

2014

*Annual Newsletter*



The Program in African & African American Studies  
Stanford University

# African & African American Studies

## 2014 Newsletter

Summer 2014



### Director's Welcome

By Professor H. Samy Alim

Faculty, students, friends, alumni, and affiliates, welcome to the Program in African & African American Studies (AAAS) 2014 Newsletter! Within this publication you will find information on some of our exciting 2013-2014 AAAS events and programs.

This year I joined AAAS as the new Faculty Director and launched a 3-year "Race in Post-Obama America" initiative with the generous support of the President's Office and numerous units across campus. The initiative supports research on the new and emerging problems of race in an America with rapidly shifting racial and ethnic demographics. In addition, we began engaging with our community around two focal points: (1) 2013-2014 as a year for marking so many important anniversaries in African American history, and (2) The critical issues of race, mass incarceration, and the policing of Black bodies. Given the unfolding protests in Ferguson, Missouri over the past several weeks, and the continued fatal shootings of unarmed Black citizens by police, these two themes continue to be relevant as history informs the contemporary racial politics of policing. If ever there was a moment to highlight the continued relevance of race, and the necessity for race and ethnic studies programs such as AAAS, that time is certainly now.

In addition, we have also focused on developing a stronger intellectual community by engaging with each other on and off campus. We developed new courses, "Real Talk: Intimate Discussions about the Diaspora" which gave students and opportunity to get to know a number of our affiliated faculty, and "The 5<sup>th</sup> Element: Hip Hop Knowledge, Pedagogy and Social Justice," which was a highly well-attended (over 100 students and hundreds of community members over 10 weeks) collaboration involving the Institute for Diversity in the Arts, the Mural Music & Arts Project and faculty/students from the East Palo Alto Academy.

As a unit, we have collaborated with the Black Community Service Center, Center for African Studies, Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Institute for Diversity in the Arts, Graduate School of Education and various other units across campus. I also spent a quarter in Cape Town, South Africa teaching in Stanford's Bing Overseas Studies Program, strengthening our collaborations and building future opportunities for AAAS students. In the spring we had the honor of hosting a conversation about activism and racial justice in America with this year's St. Clair Drake Memorial speaker, Mr. Harry Belafonte. These are just a few of the many exciting events we hosted this year.

Please join us in celebrating 2014, another year in the continuing legacy of excellence that distinguishes Stanford's Program in African & African American Studies!





The BCSC, IDA & AAAS hosted a reception with "Fruitvale Station" writer and director Ryan Coogler at the Black House

## Fruitvale Station, Oscar Grant & The Policing of Black Bodies

On July 12, 2013 "Fruitvale Station" was released in movie theaters across the US. The film depicted the events that lead up to the tragic death of Oscar Grants, an unarmed young African American man who was shoot and killed by Bart police in Oakland, CA. The very next day, July 13, 2013 a six-person jury rendered a not guilty verdict on all accounts in the trail of George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watch member who killed an unarmed teen, Trayvon Martin in Florida. The deaths of both men lead to local and national protests and emotionally affected students. Many Stanford students took to facebook and twitter to express their sorrow and stress. Students also held meetings on campus to discuss the stress associated with the killing of innocent African American men. There was a clear need to address this issue with students in the Fall. Therefore AAAS met with leaders from the BCSC and IDA to create a program that would help students heal, grow and learn. As a group we worked with Flicks to bring "Fruitvale Station" to campus and co-hosted a day of events with BCSC, IDA, the BSU, Res Ed and FroSoCo including a intimate reception and dinner for students with the writer and director of "Fruitvale Station", Ryan Coogler. At the dinner Coogler shared his experience finding his passion and becoming a filmmaker. He also discussed his desire to use art as a tool to raise awareness by choosing to tell stories like Oscar Grants. Later that evening Coogler participated in a panel that addressed larger issues of policing black bodies.



Ryan Coogler sharing his passion for film over dinner.



AAAS major Jessica Reed shared a poem at the reception for Ryan Coogler



BSU co-presidents Wade Morgan (left) and Kaela Farris (right) welcome Ryan Coogler and his finance to an intimate dinner with students.






African & African American Studies, Black Community Services Center, Black Student Union and the Institute for Diversity in the Arts present

## FRUITVALE STATION, OSCAR GRANT & THE POLICING OF BLACK BODIES

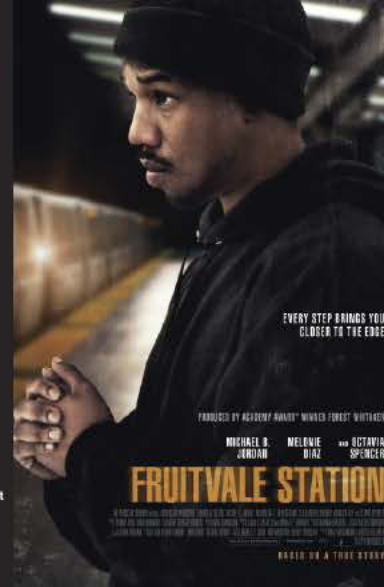
Tuesday December 3, 7-9pm  
Tresidder Oak Lounge

Join us for a candid student-led discussion featuring:



Ryan Coogler, Fruitvale Station director  
Wanda Johnson, Oscar Grant's mother  
Derecka Blackmon, Lead architect in the justice movement for Oscar Grant  
Pamela Y. Price, Grant's attorney

Co-sponsored by Residential Education's Riddick Fund, Center for Comparative Studies in Race & Ethnicity, ProSeCo, and USanso



## Reflections on "Fruitvale Station, Oscar Grant, & The Policing of Black Bodies"

By Elliot Williams '15 AAAS major



One of this year's most impressive events was a panel discussion entitled "Fruitvale Station, Oscar Grant and the Policing of Black Bodies", in conjunction with an on campus screening of the film Fruitvale Station. The panel featured an array of speakers important to the story: Ryan Coogler, The

director of Fruitvale Station; Wanda Johnson, Oscar Grant's mother; Dereca Blackmon, lead architect in the justice movement for Oscar Grant; and Pamela Price, Grant's lawyer. The screening and panel were extremely interesting: not only did we get to understand the human that Oscar Grant was, and was striving to be from the film, we also began to understand, through the powerful answers to Students' questions, how the event impacted the family, the city of Oakland, and the country at large, and the implications of what happened. To be able to have events that are focused on the person, and the reaction, as opposed to just the one act of violence itself really allowed us to see in context how impactful this event was, both on a micro and macro level.

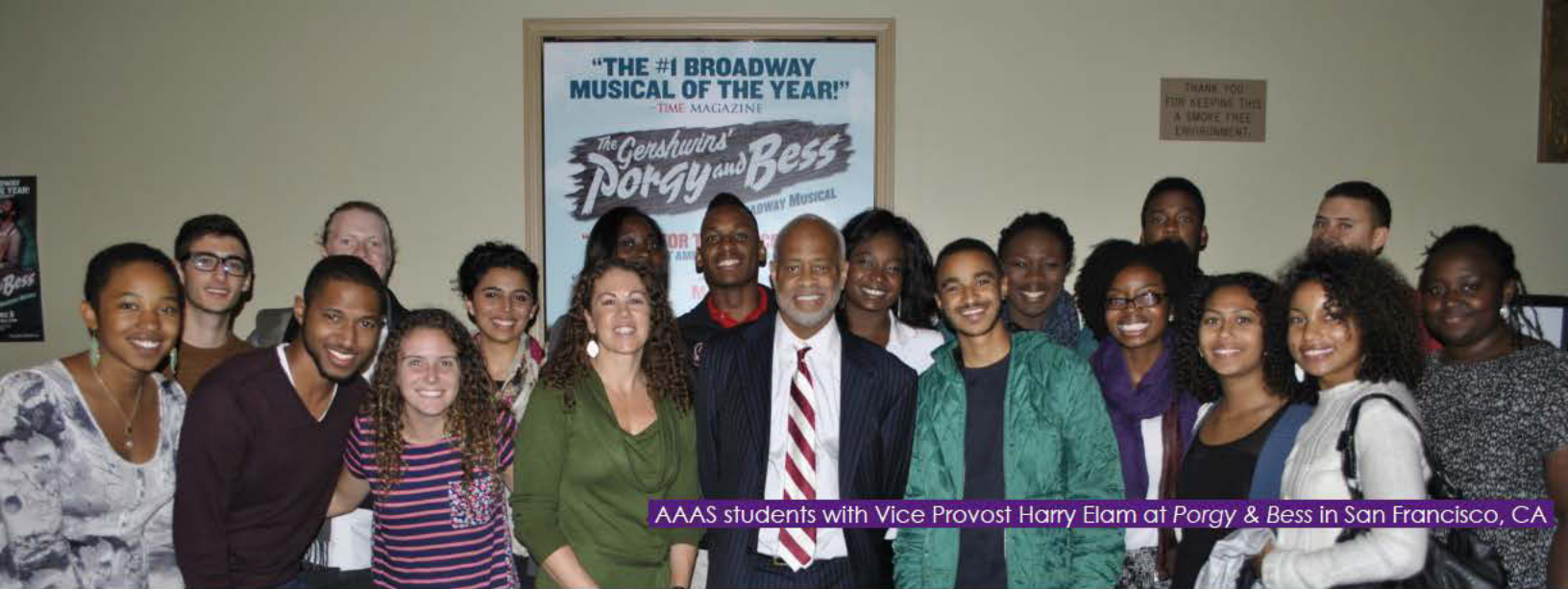


Student panelists: AAAS/IDA senior Kareem Alston (left), AAAS junior Elliot Williams (center) & AAAS senior Hope Burke (right).



Writer & director Ryan Coogler and AAAS Director H. Samy Alim (moderator) share a moment after the panel discussion.





AAAS students with Vice Provost Harry Elam at Porgy & Bess in San Francisco, CA

## Off the Farm: Going with AAAS to see Porgy & Bess

By Delia Addo-Yobo '16 AAAS Major



The program in African & African American Studies (AAAS) takes its majors and minors on outings relating to what students study. In the Fall of 2013, AAAS took us to view the live-musical version of *Porgy and Bess*. I found this musical especially pertinent, as I was required to read the novel *Porgy* and view its 1959 film adaptation in one of the many courses offered through AAAS.



The evening began with dinner at an Ethiopian restaurant in San Francisco. During dinner, I was able to laugh with old friends in addition to making new ones. It was also inspiring to hear about the projects that AAAS students were developing, which expanded across a variety of disciplines. As a sophomore, these conversations were essential in helping me imagine what I too could produce.

At the theater, we witnessed Vice Provost Harry Elam passionately deliver an introduction about the musical *Porgy and Bess*. Highlights included the history of the piece, its critiques and praises, and its cultural relevance in the US and across the world. It was wonderful to see the Vice Provost outside of Admit Weekend and NSO.



The musical performance both entertained and challenged me. It was fun to be a part of the call and response interaction between the characters on stage and the audience, but also made me think about who has ownership over certain narrative. I was able to apply what I learned in my AAAS courses at the performance.



Overall, the trip was enthralling. Experiences like these are extremely important in a major. They help students build community, develop a sense of purpose, apply the relevant academics, and create more bridges of communication with staff and faculty. For me, this exhibition is only one of the many reasons I am dedicated to and love my major!





Professor H. Samy Alim welcomes "Real Talk" students

## Experiencing "Real Talk: Intimate Discussions about the African Diaspora"

By Gabriella Johnson '17 AAAS Major



Arriving at Stanford this past year interested in both chemistry and African American Studies, I took introductory courses in both. Thankfully, a current AAAS major and friend encouraged me to rearrange my fall quarter to make time for the new class, "Real Talk: Intimate Discussions on the African Diaspora". Besides the

opportunity for free lunch every Thursday, this course provided a perfect introduction to the AAAS major through candid discussions with a diversity of AAAS professors. It was inspiring to hear how they landed where they are and comforting to learn that their career trajectories were not straight paths. I also learned about their research and the courses they teach on campus. Real Talk introduced me to all of the opportunities that AAAS has to offer, in travel, job positions, the wide range of studies, and the limitless possibilities. After realizing all of this potential, my decision to major was sealed. In AAAS I am able to study topics of importance to me while gaining interdisciplinary skills. I can't wait for what AAAS has in store and what I can make of it my sophomore year!

**STANFORD UNIVERSITY** THE PROGRAM IN **AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**  
AT THE CENTER FOR COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN RACE AND ETHNICITY

**RealTalk: Intimate Discussions about the African Diaspora**

 <b>Thurs. 9/26 H. Samy Alim</b> <small>Associate Professor in Education and (by courtesy) Anthropology and Linguistics              Director, African &amp; African American Studies              Director, Institute for Diversity in the Arts              Director, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language (CREAL)</small>	<p><b>THURSDAYS</b> 12:00-1:00pm Bldg-360-362B</p> <p><b>AFRICAAM 31</b> 1 UNIT COURSE</p> <p>Students will engage in an intellectual discussion about the African Diaspora with leading faculty at Stanford across departments including Education, Linguistics, Sociology, History, Political Science, English, and Theater and Performance Studies over lunch. Open to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.</p> <p><b>LUNCH WILL BE SERVED!</b></p>
 <b>Thurs. 10/3 Sean Hanretta</b> <small>Associate Professor of African History              Director, Center for African Studies</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 10/10 Michele Elam</b> <small>Martin Luther King, Jr. Centennial Professor of English              Oliver N. Martin Family University Fellow, in Undergraduate Education              Former Director of AAAS (2007-2010)</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 10/17 Lauren Davenport</b> <small>Assistant Professor in Political Science</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 10/24 John Rickford</b> <small>J.E. Wallace Sterling Professor of Linguistics and the Humanities &amp; (by courtesy) Education              Pitlor University Fellow in Undergraduate Education              Co-Director, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language (CREAL)              Former Director of AAAS (1998-2005)</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 10/31 Clayborne Carson</b> <small>Professor of American History, in the History Department              Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 11/7 Arnetha Ball, Kareem Alston, &amp; Jessica Anderson</b> <small>Professor in the Stanford Graduate School of Education              Co-Director, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language (CREAL)              World Educational Research Association, US Representative              Former Director of AAAS (2010-2013)</small>	 <small>Class of 2014              AAAS Major              BA concentration              Diaspora Research Fellow              Human Scholar</small>
 <b>Thurs. 11/14 Corey Fields &amp; Cheryl Brown</b> <small>Assistant Professor in Sociology</small>	 <small>Associate Director, African &amp; African American Studies              College Director in Freshman Sophomore College (ProSoCo)</small>
 <b>Thurs. 11/21 Prudence Carter</b> <small>Professor of Education and (by courtesy) Sociology              Faculty Director, John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities              Director, Research Institute for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (RACSRE)</small>	
 <b>Thurs. 12/5 Harry J. Elam Jr.</b> <small>Freshman-Thurston Vice President for Undergraduate Education              Professor of Theater and Performance Studies (TAPS)              Olive H. Palmer Professor in the Humanities              Bass University Fellow in Undergraduate Education</small>	



Lunch with Professor John Rickford



Professor Clayborn Carson



Lunch with Professor Michele Elam





## Learning from Reverend Jesse Jackson

By Farris Blount III '14 AAAS Minor



Farris and Rev. Jackson share a moment after the interview.

When I was approached with the opportunity to interview the Reverend Jesse Jackson, I had no doubt it would be the experience of a lifetime.

It was the culmination of a week (hosted by BCSC, History, CCSRE, & AAAS) in which the Rev came to Stanford and highlighted the inequalities and lack of diversity still present decades after the Civil Rights Movement, most notably in Silicon Valley. In particular, I appreciated the depth and breadth of his visit; he attended numerous classes and lunches where he was able to engage with students on an intimate level.

But for me, the interview was a reminder of how faith can be a powerful catalyst for change. Reverend Jackson's background as a minister allowed him to articulate to the masses that if one considered himself to be a Christian, then he should be compelled to speak out and challenge social injustice. His focus on the radical love of Jesus and the Christian belief that all men were created equal in God's eyes were the tools he used to connect his faith with the most pressing issues of the day. It is what drove him to march, protest, and encourage others to do the same in order to create a better society for African-Americans in the United States.



Rev. Jackson addressing the larger Stanford community in Cemex Auditorium.



As someone who identifies as a Christian, I recognize that the same principles hold true today; my beliefs should compel me to speak out and be heard as the Reverend did and continues to do to this very day. Reverend Jackson's visit was a powerful testament to the belief that resilience, determination, and faith can be used to spur massive change.





5th Element instructors Jeff Chang & H. Samy Alim engage in a conversation with education professor and journalist Marc Lamont Hill

## THE 5TH ELEMENT: Hip Hop Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Social Justice

The 5th Element was a very popular spring course co-sponsored by African & African American Studies and the Institute for Diversity in the Arts and co-taught by AAAS/IDA faculty director H. Samy Alim and IDA Executive Director Jeff Chang. The course examined Hip Hop and Spoken Word knowledges from multiple perspectives. Focused on the following questions: How are these knowledges being used to transform teaching pedagogies in classrooms and communities around the world? How have culturally relevant and culturally sustaining pedagogies enabled ethnically diverse youth to gain the critical knowledge needed for educational and life success? What can we learn from community youth arts organizations that are succeeding in reaching youth of color where schools are not? How can we integrate Hip Hop Knowledge with the knowledge gained through the work of community organizations and educational research? What are the future directions of research needed to think through the complex relationship between knowledge, race, and the arts more broadly?

This public-facing course consisted of panel discussions, lectures, performances, and community forums featuring a weekly lineup of leading scholars, critically-acclaimed artists, and innovative practitioners. The course/series began by framing various approaches to Hip Hop pedagogies. Next, students were provided with the broader social context of Hip Hop education by discussing the politics of race and educational opportunity. Then they were introduced multiple forms of Hip Hop knowledges developed within community youth arts organizations. The course conclude with a town hall style forum on future directions in Hip Hop education.



Shaheen Ariefdien of Prophets of Da City



Michelle Lee from Youth Speaks



Mural Music & Arts Project (MMAP) Artists share their new song about gentrification in East Palo Alto



## Culturally Relevant & Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies



AAAS Director H. Samy Alim (left) in conversation with Michigan State Education Professor Django Paris (center) and University of Wisconsin-Madison Education Professor Gloria Ladson-Billings (right)

### 5th Element: Student reflection By Hannah Rusk '14 AAAS Major



The 5th Element was, for me, the perfect example of Samy Alim's saying that "AAAS isn't just a major, it's a movement." Its social justice emphasis reminded me that theory can

only take us so far, and then we must actually act in order to effect real change in our communities. Out of my entire Stanford career, the 5th Element was the class that best helped me clarify my own personal goals as an educator and pointed me toward the real work that needs doing in our education system. Furthermore, its emphasis on hip-hop pedagogy as culturally relevant pedagogy highlighted the myriad ways that Black culture promotes growth and excellence – a much-needed point of view in educational environments that frequently only emphasizes the opposite. As I move forward in my work with students after graduation, I will strive to utilize what I learned in the 5th Element and to promote culturally relevant practice among my fellow educators.



The GZA from the Wu-Tang Clan (left), Stanford Education Professor Bryan Brown (center) and Columbia Education Professor Chris Emdin (right) in conversation about "Science Genius", an urban science initiative created and run by emcee, GZA/the Genius, Christopher Emdin.



Professor Chris Emdin speaks passionately about hip hop science education.





AAAS advisory board members, students, and the Drake family with Mr. Harry Belafonte

## Harry Belafonte on Activism & Racial Justice in America

AAAS was honored to host living legend Mr. Harry Belafonte as our speaker for the 2014 St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture. His participation in this year's event was particularly special for two reasons: (1) 2013-2014 marked so many anniversaries in African American history, (2) Our theme for the year was how arts and activism play a role in addressing critical issues of race, mass incarceration and the policing of Black youth. Given Belafonte's continued fight for justice and equality, we felt that his work was not only relevant to our themes, but also necessary for our students and the broader campus community. We believe that he was the best person to communicate the importance of these issues. His work speaks across generations, which is a testament to his longevity and resilience.

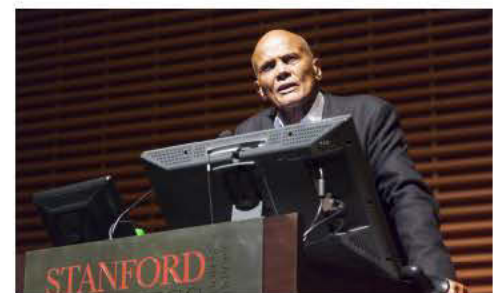
Our majors and minors had the opportunity to dine with Mr. Belafonte before he addressed the Stanford community in Cemex Auditorium to a standing room only crowd. He shared powerful words encouraging this of students to pay closer attention to the policies that negatively impact our country, challenging them to be more active in politics and the fight for social justice. After his speech he engaged in a dialogue with AAAS director H. Samy Alim and responded to a number of questions from faculty, students and community members in attendance. Students took to twitter responding to his challenge and continued to have conversations about the ways they already are and can continue to impact the world.



AAAS seniors Jessica Anderson & Kareem Alston welcome Mr. Belafonte to campus



AAAS Director, H. Samy Alim introducing Mr. Belafonte as the 2014 St. Clair Drake Memorial Speaker to a packed auditorium



Mr. Belafonte addressing the audience



## Student Reflection on the 2014 St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture

By Hope Burke '14 AAAS Major



This year's St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture given by Harry Belafonte was a defining experience during my time at Stanford. As an African and African American Studies major, I have been given the opportunity to learn about

many talented icons within the black community and understand how they have actively shaped the world around them. Harry Belafonte is one such mover and shaker. With his wisdom and wit, Belafonte challenged my generation, especially Stanford students, to think critically about our world and our actions. He firmly yet lovingly critiqued our inability or unwillingness to ensure that the gains made by the civil rights activists in his generations remained intact. His evaluation cut to the core, but encouraged us to question our practices and hearts and find ways to act in the name of justice and equality. Personally, the St. Clair Drake Memorial Lecture was a chance for me to better understand the conditions that popular black artists navigated during the 1950s and 1960s. Belafonte helped me to see that even the smallest acts of defiance can undermine the power of white institutions. He said, "What I did was stop dealing with the forces that owned the machine of culture." This quote neatly summarizes the main point that I took away from this experience. Liberation or change cannot take place until we begin to challenge the machines that hold us back or suppress our rights. Hearing Belafonte speak his truth and inspire my colleagues and friends reminded me of how fortunate I am to be a part of a community like the Program in African and African American Studies at Stanford.



Professor Alim and Mr. Belafonte engaged in a conversation



Audience members pose questions to Mr. Belafonte



Mr. Belafonte responding to questions from students





Senior majors Kareem Alston, Jessica Anderson, Hope Burke, Hannah Rusk, Jason Kaufman, Kayln McCall before their theses presentations

## Honors & Senior Theses

Cape Town Hip Hop: the Cultural Politics of "Post Apartheid"  
South Africa  
**Kareem Alston**

Higher Ground: A Gospel Musical  
**Jessica Anderson**

Navigating Their Worlds: Nina Simone, Sidney Poitier, and  
the Reinvention of "the Politics of Respectability"  
**Hope Michele Burke**

The Implications of New Election Laws on African American  
voting behavior in Southern Florida during  
the General Election of 2012  
**Kaela Farrise**

Perceptions of Black America in Artistic Interventions in  
Pan-African discourse in Senegal, 1966-1995  
**Jason Kaufman**

Still I Rise: A Study of American Slavery in Film  
**Kalyn McCall**

Models of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for  
African American Students: An analysis and case study  
**Hannah Rusk**



Hope Burke & her thesis advisor,  
History Professor Allyson Hobbs



Jason Kaufman & his thesis Advisor,  
History Professor Sean Hanretta







During my junior year, I spent three months in South Africa, immersing myself in the culture, sights, and sounds of Cape Town. Spending the majority of my time building relationships and documenting the music I heard, I found incredible influences of African American Gospel

music on Black South African Gospel. It was no surprise that such sharing had taken place, seeing the impact of other genres of music including swing, jazz, and bebop on South African music in the 1950s and 60s. But what I also learned from various community members was that this music lifted their souls throughout the Apartheid struggle. Similar to what was seen during the Civil Rights Era in America, Gospel had functioned as an arsenal for protest music in Apartheid resistance. How did I not know about Gospel's international appeal? How did I not learn of its impact on



social movements even beyond the Diaspora? I soon learned after excavating musicology journals and other materials that Gospel was sung in multiple movements through Europe and reached Asia as well.

In these moments, I realized that I wanted to document such history, both in the form that it has historically been shared (i.e. through music) and through a medium where it has not been documented (i.e. scholarly literature). I decided to write my Honors Thesis on the historic relationship between Black Sacred Music and social justice movement and that thesis became the basis for my musical, *Higher Ground*. In an act of acceptance of my Black Christian identity and a legitimization of this genre of music, I shared my production with the public on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Dinkelspiel Auditorium was filled beyond capacity, and an estimated 200 guests were unfortunately turned away at the door. Rip Patton, one of the original Freedom Riders during the Civil Rights Movement, attended the production and exclaimed after the show, "I just want to thank you for honoring us. Those were the songs we sang when we were in jail, when we marched the streets, when we were attacked and beaten. Those were the songs that kept us together." His words validated not only the importance of the content of this work, but also the existence of this work. This creation was a collaborative effort with over 100 participants through the cast, crew, production staff, guest choirs, and marketing team. It was an endeavor of time, energy, and sustenance, but the final product validated the efforts that were given and the spirit that was shared. Thank you to my advisers, our donors and partners, the Program in African and African American Studies, the Institute for Diversity in the Arts, and the Theater and Performance Studies Department for all of your support and guidance along this journey.



Jessica and her cast received a standing ovation





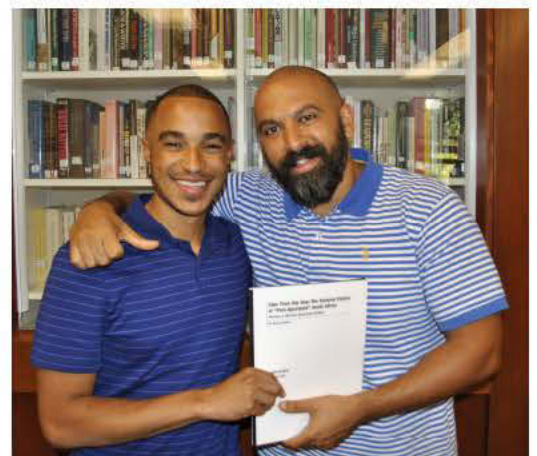
## Thankful to learn from AAAS faculty

By Kareem Alston '14 AAAS Major



As a freshman at Stanford, when Professor H. Samy Alim told me I could study Hip Hop culture as part of my major, I asked him, "What's the catch?" He said there was none. Four years later, I had to pinch myself as I was editing my Honors Thesis documentary about Hip Hop culture, activism, and education in Cape Town, South Africa. After that fateful day, when Professor Alim convinced me to join the AAAS family via an academic concentration through the Institute for Diversity in the Arts, I have been on a non-stop track to discovering the depths of my academic passions and

interests. Two trips to Cape Town, South Africa, countless seminars on race and culture, events with artists I admire, and my new journey as a master's student in the Center for African Studies. It all began that day I was able to connect with Professor Alim and he has supported me every step of the way. Now, as the Director of African & African American Studies, the Institute for Diversity the Arts and the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language, I am honored to have had the mentorship of Professor Alim throughout my years of undergraduate education at Stanford. It was a honor to work closely with Professor Alim on my thesis which explored the current constructions and impacts of Hip Hop culture in Cape Town, South Africa. Professor Alim supported and guided me as I attempted to answer the following question: In the modern era, how has Hip Hop in Cape Town evolved and what are the challenges that still exist in Capetonian society? I created a original documentary with footage from my trips to Cape Town to answer this question and convey the rich history of activism and spread of knowledge in Capetonian Hip Hop.



Kareem Alston & his thesis advisor, Education Professor, AAAS & IDA Director H. Samy Alim





AAAS Director Professor H. Samy Alim receiving the St. Clair Drake teacher of the year award at the black community awards

## 2014 AWARDS

Students enrolled “The 5th Element: Hip Hop Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Social Justice” course submitted strong nominations for AAAS Director H. Samy Alim & IDA Executive Director Jeff Chang. Alim and Chang were both selected for the 2014 Dr. St. Clair Drake Teacher of the Year Award at Stanford’s Black Community awards in Spring.

### AAAS Awards

Each year AAAS gives out five awards to outstanding undergraduates. Below we recognize this year’s recipients.

The James L. Gibbs Jr. Award for Superior Academic Performance  
**Kalyn McCall '14**

Trustee Leadership Award  
**Gerald Higginbotham '14**

The Kennell Jackson Award  
**Hope Burke '14 & Jessica Anderson '14**

The Academic Achievement & Service Award  
**Brandon Hill '16**

The Shanta Annan Memorial Award  
**Minvmoh Anelone '17**





AAAS majors and minors at our spring study break

## Why I majored in AAAS? What I gained from it? How it's set me up for future pursuits.

By Kaela Farrise '14 AAAS Major



I owe so much to the Program in African and African American Studies that it is hard to pinpoint just a few to write about. Academically, I explored my varied interests in different fields through the lens of race: I was able to take classes on education, feminism, study abroad and write my senior capstone in political science. The things that I cherish the most about my time in the AAAS major though, are those that can't be measured by grades or the

traditional measures of success. Outside of learning about so many topics I care deeply about, the classes I took through AAAS taught me to question the norms, analyze different viewpoints and come to my own conclusions; three things that have prepared me very much for this next leg of my journey in law school. In the major I found a home, I found friends, and ultimately, I found family. At Stanford, I did everything that I wanted and I can say that was in large part due to the support and guidance I received from the program in African and African American Studies.



AAAS majors in the class of 2014





## Celebrating the AAAS Class of 2014

### *Majors*

**Kareem Alston**, B.A. in African & African American Studies with Honors

**Jessica Anderson**, B.A. in African & African American Studies with Honors,

**Hope Burke**, B.A. in African & African American Studies with Honors, & History

**Kaela Farrise**, B.A. African & African American Studies & Urban Studies

**Jason Kaufman**, B.A. African & African American Studies with Honors, & Earth Systems

**Kalyn McCall**, B.A. in African & African American Studies with Honors, & History, M.A. Sociology

**Hannah Rusk**, B.A. African & African American Studies & Urban Studies

### *Minors*

**Farris Blount III**, B.A. in International Relations & a minor in AAAS

**Taylor Drewberry**, B.A. in American Studies with Honors & a minor in AAAS

**Gerald Higginbotham**, B.A. in Psychology with Honors & a minor in AAAS

**John Paul Lawrence**, B.S. Material Science & Engineering & a minor in AAAS

**Megan McKoy**, B.A. in History & a minor in AAAS

**Larence Walter Melton**, B.A. in Communication & a minor in AAAS

**Poni Bepo**, B.S. in Mechanical Engineering & a minor in AAAS

**Brian Wanyoike**, B.A. in Science Technology & Society & a minor in AAAS



# The Program in African and African American Studies

**H. Samy Alim, Ph.D.**  
AAAS Director

Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Education  
Co-Director, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Language (CREAL)  
Faculty Director of The Institute for Diversity in the Arts (IDA)

**Cheryl A. Brown, Ph.D.**  
AAAS Associate Director

**Massa Wells**  
AAAS Student Services Coordinator

For More Information Visit:

**AAAS Website**  
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/AAAS/>

**AAAS Office**  
650-723-3782  
450 Serra Mall  
BLDG 360-362B  
Stanford, CA 94305

