

Wendell Hassan Marsh

Assistant Professor
Department of African American and African Studies
Rutgers University - Newark
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Fields of Specialization

Islam in Africa, African Intellectual History, Postcolonial Philology

Education

Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York, NY

Ph.D. African Studies and Comparative Literature May 2018

Dissertation Title: “Compositions of Sainthood: The Biography of Ḥājj ‘Umar Tāl by Shaykh Mūsā Kamara”

Committee members: Mamadou Diouf, Souleymane Bachir Diagne, Brinkley Messick, Mana Kia, and Gil Anidjar

M.Phil. Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and Cultures October 2014

Fields: Islam in Africa, African Intellectual History, and Written Culture

M.A. with Distinction, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies May 2013

Thesis: ‘Perfecting Our Inheritance’: Reading the Sudanic Self in Amadou Hampate Ba’s *Kaidara*

Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA May 2009

B.A. English with minor in French

Phi Beta Kappa; magna cum laude; Pickens award for highest-ranking English major

Publications

Academic journals

“De-historicizing Islam in Africa.” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (2015) 35(3): 656-666

Public Engagement

“God has written a miracle into my body” *Chimurenga’s The Chronic*. April 2016.

bit.ly/2yFcDdC

“Islam between Françafrique and Afrabia” *Chimurenga’s The Chronic*. July 2015.

bit.ly/2yEzNkx

“Politics of an Always Vanishing Present.” *Borderlines: Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*. June 27, 2015. bit.ly/2z0jUAU

“Re-memembering the name of God” *Chimurenga’s The Chronic*. March 2015. bit.ly/2gbHsiE

“Arabic in Africa and the problem of archival thinking.” *Baraza*. 2014. bit.ly/2guTtN1

“When the French Speak Arabic to Africans.” *Baraza*. 2014. bit.ly/2kGK6hE

“Tariq Ramadan’s Burden.” *Baraza*. 2014. bit.ly/2hB2L9Q

“Review: Muslim Societies in Africa.” *Baraza*. 2014. bit.ly/2ybsldw

“‘It is better to fight’: On Malcolm and Martin.” *Viewpoint*. 2012. bit.ly/2yYXGz3

Awards, Grants, and Honors

- Buffet Institute for Global Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship (2018-2020)
- Global Religion Research Initiative International Collaboration award, \$25,000 (co-authored with Katherine Ewing, 2018)
- Gordon Gray, Jr. Fellowship, Columbia University (2017-2018)
- Preceptorship in African Civilizations (2017-2018)
- Ford Dissertation Fellowship (2016-2017)
- Mellon Humanities International Travel Award, Columbia University (2015-2016)
- International research grant from the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life (Fall 2014)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Pulaar (Summer 2014)
- Butler Libraries Digital Humanities Fellowship (2013-2014)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic (Summer 2013)
- Critical Language Scholarship, Arabic (2012)
- Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Arabic (Summer 2012, declined)
- Ford Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship (Honorable Mention, 2012; 2013)
- Fulbright Fellowship, Egypt (2009-2010)

Research Consulting and Reporting

Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life at Columbia University

Research Coordinator

Jan. 2017 - Present

- Developed and implemented research strategy of the ACLS/Luce funded project “Life History in Northwest Africa: Everyday Life, Historical Memory, and the Public Square,”
- Manage two locally based three-person research teams in Senegal and Mauritania, both in person and remotely
- Develop institutional network with partners in Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco
- Facilitate occasional workshops in Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco on research methodologies with the research teams

Thomson Reuters, Washington, D.C.

June 2009 - Aug. 2011

Journalist

- Covered general domestic news as member of the experimental Reuters America Service
- Covered the economic recovery of the international financial crises of 2008-2009 as a part of the Economic team
- Reported on Ben Bernanke’s Federal Reserve, Timothy Geithner’s Dept. of Treasury, and Barack Obama’s White House
- Wrote three feature articles that made Reuters.com top ten most read articles

Teaching

Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

Instructor of Record

Sept. 2017 – May 2018

African Civilizations

Independently teaching a seminar course which serves as an introduction to the study of Africa and as a fulfillment of the university’s Global Core, which aims to de-center the study of civilizational history away from the modern West.

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Teaching Assistant

Sept. 2012 – Dec. 2014

Theory and Culture (with Gil Anidjar); Contemporary Islamic Civilization (with Hamid Dabashi); African Civilization (with Kai Kresse); Africa and the Anthropologist (with Hlopina Mokoena); Major Debates in the Study of Africa (with Mahmood Mamdani)

Presentations

Invited Lectures

- “Compositions of Sainthood: The Biography of Ḥājī ‘Umar Tāl by Shaykh Mūsā Kamara”
Delivered at “Anthropologie Comparative du Sahel Occidental Musulman” sponsored by the Institut des Mondes Africains, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. June 6, 2018. Paris, France.
- “Genealogies of Race and Religion in Colonial Senegal.” Delivered at “Conversations” sponsored by the Institute for Research in African-American Studies. October 20, 2017. New York, NY.
- “Black Liberation Philology: Malcolm X et sa traduction de l'Islam.” Delivered at the second RAW Academy. May 19, 2017. Dakar, Senegal.
- “Les écritures Arabophones au Sénégal : Shaykh Mūsā Kamara, savant et intellectuel aux prises avec son temps. May 17, 2017. Delivered at Laboratoire d'Analyse des Sociétés et Pouvoirs / Afrique-Diasporas at Université Gaston Berger. Saint Louis, Senegal.
- “Black Liberation Philology.” Presented at the Sigma Tau Delta Spring Colloquium Keynote Lecture, Morehouse College. May 25, 2016. Atlanta, GA.
- “A Critique of the Global University.” Presented at the University of Dar es Salaam Political Science Seminar. Jan. 21, 2015. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Conferences

- “The "Encounter" as a model for global institutional collaboration.” Presented at “Sage Philosophy and Intellectual Culture in African Studies” at Columbia University. December 8, 2017. New York, NY.
- “Theses toward a concept of the political in the West African Age of Jihad.” Presented on and organized the Islam in Africa Studies Group sponsored panel “Formative Texts in 19th Century West African Statecraft: a Conceptual Reading” at the 60th Annual African Studies Association meeting. November 18, 2017. Chicago, Illinois.
- “Islam, Africa, and Colonialism.” Presented at the Institute of Religion, Culture, and Public Life’s training workshop. January 9, 2017. Marrakesh, Morocco.
- “Islam, Race, and Articulation.” Presented at the 59th Annual African Studies Association meeting. December 3, 2016. Washington, D.C.
- “Knowing beyond human certainty: the miraculous in Shaykh Musa Kamara’s Historiographical Method.” Presented at the Yale Workshop in African Intellectual History. April 2, 2016. New Haven, CT.
- “Islamic Africa in search of a Database.” Presented at the Eighth Greater New York Area African Historians Workshop. March. 28, 2014. Princeton, New Jersey.
- “Reading Sudanic Africa in the Margins: The Perils of Commentary.” Presented at the Annual American Comparative Literature Association conference for the seminar “Re/Reading Capital: The Value of Reading Across Traditions” March 21, 2014. New York, NY.
- “Mapping the African Islamic Library.” Presented at the Eleventh Annual Duke-UNC Graduate Islamic Studies Conference “Cartographies of Islam: Creating Location and The Places Beyond Meaning.” Feb. 16, 2014. Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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Languages

- English - Native Fluency
- French - Near-Native Fluency
- Modern Standard Arabic – Professional proficiency; Egyptian Colloquial Arabic – Limited working proficiency; Moroccan Colloquial Arabic – Elementary proficiency
- Pulaar - Limited working proficiency
- Wolof – Elementary proficiency

Additional Study

Non-Degree Programs

Summer Arabic in Amman , Amman, Jordan <i>Intensive Arabic study at Columbia's Global Center in Amman</i>	June 2013 - July 2013
Critical Language Scholarship (Arabic) , Rabat, Morocco <i>Intensive Arabic study in a Council of American Overseas Research Centers program</i>	June 2012 - Aug. 2012
American University in Cairo , Cairo, Egypt <i>Intensive Arabic study at the Arabic Language Institute</i>	Jan. 2010 - May 2010
Alexandria University , Alexandria, Egypt <i>Intensive Arabic study at the TAFL Centre</i>	Sept. 2010 - Dec. 2010
CIEE Study Center , Dakar, Senegal <i>Study Abroad program focused on Development and African Studies</i>	Jan. 2008 - May 2008
Centre Parisian des Études Critiques , Paris, France <i>Intensive French study program focusing on Critical Theory</i>	Aug. 2008 - Dec. 2007

SERVICE

Chair of the professionalization committee for MESAAS Graduate Student Association 2017-2018.

Member of the editorial collective of *Viewpoint Magazine*. 2012-18.

Founding Editor of Baraza. 2012-2014.

Member of organizing committee for fifth annual MESAAS Graduate Student Conference. 2014.

Chair of organizing committee for fourth annual MESAAS Graduate Student Conference. 2013.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

African Studies Association

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars

Islam in Africa Studies Group

REFERENCES

Mamadou Diouf, Leitner Family Professor of African Studies and History, Columbia University
md2573@columbia.edu; +1 (212) 854-4083

Souleymane Bachir Diagne Professor of French and Philosophy, Columbia University
sd2456@columbia.edu; +1 (212) 854 3907

Brinkley Messick, Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University
bmm23@columbia.edu; +1 (212) 854-7459

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