

curriculum vitae

KRYSTAL A. SMALLS

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EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania. PhD in Africana Studies and Educational Linguistics (2015)

Cornell University. B.S. in Industrial and Labor Relations (2000)

Africana Studies Minor, Cornell National Scholar

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2017-current **University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign,** Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology (75%); Department of Linguistics (25%)
- 2015-2017 **University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign,** Postdoctoral Research Associate and Lecturer
Department of Anthropology
- 2014-2015 **University of California, Santa Barbara,** Dissertation Fellow and Lecturer
Department of Black Studies
- 2014 **University of Pennsylvania,** Instructor
Graduate School of Education
- 2013-2014 **Arcadia University,** Adjunct Professor
School of Education
- 2011-2014 **Philadelphia University,** Adjunct Professor
College of Science, Health and Liberal Arts

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS:

Telling Blackness: Young Liberians and the Semiotics of Contemporary Diaspora in an Anti-Black World, Oxford University Press (incomplete work under contract)

REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES:

"Fat, Black, and Ugly: The Semiotic Production of Prodigious Femininities." *Transforming Anthropology* 29, no. 1 (2021): 12-28.

"Fighting Words: Antblackness and Discursive Violence in an American High School." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 28, No 3 (2018): 356-383.

"'We had lighter tongues': Making and mediating Gullah/Geechee personhood in the South Carolina Lowcountry," *Language and Communication* 32, no. 20 (2012): 147-159.

"Flipping the Script: (Re)constructing Personhood through Hip Hop Language in a U.S. High School," *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 25, no. 2 (2010): 35-54.

BOOK CHAPTERS:

"Race, Signs, and the Body: Towards a Theory of Racial Semiotics" in the *Oxford Handbook of Language and Race*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Paul Kroskrity, and Angela Reyes. New York: Oxford University Press. (2020): 233-260.

"Languages of Liberation: Making Black Lives Matter Through Digital Discourse" In *Language and Social Justice: Case Studies on Communication and the Creation of Just Societies*, edited by Netta Avineri, Robin Conley Riner, Laura Graham, Eric Johnson, and Jonathan Rosa. Routledge. (2018): 52-60.

"Racialized Masculinity in Digital Space" in *Gender: Space*, edited by Aimee Meredith Cox. Macmillan Reference USA, (2018): 301-315.

"The Proverbial Monkey on Our Backs: Exploring the Politics of Belonging among Transnational African High School Students in the US." In *US Education in a World of Migration*, edited by Jill Koyama and Mathangi Subramanian, New York: Routledge, (2014): 19-37.

BOOK REVIEWS:

Review of *Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity*, by John L. Jackson, *Transforming Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (2013): 205-207.

Review of *The Real Hip-hop: Battling for Knowledge, Power, and Respect in the LA Underground*, by Marcyliena Morgan, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 22, no. 3 (2013): 247-250.

(with Catrice Barrett) Review of *Languages of Global Hip Hop*, edited by Marina Terkourafi, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2012): 446-448.

NON-ACADEMIC:

"Daughters of the Dust and the Place of the Gullah/Geechee" *Public I* (April 2017). <http://publici.ucimc.org/daughters-of-the-dust-and-the-place-of-the-gullahgeechee/>

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2021	Humanities Research Institute Faculty Research Prize (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)
2021	Spotlighted in "Stars from the AAA Sections" in <i>Anthropology News</i>
2018-19	Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Faculty Fellow (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)
2014	Black Studies Dissertation Fellowship (University of California, Santa Barbara)
2013	Honorable Mention, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
2012	University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Summer Research Grant
2008-2013	William D. Fontaine Fellowship (University of Pennsylvania)
2008-2012	Carmen T. Middleberg Fellowship (University of Pennsylvania)
2009	Stephen Peck Award (Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics)
1996-2000	Cornell National Scholar (Cornell University)

INVITED TALKS

Apr 2021	"Digital Body-Snatching: TikTok, Utilitarian Anti-Blackness, and the Entextualization of the Black Body in Social Media" Brandeis University, Department of Anthropology
Apr 2021	"From Dispossession to Overdetermination: A Contemporary Racial Semiotics" w/ Jonathan Rosa. Stanford University, Department of Anthropology.
Apr 2021	"Water in Our Veins: A Reflection on Saltwater Ontologies of the Gullah/Geechee." Indiana University, Diverse Environmentalisms Research Team
Apr 2021	"Digital Body Snatching: Tiktok, Utilitarian Anti-Blackness, and the Entextualization of the Feminine Black Body in Social Media" University of Arizona, Department of Anthropology
Nov 2020	Discussant for "Alt-Signaling: White Violence, Military Fantasies, and Racial Stock in Trump's America" by Janet McIntosh and Norma Mendoza-Denton, University of Chicago and University of Colorado-Boulder, Talking Politics: Anthropologists and Linguists Analyze the 2020 Election
Nov 2020	"Utilitarian Anti-Blackness: Body-Snatching, White Pleasure, and the Entextualization of the Black Body in Digital Space." University of Texas - Austin, Department of Anthropology
Oct 2020	"Utilitarian Anti-Blackness: Body-Snatching, White Pleasure, and the Entextualization of the Black Body in Digital Space." Discourse Lab. University of California -Los Angeles, Department of Linguistics
Oct 2020	"Utilitarian Anti-Blackness: Body-Snatching, White Pleasure, and the Entextualization of the Black Body in Digital Space." Colloquium Series <i>White Supremacy and the Making of the Modern World</i> University of Pennsylvania, Department of Anthropology
May 2020	"Utilitarian Antiblackness: Body-Snatching in Digital Space" Semiotics: Culture in Context Workshop. University of Chicago, Department of Anthropology
Sep 2019	"Real Black: Emphatically Black Signs and Fugitive Humanity in Digital Space." Roman Jakobson Symposium. Harvard University, Department of Anthropology
May 2019	"White Noise: The Semiotics of Intentional Whiteness & Epistemic Resistance in Digital Space." Northwestern Anthropology Colloquium Series. Northwestern University, Department of Anthropology

- Mar 2019 "White Noise: Cancelled Whiteness, Emphatic Blackness, and the Semiotics of Epistemic Resistance in Digital Life." Plenary Panel. **Ethnographic Futures Conference**, American Ethnological Society – St. Louis, MO
- Feb 2019 "Diaspora Now: Young Liberians and the Semiotics of Transnational Blackness." Linguistics Colloquium Series. **Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Department of Linguistics.**

CAMPUS TALKS

- Apr 2020 "Digital Body Snatching: Tiktok, Utilitarian Anti-Blackness, and the Entextualization of the Feminine Black Body in Social Media" Let's Talk Research Brown Bag Series
Department of African American Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Apr 2019 "Tweet Nation: Studying Language, Race, and Identity in the Era of Trump" Sociolinguistics Symposium at the **Illinois Language and Linguistics Society Annual Conference**. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- Apr 2018 "Ain't No Stopping Us Now:" Reflections on a Musical Journey through Collaborative Diaspora and African Infinity" Keynote Speaker: Re-Affirming Our Value: Africa's Contributions to the World
African Student Organization Annual Spring Forum, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Feb 2018 "Digital Diaspora and Blackness," Black History Month & Beyond Brown Bag Series
Department of African American Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Apr 2017 "Familiar Strangers: Belonging and Dissonance in Contemporary African Diaspora"
Invited Speaker: Africa: Next Generation of Leadership for Tomorrow's Change, Growth and Innovation
African Student Organization Annual Spring Forum, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- May 2015 "Exploring the Semiotics of Digital Personhood: Emphatic Blackness in Selfies and Memes"
Language, Interaction, and Social Organization (LISO), University of California, Santa Barbara

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2020 Panelist on "Teaching in Times of Crisis and Hope: A Roundtable Discussion on Language and Social Justice in the Classroom" **Society for Linguistic Anthropology Fall Conference 2020**, Boulder, CO (Postponed)
- 2019 "The "Black Body" in Digital Space: Digital Utterances and Anti-Black Epistemes" Panel: Semiotic Pathways to Social Justice: Theory, Technology, and Transformation **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting**, Vancouver, Canada
- 2019 "The Pot and the Kettle: The Politics of Skin Color in Early Liberia" Panel: Marking the Skin, Past and Present **Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora**, Williamsburg, VA
- 2019 "The Water: Examining the Meanings of Saltwater in the Making of Gullah Past, Present, and Futures" **International Gullah Geechee and African Diaspora Conference**, Myrtle Beach, SC
- 2018 "The Future is Black: Transnational Liberian Youth and the Making of Black Modernities" **Liberian Studies Association (LSA) Annual Conference**, University of Rochester
- 2017 "Very Black and Very Human: Signifying in Digital Space" Panel: Language, Race, and Digital Space **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC**
- 2017 Panelist for Society for Linguistic Anthropology Presidential Conversation: Mentoring and Social Justice **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting**, Washington DC
- 2017 "#BlackHumanity: Digital Space as a New Terrain of Black Resistance" Panel: Re-envisioning Social Spaces of Resistance and Collective Identities in the African Diaspora **Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora**, Sevilla, Spain
- 2016 "Black and Multilingual: Language Education Scholarship and Black Students" Panel: Society for Linguistic Anthropology Presidential Conversation on Multilingual Education & Social Justice **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Society of Linguistic Anthropology)**, Minneapolis, MN
- 2016 "Black Semiosis: Theorizing Black "Ways of Speaking" As Survival Codes" Panel: (Organizer) Talkin' and Testifyin' to Black Humanity: Producing Black Linguistic Anthropology Then and Now **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Association of Black Anthropologists)**, Minneapolis, MN

2016 "Discourses of Black Unintelligibility" Panel: Toward a Raciolinguistic Perspective on the Study of Language and Society
Sociolinguistics Symposium 21, Murcia, Spain

2015 "Mediatizing Anti-Anti-Blackness: Emphatic Blackness and Conscious "Unrespectability" in the Digital Sociality of Young Transnational Liberians" Panel: Transnational Processes of Mediatization Within a Digital Moment **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Society of Linguistic Anthropology)**, Denver, CO

2015 "Geechee Gyals: "Femixing" the Dirty South and Annexing Caribbean Femininities in Diasporic Self-Making" Panel: Taking Her Place: The Spatial Politics of Black Womanhood **Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora**, Charleston, SC

2014 "Real Niggas and Authentic Africans: Semiotic Productions of Blackness and Belonging in the New Liberian Diaspora" Panel: Citizenship Otherwise: More Lessons from the Savage Slot **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Association of Black Anthropologists)**, Washington, DC

2013 "Savages/Settlers/Slaves: Mashing Up Black Subjectivities in Liberia and the Metropole" Panel: Black Mirrors: Emergent Ethnoracial Configurations and Afro-indigenous Futures **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Association of Black Anthropologists)**, Chicago, IL

2013 (with Diana Burnett) "Wading in the Waters: Black Immortality, Memory, and Transnational Black Intersubjectivity" Panel: Leaning Towards An Afrofuture: Black Thought and Aesthetics as Praxis **Critical Ethnic Studies Association Annual Meeting**, Chicago, IL

2013 (with Chike McLoyd) "New Visions: Black-Identified Transnational Youth Theorizing about Race and Justice" Panel: Epistemic Privilege and Poverty: Conceptualizing Transnational Youth as Social Theorists **American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting**, San Francisco, CA.

2012 "Fighting Monkeys and Situating Selves: Mapping Shiny New Blacknesses Via Dirty Old Logics In Contemporary Black Diaspora" Panel: Mapping Diasporic Engagements/Mapping Blackness **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Association of Black Anthropologists)**, San Francisco, CA

2011 "Sheng Nation: Constructing Sheng Diaspora and Transforming Language Ideology Online" Panel: Tracing Mobile Language Practices Across Digital Territories. **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Society of Linguistic Anthropology)**, Montreal, Canada

2011 "Sheng Nation: Transforming Ideology and Constructing Sheng Literacy Online" **Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics**, Washington DC

2011 "Flipping the Performative Script: (Re)Constructing Models of Identity Through Hip Hop Linguaging and Liberian Englishes in a US High School" **Society of Pidgin and Creole Linguistics (at the Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting)**, Pittsburgh, PA.

2010 (with Chike McLoyd) "It's Bigger than Hip Hop: Translocal African Youth and Identity in the United States" Panel: Mobilizing Media: Constructing Social Identities in Youth Diaspora. **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting (Society for Urban, National and Transnational/Global Anthropology)**, New Orleans, LA

2010 "The Signifyin' Monkey and Lil Wayne: Co-Constructing Models of Identity Through Hip Hop Linguaging in a US High School" **Multilingualism and Education: Global Practices, Challenges and the Way Forward Conference**, Kenyatta University- Nairobi, Kenya

2010 "You Don't Know Me: Self-Conceptualization and Social-Identification Among African Immigrant High School Students" Panel: Politics of Identity Among Immigrant Students. **31st Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum**, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

2009 "Lighter Tongues: A Look at Gullah Language Ideology in Two Historic Schools" **Society for Pidgin and Creole Linguistics and Associação de Crioulos de Base Lexical Portuguesa e Espanhola (ACBPLe)**, Köln, Germany

2009 "We Had Lighter Tongues: Language Teaching and Self-conceptualization in Two Gullah Communities" Panel: Tongue-Tied Territories and the End(s) of Nationhood: Language Purism and Language Politics in Stateless Nations **American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting** Philadelphia, PA

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Member of the Wenner Gren Foundation Panel of Reviewers, 2020-2022

Wenner Gren Foundation

Member of the Steering Committee for the Society for Linguistic Anthropology 2020 Fall Conference, 2020
American Anthropological Association

Member of the Advisory Committee for the Center for African Studies, 2019-2020
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Member of Society for Linguistic Anthropology Committee on Language & Social Justice, 2015 – present
American Anthropological Association

Chair, Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology, 2017
American Anthropological Association

Member, Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology, 2013 – 2017
American Anthropological Association

EDITORIAL ACTIVITIES

Co-Editor (w/ Arthur Spears and Jonathan Rosa), Special Issue on Language and White Supremacy, 2020, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*

Editorial Board Member, 2020 -2024, *American Anthropologist*

Editorial Board Member, 2019-present, *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*

External Reviewer, 2014 – present, *American Anthropologist; Journal of Linguistic Anthropology; Signs and Society; Meridians; Anthropology and Education Quarterly; Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*

Editorial Team Member, 2008 – 2012; 2017 – 2018, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*

Co-Editor-in-Chief, 2010 – 2011, *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*

SELECTED SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

- Member of Abolition 2 Abundance
- Founding Member of Mass Arrest Mutual Aid Champaign County
- Organizer and facilitator, youth worker and teacher training, Monrovia, Liberia
- Member of Sanctuary for the People at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Panel member *Daughters of the Dust* at the Affirmation & Resistance: Black World Film Series, Art Theater Co-op
- Panel member *Black Girl* at the Affirmation & Resistance: Black World Film Series, Art Theater Co-op,
- Public lecture for “Science for All” at Orpheum Children’s Science Museum
- Facilitator, youth worker and teacher trainings, Philadelphia, PA
- Volunteer program director, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy, Brooklyn, NY

OTHER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant/Ethnographer, 2009 – 2014
Project: The New Latino Diaspora in Marshall (Stanton Wortham)

Research Assistant/Ethnographer, 2008 – 2012
Project: Communicative Repertoires and Mass Media (Betsy Rymes)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Society for Linguistic Anthropology, American Anthropological Association, Association of Black Anthropologists, Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, Society for Pidgin & Creole Linguistics, Linguistic Society of America, American Education Research Association, Liberian Studies Association, Caribbean Studies Association

LANGUAGE VARIETIES

Spanish: moderate proficiency; **Gullah/Geechee:** moderate proficiency; **African American Language:** fluent; **Kiswahili:** novice

COMMUNITY & POLICY WORK

Classroom Teacher, Tenth Grade English (Special Education); Henrico County, VA, 2007-2008

Program Director, Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy; Brooklyn, New York, 2006-2007

Outreach & Communications Assistant, The Parent-Child Home Program; Port Washington, NY, 2003-2006

Legislative Assistant, Education/Social Services: US Congress, Rep. José E. Serrano (NY16); Washington, D.C., 2001-2003