

Wendell H. Marsh

Assistant Professor
Department of Africana Studies
Rutgers University - Newark
+1 678 308 8350
Wm276@newark.rutgers.edu

Fields of Specialization

Islam in Africa and the African Diaspora, African Intellectual history, Black Religion

Education

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

Ph.D. Middle Eastern, South Asian, and 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 Hampaté 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

Books

Black Liberation Philology: Shaykh Musa Kamara and the Fate of the Humanities, under contract with Columbia University Press, expected submission January 2024

Peer-Reviewed Articles

"Episodes of African Islamic Modernity" in preparation for *The Journal of Africana Religion*

"Putting Northwest Africa in its Place" extended version in preparation for *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*

"Putting Northwest Africa in its place" *Racial Formations in Africa and the Middle East: A Transregional Approach* (2021): 31.

"Reading with the Colonial in the life of Shaykh Musa Kamara, A Muslim Scholar-Saint" *Africa* (2020) 90 (2).

Book Reviews

Review of Brigaglia, Andrea; Nobili, Mauro, eds, *The Arts and Crafts of Literacy: Islamic Manuscript Cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa*. H-IslamInAfrica, H-Net Reviews. December, 2022. <https://bit.ly/3P7X4Q0>

Wendell Marsh

1 of 6

Review of Conflicts of Colonialism: The Rule of Law, French Sudan, and Faama Mademba Sèye, *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue canadienne des études africaines*, Nov. 11, 2022, DOI: 10.1080/00083968.2022.2133367

“The ultimate end of decolonization” Review of *Islamic Scholarship in Africa: New Directions and Global Context*, Edited by Ousmane Kane *Africa is a Country*. Jan. 12, 2022. <https://bit.ly/3hmXAJU>

Review of *Jihad of the Pen: The Sufi Literature of West Africa*. Edited by Rudolph Ware, Zachary Wright, and Amir Syed. *Journal of African History* (2021) 62 (1): 160-161

“Dreaming Home in African Studies” Review of *Ethiopia in Theory* by Elleni Zeleke, H-Net Diplo roundtable. September 18, 2020. <https://bit.ly/3ba5QcM>

“De-historicizing Islam in Africa.” Review of *The Walking Qur’an* by Rudolph Ware, *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-membering the name of God” *Chimurenga’s The Chronic*. March 2015. bit.ly/2gbHsiE

“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

- John Hunwick Fund, Northwestern University, \$6,500 (2019)
- 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

Wendell Marsh

2 of 6

Research Coordinator

Jan. 2017 – Dec. 2018

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

Rutgers University-Newark, Newark, NJ

Instructor of Record

Intro to Africana Studies	Fall 2022
Black Religion	Spring 2021, Spring 2022
Islam in the African American Experience	Spring 2021, Spring 2022
Islam and Blackness	Fall 2020
Approaches to the Black Archive	Fall 2020

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

Instructor of Record

Shari‘a in Global History	Winter 2020
Islam and Blackness in Global History	Spring 2019

Université Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis, Senegal

Co-Taught short-course with Katherine Ewing and Abdourahmane Seck Winter 2018

Interdisciplinary Seminar on Socio-religious Change: Memory, Subjectivity, and History

Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

Instructor of Record

Sept. 2017 – May 2018

African Civilizations

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

“The Islamic Historiography of Africa and the Decolonization of Knowledge” Delivered remotely to Department of History, Dartmouth College, Feb. 16, 2022.

- “The Islamic Historiography of Africa and the Decolonization of Knowledge” Delivered remotely to Department of History, Barnard College, Oct. 18, 2021.
- “Shaykh Musa Kamara and the Genealogy of African Islamic Modernity” Delivered remotely to “Bodies, Texts, Networks: Islam in Global Context” online symposium, Center for Global Islamic Studies, University of Florida, May 21, 2021.
- “A Genealogy of African Islamic Modernity” Delivered remotely to the Center for Security, Race, and Rights, Rutgers University, April 5, 2021.
- “A Genealogy of African Islamic Modernity” Delivered remotely to the Comparative Muslim Societies Seminar Series, Cornell University, March 17, 2021.
- “Theorizing Islam in Africa” Delivered at the Lived Islam Summer Institute, Center for African Studies, University of Florida, May 23, 2019. Gainesville, FL.
- “Genealogies of an African Islamic Modernity” Delivered at the Buffett Institute for Global Studies at Northwestern University. May 10, 2019. Evanston, IL.
- “The Senegalese Exception: the Genealogy of an African Islamic Modernity” Delivered at the Department of History, University of Illinois at Chicago. March 6, 2019. Chicago, IL
- “The Senegalese Exception: the Genealogy of an African Islamic Modernity” Delivered at the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University. February 13, 2019. Evanston, IL.
- “Shaykh Musa Kamara and the Genealogy of an African Islamic Modernity” Delivered at the World History Center at the University of Pittsburgh. February 5, 2019. Pittsburgh, Penn.
- “Rememory, Islam, and the Black Archive”, with Mamadou Diallo Delivered at “Intellectual Histories and the Black Archive” sponsored by the English Department at the University of Cape Town. October 8, 2018. Cape Town, South Africa.
- “Compositions of Sainthood: The Biography of Ḥājj ‘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

- “Translating the Life of an African Muslim Scholar-Saint” Presented at “Translating Africa/Africa in Translation” Center for African Studies Global Africa Symposium, Rutgers University. April 1, 2021. (Remote)
- “Roundtable on W. Hallaq's Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge (CUP, 2018)” Presented at the Annual American Academy of Religion meeting. November 25, 2019. San Diego, California.

- “Reading with the Colonial in the Life of Shaykh Musa Kamara.” Presented at the 62th Annual African Studies Association meeting. November 22, 2019. Boston, Massachusetts.
- “Accommodating Sainly Authority in Sahelian Hagiographic Literature during the Colonial Period.” Presented at The Fragmentation of Religious Authority in Muslim Africa: An International Workshop. October 11, 2019. Berlin, Germany.
- “Hajj Umar Tall and the Genealogy of an African Islamic Modernity” Presented at and co-organized the Life History and Mémographie: Encountering socio-religious change in Northwest Africa conference. December 13, 2018. Dakar, Senegal.
- “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.

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 - Elementary proficiency
- Wolof – Elementary proficiency

Additional Study

Non-Degree Programs

Summer Arabic in Amman , Amman, Jordan	June 2013 - July 2013
<i>Intensive Arabic study at Columbia’s Global Center in Amman</i>	
Critical Language Scholarship (Arabic) , Rabat, Morocco	June 2012 - Aug. 2012
<i>Intensive Arabic study in a Council of American Overseas Research Centers program</i>	
American University in Cairo , Cairo, Egypt	Jan. 2010 - May 2010

Wendell Marsh

<i>Intensive Arabic study at the Arabic Language Institute</i> Alexandria University , Alexandria, Egypt	Sept. 2010 - Dec. 2010
<i>Intensive Arabic study at the TAFL Centre</i> CIEE Study Center , Dakar, Senegal	Jan. 2008 - May 2008
<i>Study Abroad program focused on Development and African Studies</i> Centre Parisien d'Études Critiques , Paris, France	Aug. 2008 - Dec. 2007
<i>Intensive French study program focusing on Critical Theory</i>	

SERVICE

Regularly review articles for *Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*,
Journal of Africana Religion, Africa, and *Journal of Islamic Studies*

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
American Academy of Religions

REFERENCES

John Keene, Distinguished Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, john.keene@rutgers.edu; +1 973-353-3899

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

R.A. Judy, Professor of Critical and Cultural Studies, University of Pittsburgh
buchnfar@pitt.edu;

Updated: December 7, 2022