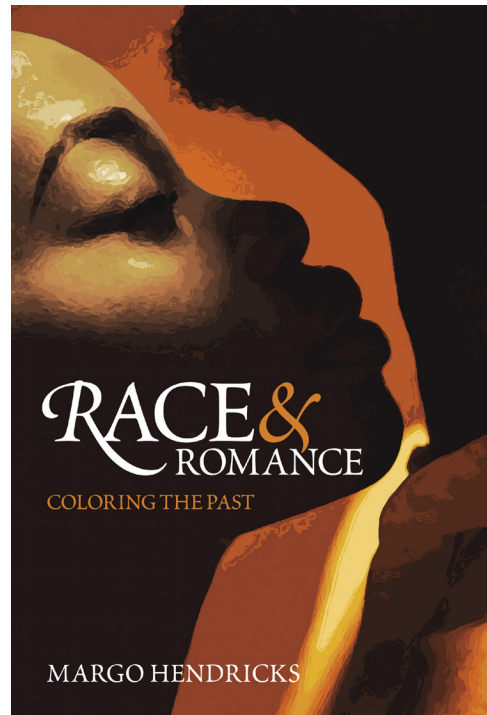
Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature

Race and Affect in Early Modern English Literature, edited by Carol Mejia LaPerle, brings together critical race studies and affect theory to examine the emotional dimensions of race in early modern literature.



Race and Romance: Coloring the Past

Race and Romance: Coloring the Past by Margo Hendricks explores the literary and cultural genealogy of colorism, white passing and white presenting in the romance genre.



ACMRS YouTube Channel

Even prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, ACMRS was committed to making our events available to anyone who wished to participate. All events are livestreamed, recorded, and uploaded to the ACMRS YouTube channel. Since its launch in 2019, the ACMRS YouTube channel has received 24,500 views with 3,500 total hours watched. Many of these recordings have appeared on syllabi from premodern scholars across the country, and are cited in a variety of publications.



The Sundial

The Sundial is a digital publication of ACMRS Press. It is a platform for writers to try out new, daring, risky ideas, no matter where they might be in their career. Above all, it is a space where we all begin to have those difficult conversations and experience those uncomfortable moments that lead to change. By bridging the premodern with the contemporary, *The Sundial* is where we do the hard work of thinking about what inclusivity is and should mean for us all.

Since its launch in the summer of 2019, *The Sundial* has been viewed over 78,000 times with over 26,000 complete reads. In the fall of 2021, *The Sundial* formed an editorial board to further the efforts of the publication. The board is comprised of a group of scholars at the forefront of the field: Brandi K. Adams, Tarren Andrews, Carissa Harris, Kathryn Vomero Santos and Geoffrey Way.

Leviathan and the Airway:
Black Lives Matter
and Hobbes with the
History Put Back by
Christopher N. Warren



Teaching Race: Preparing
Students and Creating a
Safe Environment by Nahir
Otaño Gracia



Motherhood Interrupted:
Borders, Bodies, and
Chaucer's Griselda by Kate
Koppelman



Play On Shakespeare

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Play On! project commissioned new translations of thirty-nine Shakespeare plays. These translations present the work of "The Bard" in language accessible to modern audiences while never losing the beauty of Shakespeare's verse. Enlisting the talents of a diverse group of contemporary playwrights, screenwriters and dramaturges from diverse backgrounds, this project reenvisioned Shakespeare for the twenty-first century. These volumes make these works available for the first time in print—a new First Folio for a new era. With the support of Play On and the Hitz Foundation, ACMRS Press is publishing the



series, which is already impacting the way Shakespeare is performed in theaters across America. With over half the plays released in bookstores across the country, Play On Shakespeare is asking readers to reimagine their relationship with the bard.

Learn more at acmrspress.com



Engaging our community.

Connecting scholars, students and artists

ACMRS supports an expansive community of scholars, students, university staff, administrators, artists and theater practitioners. Our free, open to the public events feature experts in their fields who focus on intersectional and expansive topics related to premodern literature, culture and history. We offer awards, internships and residencies that support scholars and students at critical

junctions in their careers. These programs offer participants the ability to develop new skills, create professional networks and conduct research that looks to the past to imagine different, more inclusive, futures.

Distinguished Speaker Series

The ACMRS Distinguished Speaker series brings prominent artists, performers, writers and public figures whose work has been influenced by premodern art and culture to ASU and online for a free, public event. These speakers offer unique perspectives on how premodern literature, culture, history and art impact our contemporary world. All events are free and open to the public.

Upcoming Speakers



Fred Moten | January 27, 2023

Fred Moten is a cultural theorist and poet creating new conceptual spaces that accommodate emergent forms of Black cultural production, aesthetics and social life. In his theoretical and critical writing on visual culture, poetics, music and performance, Moten seeks to move beyond normative categories of analysis, grounded in Western philosophical traditions, that do not account for the Black experience. He is developing a new mode of aesthetic inquiry wherein the conditions of being Black play a central role.

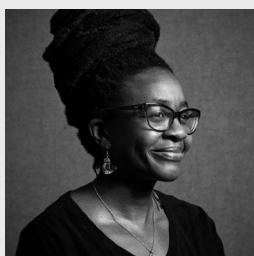
Recent Speakers



Zadie Smith | November 21, 2021



Ibram X. Kendi | May 21, 2021



Nnedi Okorafor | October 20, 2020



ACMRS Short Term Residencies

The annual ACMRS Short Term Residencies enable scholars who have earned a PhD in a premodern field to pursue their research. In line with ACMRS' mission, the ACMRS Short Term Residencies are designed to be as inclusive as possible and allow maximum

flexibility. As such, the residencies may be held for a period of four to six weeks; a portion of the residency may be conducted remotely; or the residency may be divided into shorter segments over the course of the award year. Each residency carries a stipend of \$7,500.

2022-23 Residents



Alani Hicks-Bartlett is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and French and Francophone Studies at Brown University. Her research interests span medieval and early modern French, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and

Portuguese literature and culture. In particular, she is interested in power and empire in chansons de geste and early modern epics, the development of the love lyric, the (proto)feminist complaint tradition, classical exemplarity in medieval and early modern literature, early modern tragedy and digital humanities. Her current projects focus on wife-murder in medieval and early modern literature (especially tragedy); representations of disability in medieval and early modern prose; and race and gender in medieval and early modern epic poetry. Some of her recent articles have appeared in *Romance Notes*, *L'Esprit Créateur*, *Hispanic Journal*, *Comparative Literature*, *Rivista di Studi Italiani*, *Hispanic Review*, and *MLN*.



Elisa Oh is an Associate Professor in the English Department at Howard University, where she teaches Shakespeare, early modern English literature, literary theory and surveys of British literature. She has published on the myriad

meanings of early modern women's silences in *King Lear*, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, the speeches of Elizabeth I, *Measure for Measure* and Wroth's *Urania* as well as kinetic constructions of race and gender in Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* and early modern English representations of Pocahontas. Her current book project is entitled *Choreographies of Race and Gender: Dance, Travel, and Ritual in Early Modern English Literature 1558-1668*.

Past Residents

2021-22

Sawyer Kemp
Cameron Hunt McNabb

2020-21

Letha Ch'ien
Mira Assaf Kafantaris
Hannah Johnson

2019-20

Gabriel de Avilez Rocha



Ira Aldridge Undergraduate Internships

ACMRS offers hands-on experience in publishing and marketing for undergraduate students at ASU. Interns spend a year working directly with center staff and faculty on projects that have influence on the center and on the fields of premodern studies at large.

Meet Andrea Zamora Chavez

What's your major and year at ASU?

I'm a senior at ASU studying English literature.

What's an average day at ACMRS like for you?

I usually begin the day with a casual check-in, then I work on various marketing or editorial tasks. Some of these have included writing press releases and light editing of our Play On! Shakespeare series. I mostly work independently throughout the day, but I always have the option of engaging with those around me.

How has working at ACMRS deepened your academic experience at ASU?

Seeing the impact of the new and exciting research that ACMRS publishes has shown me what can come of the analytical skills I've been honing throughout my undergraduate degree. Furthermore, the fresh perspective on academia and scholarly publishing I've gained has also encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree in the future.

If you could have a conversation with a premodern author, who would it be and why?

I'd like to chat with Chaucer. I read his *Canterbury Tales* last semester and I'd love to have a conversation about women and sovereignty in his stories, especially in "The Merchant's Tale." And it wouldn't hurt to finally know the ending of "The Cook's Tale."

The Ira Aldridge Internship program at ACMRS has been hugely successful in supporting the career development of students at ASU. Our graduates have gone on to PhD programs in Medieval Studies, MA programs in publishing and to work at publishing houses using the skills they learned here at ACMRS.

- Leah Newsom, Manager of Marketing and Communications | ACMRS

Past Interns

Laurie MacQueen
The Design School, graduated 2021

Nora Martinez
School of Human Evolution and Social Change,
graduated 2021

MacKenzie King
The English Department, graduated 2020

Godfred Naah
W. P. Carey School of Business, graduated 2019



Ruben Espinosa

Associate Director

Before arriving at ASU, I was already quite familiar with the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Indeed, I attended the inaugural RaceB4Race Symposium in 2019 and I was immediately struck by the strong sense of community for BIPOC scholars that ACMRS fostered. It was unlike any other academic conference I had ever attended, and it was clear to me then that ACMRS and the RaceB4Race series would take pre- and early modern studies in compelling new directions. That fall, I participated in the RaceB4Race symposium in Washington, D.C., and the excitement at that event was palpable. Not even one year in, ACMRS was already leading the way in shaping our field anew with a commitment to racial justice at the fore.

Because of my deep admiration for the work and leadership of Ayanna Thompson and Jeffrey Cohen, I was honored to join the ACMRS team and contribute to the vital

work being done here at ASU. ACMRS has been nothing short of a dream job, and it has been incredibly rewarding not only to find a home that values my work on the intersections of Shakespeare and Chicana culture, but also that consistently supports initiatives that seek to diversify a field in deep need of diversification. These efforts are well underway at ACMRS. I am thrilled to be a part of a team here at ASU that imagines just futures via premodern studies, and to be a part of a center that commits itself in earnest to undertake the work to get us there.

We are at a critical juncture in our history, and now more than ever the value of the humanities is readily apparent. By taking seriously our ethical obligations to each other, and by embracing an ethics of hospitality, compassion, inclusivity and diversity, ACMRS will be the innovative leader for many years to come.



acrms.asu.edu