

CERA SMITH

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., African American Studies and English	Yale University, Dec. 2023 <i>Dissertation Title</i> : “Blackened Biology: Physiology of the Self and Society in African American Literature and Sculpture” <i>Committee</i> : Jacqueline Goldsby, Tavia Nyong’o, and Aimee Meredith Cox <i>Certificate</i> : Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
M.Phil., African American Studies and English	Yale University, Dec. 2019
M.A., African American Studies and English	Yale University, Dec. 2018
B.A., English Literature B.A., Creative Writing	California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), May 2015 <i>Honors</i> : summa cum laude <i>Honors Thesis</i> : “Labor Pains: Motherhood as the Birthplace of Social Awareness & Social Response in Toni Morrison’s <i>Beloved</i> ”

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor, University of Oregon (UO) Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies (IRES)	Nov. 2023-Present
Acting Assistant Professor, University of Oregon (UO) Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies (IRES)	Sept. 2023-Nov. 2023

RESEARCH INTERESTS

20th/21st-Century U.S. Black Literatures (African American, Afro-Latinx, and other Black diasporic), Radical Protest Literatures of the U.S., Black Studies, Critical Race Theories, Gender and Sexuality, Histories of Science and Medicine, and the Health Humanities

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Articles

Smith, Cera. ““dark puree of flesh [...] / shake everything in your beautiful nasty self / we’re here’: Nasty Unity and Black Possibility in Jayne Cortez’s *Firespitter*,” *Multiethnic*

Literature of the United States (MELUS): “Black Speculations/Black Futures” (special issue) – solicited, accepted with minor revisions, 38 pages (including footnotes and works cited)

Smith, Cera. 2024. “Shocking Therapy: Narrating Racism’s Psychobiological Injuries in Ralph Ellison’s Factory Hospital.” *American Literature* 96 (2): 241–67. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-11218886>.

Shorter Publications: Encyclopedia Entries, Reviews, Notes

Smith, Cera. “Sociality of Self-Care: Simone Leigh’s *The Waiting Room* (2016),” *Art and the Critical Medical Humanities* (Bloomsbury, Critical Interventions in the Medical and Health Humanities series) – solicited; in press; forthcoming in Oct. 2025; 1,600 words (including footnotes and works cited)

Smith, Cera. Review of *Dear Science and Other Stories*, by Katherine McKittrick. *The Black Scholar*, vol. 51, no. 4, Oct. 2021, pp. 50-53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.2021.1972397>.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Books

Smith, Cera. *Vivified Viscerality: Bioscience and the Black Interior in U.S. Black Literature and Sculpture* (book project)

Book Chapters

Smith, Cera. TBD (chapter on medical illustration, anatomical models, and KING COBRA’s assemblage sculptures), *Black Feminist Theory Summer Institute* (volume edited by Jennifer C. Nash and Mishana Garschi)—solicited; in preparation; 8,000 words

Shorter Publications: Encyclopedia Entries, Reviews, Notes

Smith, Cera. Review of *The Cambridge Companion to the Black Body in American Literature*, edited by Cherene Sherrard-Johnson, *Early American Literature* – solicited; in preparation; 1,500-2,000 words

AWARDS

Ernest G. Moll Faculty Research Fellowship in Literary Studies (Oregon Humanities Center)	Dec. 2024
The Schachterle Essay Prize (Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts)	Aug. 2024
New Junior Faculty Research Award (UO)	Oct. 2023
The Carter G. Woodson Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship (National, UVA, declined)	March 2023

Dartmouth Society of Fellows (National, Dartmouth, declined)	March 2023
University of Michigan Society of Fellows (National, UMich, declined)	Feb. 2023
John Hope Franklin Dissertation Fellowship (National, American Philosophical Society) (\$28,000)	June 2022
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship—Alternate and Honorable Mention (National)	March 2022
Prize Teaching Fellowship for 2021-2022 (Yale)	May 2021
Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society (National)	March 2021
Franke Graduate Research Award (Yale)	Sept. 2020
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Summer Dissertation Writing-in-Residence Fellowship (Yale)	May 2020
Master of Philosophy Student Marshal at Commencement 2019 (Yale)	May 2019
Prize Teaching Fellowship for 2019-2020 (Yale)	April 2019
Dean's Emerging Scholars Research Award (Yale)	Nov. 2018
Richard J. Franke Fellowship in the Humanities (Yale)	Sept. 2018
Edwin O. Robson Fellowship Fund (Yale)	Dec. 2017
Theodore F. Myers and Margaret G. Myers Scholarship Fund (Yale)	Dec. 2016
Richard J. Franke Fellowship—Franke Fellow (Yale)	Feb. 2016
Student Life and Development Academic Travel Grant (CSULB)	May 2015
Exceptional Student Achievement Award (CSULB)	April 2015
Distinguished Undergraduate for 2015 (CSULB)	March 2015
John B. Williams Scholarship for Literature (CSULB)	March 2015
Outstanding Baccalaureate Award—Finalist (CSULB)	Feb. 2015
National Merit: National Achievement Scholarship—Finalist (National)	May 2011

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Before Knowing: Black Sensation and Perception in William Attaway’s Protest Novel *Blood on the Forge*,” American Studies Association’s (ASA) Annual Meeting (accepted, Nov. 2025)
- “Tending to Me, So We Can Get Free: Simone Leigh’s *The Waiting Room* and the Healing Art of Action,” Art & the Critical Medical Humanities: Confabulations x Health & Care symposium, Royal College of Art (June 2024)
- “Flickering Flames: Conflagration and Corporeality beyond Capture in Jayne Cortez’s *Firespitter*,” American Studies Association’s (ASA) Annual Meeting (Nov. 2022)
- “Moving towards ‘Uncommon Sense’: Playing with Prosody in Nathaniel Mackey’s ‘Bedouin Hornbook,’” College Language Association’s (CLA) 79th Annual Convention (April 2019)
- “Moving towards ‘Uncommon Sense’: Playing with Prosody in Nathaniel Mackey’s ‘Bedouin Hornbook,’” The Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States’s (MELUS) 33rd Annual Conference (March 2019)
- “Spit It Out, Shake It Off: Bodily Relationships and Bodily Resistance in William Attaway’s *Blood on the Forge*,” Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA) Conference (April 2018)

- “Making the Sense-able Make Sense: Reading Racist Microaggressions in Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen*,” The University of Michigan’s 21st Annual Comparative Literature Intra-Student Faculty Forum (CLIFF) Conference (March 2017)
- “The Hidden Reality in Exaggeration and Analogy: Hyperbole and Metaphor in Tillie Olsen’s ‘I WANT YOU WOMEN UP NORTH TO KNOW,’” Sigma Tau Delta Far Western Regional Conference (November 2015)
- “Under the Overpass: Coloniality and History-from-Below in Helena María Viramontes’s *Their Dogs Came with Them*,” CSULB’s 50th Annual Comparative Literature Conference (April 2015)
- “Labor Pains: Motherhood as the Birthplace of Social Awareness & Social Response in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*,” Sarah Lawrence College’s 17th Annual Women’s History Conference (March 2015)
- “Becoming Black: Racialization and Double Consciousness in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*,” Sigma Tau Delta’s Far Western Regional Conference (November 2014)
- “A Practical Panacea: Storytelling and Trauma in Alfredo Véa’s *Gods Go Begging*,” CSULB’s English Graduate Student Interdisciplinary Conference (April 2014)

SPEAKING INVITATIONS

- “Stepping on Business” Career Panel, Panelist, Womxn of Color Coalition, LGBTESS, and Women in Computer Science, UO (Feb. 2025)
- “Spit B(l)ack: On the Possibilities of Nasty Unity in Jayne Cortez’s Poetry,” Work in Progress Talk for the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies, UO (Feb. 2025)
- Science and the Humanities, Panelist, Oregon Humanities Center, UO (April 2024)
- “Who Cares?: Black Women’s Health Knowledge and Health Practice in Simone Leigh’s *The Waiting Room*,” Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies colloquium presentation, Yale (Dec. 2023)
- “Blackened Biology: Physiology and Awareness in African American Literature,” Presentation for the Graduate Linguistics of Oregon Student Society, UO (Nov. 2023)
- “Microscopy in Doreen Lynette Garner’s Sculpture,” Presentation in Biology of Humans through History, Science, and Society undergraduate course, Yale (Sept. 2022)
- “Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women’s Digital Resistance,” Conversation with Dr. Moya Bailey, Co-Facilitator of Q & A, Yale (March 2022)
- (Re)Defining Blackness in America, A Symposium, Guest Speaker, Yale (Feb. 2020)
- University Honors Program Graduation Speech, Guest Speaker, CSULB (May 2018)
- Afro-American Cultural Center History Keepers Talk, Guest Speaker, Yale (Feb. 2018)
- American Literature in the World Conference: “Diasporas and Vernaculars” Panel, Responder, Yale (April 2017)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses Designed and Taught as Instructor of Record

- ES 440/540: Black Health and (Social) Healing
UO, Winter 2024, Fall 2024
- ES 250: Introduction to African American Studies
UO, Winter 2024, Fall 2024, Winter 2025

AFAM 284 / ENGL 414 / AMST 282 / ER&M 284: Black Life and the Human/Body
UO, Fall 2023, Winter 2025
Yale, Fall 2022
ES 617: Genealogies of Ethnic Studies
UO, Fall 2023
ENGL 114: Humanities (Warrior Scholar Project)
Yale, Summer 2022
ENGL 114: Who Is an African American?
Yale, Fall 2019 and Spring 2021
ENGL 115: U.S. Afro-Latinx Literatures
Yale, Spring 2020 and Fall 2020

Courses Taught as Associate in Teaching

WGSS 399 / AFAM 330 / ENGL 399: Writing Trauma (with Roxane Gay)
Yale, Spring 2019

Courses Taught as Teaching Fellow

ENGL 187 / AMST 239: Love and Hate in the American South (for Caleb Smith)
Yale, Fall 2018

Other Teaching Experience

Anna Deavere Smith's *Fires in the Mirror* Post-Show Conversations, Co-Facilitator for Long Wharf Theatre
New Haven, CT, Jan. 2022
ROOTS Community Conversation, Guest Facilitator, St. Luke's Episcopal Church
New Haven, CT, March 2020
California Conference for Equality and Justice: Summer Youth Leadership Institute, Conscious Classrooms, Talking-in-Class Workshops, and Building Bridges Camps
Long Beach, CA, Aug. 2015-June 2016
Personal Statement Coach
Long Beach, CA, Sept. 2011-June 2014
Literary Analysis Teacher and Mentor for Breakthrough Collaborative (AmeriCorps Partner)
Austin, TX, June 2013-Aug. 2013
Tutor in Spanish, English, Math, Science, and History (middle school and high school)
Cerritos, CA, Aug. 2008-Aug. 2011

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Member, IRES Graduate Program Committee, UO (Sept. 2024-present)
Member, Black Strategies Group, UO (Feb. 2024-present)
Member, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art Faculty Engagement Working Group, UO (Nov. 2023-present)
Member, Women of Color Project, UO (Nov. 2023-present)

Participant, History Department Faculty Search in African American History, UO (Jan. 2025-March 2025)

Voting Departmental Member, Two IRES Open-Rank Faculty Searches (Latinx Studies and Carceral Studies), UO (Sept. 2023-March 2024)

Interviewee, Oregon Humanities Center (Nov. 2023)

Fellow, Yale Office for Graduate Student Development & Diversity (Aug. 2017-May 2023)

Graduate Professional Experience Fellow and Degree Coordinator, Yale Prison Education Initiative (Aug. 2020-May 2021)

Peer Orientation Leader, Yale Graduate School of Arts and Science's Peer Orientation Mentor Program (July 2020-Sept. 2020)

Graduate Affiliate, Yale College Graduate Affiliate Program at Ezra Stiles College (Sept. 2017-March. 2020)

Co-Founder and Facilitator, All Black Everything: Thinking Black Studies Out Loud Learning Group in Yale's African American Studies Department (Aug. 2018-Jan. 2020)

Member, Race, Gender, Sexuality Studies Colloquium (Yale English Department) (Fall 2016-Fall 2023)

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Colloquium (Yale Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department) (Fall 2016-Fall 2023)

Blackness and Affect Reading Group (Yale African American Studies Department) (Fall 2019-Spring 2020)

Embodied Research Collective (Yale African American Studies Department) (Fall 2019-Spring 2020)

Race and Innovative Poetics Working Group (Yale African American Studies Department) (Fall 2016-Spring 2018)

Publications Editor, University Outreach & School Relations (CSULB) (Aug. 2013-June 2015)

President, Sigma Tau Delta: Iota Pi Chapter (CSULB) (Jan. 2013-May 2015)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Graduate Writing Mentorship Program for Faculty (UO)	Jan. 2024-June 2024
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Certificate (Yale's Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department)	Dec. 2023
Black Feminist Theory Summer Institute—"Life. Living. Alive." (Duke's Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies, convened by Jennifer C. Nash)	Aug. 2022
Digital Humanities: Working with Texts (via partnership between Yale and Duke)	May 2022
Journal Article Writing Workshop (Yale's English Department)	Jan.-May 2021
Peer Professionalization Group (Yale's Office of Career Strategy)	June-July 2020
Advanced Pedagogy (Yale English Department, graduate coursework)	Aug. 2019-Dec. 2019
Workshop on Descriptive Bibliography—Black Bibliography Project (led by Erin Schreiner and Jesse Erickson at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)	Nov. 2019
Proofreading Claudia Rankine's book <i>Just Us: An American Conversation</i> (hired by Rankine)	July-Sept. 2019

Master Class: Literary Biography—Archives and Life Stories (led by Karin Roffman at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)	May 2019
The Teaching of English (Yale English Department, graduate coursework)	Aug. 2017-Dec. 2017
Institute for Recruitment of Teachers—Summer Fellow (Phillips Academy: Andover)	July 2014

LANGUAGES

English (native), Spanish (professional proficiency), French (reading)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Studies Association; Modern Language Association

REFERENCES

Available upon request.