

James Cantres  
ASWAD Candidate Statement

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies at Hunter College. As a junior faculty member who has been an ASWAD member since 2011 when I was a graduate student, I have found the ASWAD community and conferences to be vital to my development as a scholar. I have been a Fellow of the City University of New York Mellon Faculty Diversity Career Enhancement Initiative (CFDI), a Core Curriculum Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at New York University, and Black Studies Dissertation Fellow at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

My scholarship and research intersect with ASWAD's mission, particularly in investigating the affinities and disparities between Africana populations around the world, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the organization that has been so instrumental in my own career trajectory. As a historian of the Caribbean diaspora in Britain, I consider the ways radical black activists, intellectuals, and artists conceptualized identities in the declining imperial center through drawing on historical and political connections to diasporic Africans across the Americas and on the continent.

I currently teach courses on colonial and modern Caribbean History, histories of resistance in the African Diaspora, and Black British History. My current book project, *Blackening Britain: West Indian Migrants and the End of Empire in London 1945-1971* is a historical analysis of post-national radical political consciousness and activism among Caribbean and African migrant writers, intellectuals, artists, and activists in Britain following the end of World War II. Commonly known as the *Windrush* generation, these imperial citizens reshaped British metropolitan culture and politics in subsequent decades. My work explores the ways in which African diasporic art forms and popular culture—hip hop, reggae, sports, literature, and the plastic arts—articulate belonging and unbelonging among black peoples in Britain through the period of decolonization and independence in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. I have published articles and book reviews in *Caribbean Quarterly* and *African and Black Diaspora*.

I have been an ASWAD member since 2011 and have attended conferences in Pittsburgh, Santo Domingo, Charleston, and Sevilla. I began working with ASWAD as a graduate student while assisting with onsite conference registration in 2011. If elected to serve on the Board, I would look to contribute to ASWAD's efforts to offer conference sessions oriented around facilitating graduate student successes and mentoring junior faculty. I would also look forward to furthering ASWAD's relationships with scholars, artists, and activists in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, and Europe. It is imperative that we continue to make strides in linking the connected intellectual and social justice struggles of African and diasporic Africans around the world. Because of my scholarly focus on Britain, I would use my network within Black British and Afro-European Studies to support ASWAD outreach efforts across Europe to help increase and substantiate our membership from this part of the diaspora. I have experience serving on academic committees including my current role as Chair of the American Historical Association's Graduate and Early Career Committee.