

CURRICULUM VITAE

SONYA MARIA JOHNSON

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EDUCATION:

- 2012** **Doctor of Philosophy**, Anthropology. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
Dual major specialization, African American & African Studies. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
- 2008** **Master of Arts**, Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
- 2000** **Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude**, Anthropology. University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.
- 2000** **Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude**, Ethnic Studies, (emphasis: African American Studies. Minor: Chicano/a Studies). University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.

Areas of Interests: Religion and Ritual; Culture, Identity and Power; Anthropology of Religion; African Atlantic Diaspora; Cuba, Palo Monte/Mayombe; African American & African Studies; Qualitative field research methods.

FELLOWSHIPS:

- 2018—2022** **Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow**, Associated Colleges of the Mid-West, Chicago, Illinois.
- 2018—2019** **Teaching and Learning Workshop for Early Career Religion Faculty at Colleges and Universities**, Wabash Center, funded by the Lilly Endowment, Crawfordsville, Indiana.
- 2017—2018** **Andrew W. Mellon Teaching Fellow**, Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.
- 2014—2016** **Postdoctoral Fellow**, National Science Foundation (NSF) Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Big Ten Academic Alliance, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
- 2012—2014** **Postdoctoral Research Associate**, African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
- 2002—2007** **University Enhancement Fellow**, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

EMPLOYMENT:

Fall 2018—current

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.

2016—Spring 2018

Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.

2016 Invited Instructor, Liberal Arts Department, College for Creative Studies, Detroit, Michigan.

2016 Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2012—

2014 Instructor, Center for Integrative Studies in Social Science, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2013—

2014 Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2003—

2011 Research Field Site Coordinator, African Atlantic Research Team; Cuba, Spain, Ghana, Columbia, Canada, Dominican Republic and the United States.

2007—

2008 Research Assistant & Investigator, “Africa-based Religious Traditions of Oriente Cuba,” African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2007—

2008 Research Assistant, Professor Lynne Goldstein, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2003—

2004 Research Assistant, Professor Jualynne E. Dodson, Visiting John H. Hannah Distinguished Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

PUBLICATIONS: (*indicates peer-reviewed)

Book Chapters:

2016 *Johnson, Sonya Maria. “African-inspired Rituals in the Atlantic World, Oriente, Cuba.” In Religion and Society series, volume 2, Religion Experienced Through Rituals and Pilgrimage, Anastasia Panagakos, volume editor, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers.

2010 *Dodson Jualynne E. and Sonya Maria Johnson. “Indigenous Religious Traditions.” In Introduction to World Religion Communities and Cultures, Jacob Neusner, editor, Nashville, Tennessee: Abington Press, pp. 283-290.

- 2009** *Dodson, Jualynne E. and **Sonya Maria Johnson**. "Interacting with Spirits: Intangible Practices in Oriente, Cuba." In UNESCO's Sharing Cultures 2009: International Conference on Intangible Heritage, Sergio Lira et.al, editors, Pico Island, Azores, Portugal: Green Lines Institute for Sustainable Development, pp. 187-192.
- 2008** ***Johnson, Sonya Maria**, Alexandra Gelbard, Shanti Ali Zaid, and Harry Nii Koney Odamtten. "Preface." In Sacred Spaces and Religious Traditions in Oriente Cuba, by Jualynne E. Dodson, Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, xi-xii.

Articles:

- 2014** *Montgomery, Beronda, Jualynne E. Dodson, and **Sonya Maria Johnson**. "Guiding the Way: Mentoring Graduate Students and Junior Faculty for Sustainable Academic Careers." SAGE Open (October-December), doi: 10.1177/2158244014558043.

Other Publications:

- 2013** **Johnson, Sonya Maria**, "Members' Milestones." In Re-conexioñes, the official newsletter of the African Atlantic Research Team of Michigan State University. Fall 2013, vol.4, issue. 5.
- 2011** Dodson, Jualynne E., senior editor, **Sonya Maria Johnson**, Crystal Eddins and William Escalante, co-editors, Alyce C. Emory, Layout and Design. Re-conexão, the official newsletter of the African Atlantic Research Team of Michigan State University. Anniversary Issue, Fall 2011, vol.3, issue. 4.
- 2009** **Johnson, Sonya Maria**, "Perspectives from Our Members: 1, 2, 3...Phd!" In Re-conexioñes, the official newsletter of the African Atlantic Research Team of Michigan State University. Fall 2009, vol.2, issue. 2.

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED:

- 2017** Program Committee Co-chair for the 9th Biennial Conference of the Association of the Study of the World Wide African Diaspora; Seville, Spain; November.
- 2013** Colloquium, Significations Forward: Reflections with Dr. Charles H. Long, Pre-eminent U.S. African American Historian of Religion, African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University; East Lansing, Michigan; September.
- 2006** Symposium, Timely Reflection Plessy vs. Ferguson 110 Years Later: Implications in the Americas, Collaboration between the African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University's College of Law, Museum, & The Office of Affirmative Action, Compliance & Monitoring, Michigan State University; East Lansing, Michigan; October.

Conference Sessions Organized:

- 2015** "This Too is Ferguson": Denaturalizing Race in Service, Teaching, Mentoring and the Production of Knowledge by Anthropologists at the Margins, panel co-organized for the 114th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Denver, Colorado; November.
- 2014** Ways of Knowing: The Struggle to Produce Anthropologists of Color, panel co-organized for the 113th, annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C.; December.

- 2013** Scholars' Lessons for Studying the African Diaspora: The Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora conference panel on the Methodologies, Epistemologies, and Pedagogies of African Diaspora Studies; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; October.

Research Field of Action-Learning from a Master: Ruth Simms Hamilton & Study of the African Diaspora, panel organized for the 37th Annual meeting of the National Council of Black Studies. Indianapolis, Indiana; March.

- 2008** Creation within Original Diaspora: Religion in Cuba, panel organized for the 33rd Annual conference Caribbean Studies Association, San Andrés, Columbia; May.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

- 2019** "The Ancestors Make It Home: Palo Monte/Mayombe and the Making of Social Place in Contemporary Cuba," to be presented at the 9th International Mediterranean Women's Conference, Fes, Morocco; June.

- 2018** "In the Spirit of Liberation: Palo Monte/Mayombe within Oriente, Cuba," paper presented for the 2018 American Academy of Religion conference, Denver, Colorado; November.

- 2018** Panelist for "Being Brave: Embodying Courage in Revolutionary Pedagogies" for the Daughters' of the African Atlantic Fund's Consultation of African & African Diasporan Women in Religion and Theology's Embodying Courage: Black Women and Girls' Lives Matter conference, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; July.

- 2016** Epistemological Foundations of Palo Monte/Mayombe, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, paper presented for the 2016 Conference Transatlantic Roundtable on Religion and Race with University of the West Indies Faculty of Law, St. Augustine: Persistent Racial Problems: Political, Cultural, and Religious Responses, Port of Spain, Trinidad; August.

- 2015** Returning Home: Place Creation within the African Diaspora in Oriente, Cuba, paper presented for the 8th Biennial Conference for the Association for the Study of the World Wide African Diaspora, Charleston, South Carolina; November.

"Mentoring for Our Future:" Workshops for Graduate Students, panel participant for the 8th Biennial Conference for the Association for the Study of the World Wide African Diaspora, Charleston, South Carolina; November.

- 2014** Ways of Knowing: The Struggle to Produce Anthropologists of Color, panel participant for the inaugural mentoring panel for the Association of Black Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C.; December.

"African Meets Indian Now the African is Indian": Power, Spirit and Habitus in the Red and Black Atlantics, paper presented for the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, California; November.

Building Bridges Through Time & Space: Palo Monte/Mayombe Practitioners in Oriente, Cuba, paper presented for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Studying Religion in The African Diaspora: Cross-Cultural Qualitative Research Panel, Indianapolis, Indiana; October.

Religious Memory as Social Transformation: Oriente, Cuba, paper presented for the 18th International Sociology Association World Congress of Sociology, Yokohama, Japan; July.

- 2013** When the Dead Make a Place a Home: Homeland Creation in the African Diaspora, paper presented for the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, Illinois; November.

In the Land of the Spirits: Palo Monte/Mayombe in Oriente, Cuba, paper presented for the biennial meeting of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; October.

When the Dead Make a Place a Home: Myth of Return and the African Diaspora, paper presented for the 37th Annual meeting of the National Council of Black Studies. Indianapolis, Indiana; March.

- 2011** Spirits in the Formation of Religious Tradition in Cuba, paper presented for Purdue University's African American Studies & Research Center's 27th Annual Symposium: "Afro-Latin America: Rethinking, Identity, Politics & Culture," West Lafayette, Indiana; December.

Un-Silencing Legacies: Palo Mayombe Spirit Genealogies of Santiago de Cuba, paper presented for the American Anthropological Association, Montreal, Canada; November.

Research Strategies for On-The Ground Studying the African Diaspora: The African Atlantic Research Team, paper presented for the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; November.

De-Briefing with the African Atlantic Research Team, invited panelist by SSSR President Sir James Beckford for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; October.

- 2009** The African Diaspora and Indigenous Religious Production, paper presented for the Indigenous Religious Traditions Group for the American Academy of Religions, Montreal, Canada; November.

Interacting with Spirits: Intangible Practices in Oriente, Cuba, co-authored paper presentation for the UNESCO's Sharing Cultures 2009: International Conference on Intangible Heritage, Pico Island, Azores, Portugal; May.

- 2008** Oriente, living with Los Muertos: Report from the Field, paper presented for the 33rd Annual conference Caribbean Studies Association, San Andrés, Columbia; May.

- 2007** Ñsambe, Somos y Somos: Expanded Understandings of Indigenous and Spirit Interactions, paper presented for the Indigenous Religious Traditions Group for the American Academy of Religions, San Diego, California; November.

S(s)pirit Work: Religion and Identity in Oriente, Cuba, paper presented for the 1st International Conference on Afro-Hispanic Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana; August.

Conducting Cross Cultural Research among African Descendants in the Americas: Symbolic Universe and Religious Knowledge Production, paper presented for the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR): Blackness and Modernities, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain; April.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS:

2019 Invited panelist, "Truth Telling in Predominately White Institutions: Black Women Faculty on Doing Their World and Not Losing Their Souls," for the inaugural symposium for the launching of the Institute for Transformative Practice. Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; March.

2015 Keynote speaker, Student Excellence and Leadership TRIO Program's Fall 2015 Symposium. Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; October.

Keynote speaker, Ronald E. McNair Scholars' Symposium 2015: "The McNair Journey." Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; July.

"Without the Dead We Are Nothing:" Ritual & Healing within the African Diaspora," invited lecture for the Special Problems: Spirituality and Medicine Osteopathic Medicine Seminar, School of Osteopathic Medicine, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan; March.

2010 Spaces and Spirits: The Making of Religion in the African Diaspora. Invited speaker for the Summer Research Opportunity Program, Michigan State University, East Lansing; June.

2005 Invited alumna panelist for the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program Conference "Why are All of the Black Kids Sitting Together? Spaces of Racial and Ethnic Engagement in the 21st Century." Chapel Hill University, North Carolina; July.

Presentations Related to Liberal Arts Education:

2019 "Coco and Conversation with Dr. Johnson," guided session for the "Winning at College" Retention Weekend for Beloit College Sophomore and Freshmen Students, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin; February.

2018 "Meet the Professors" panelist for the Student Excellence and Leadership New Student Welcome Days, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; August.

Invited faculty speaker, Students for an Inclusive Campus, "Professional presentation of self as a scholar of color," Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; April.

2017 Breathing, Yoga, and Wellness, workshop conducted for Beloit College Chamber Singers Retreat, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; October.

Presentation for DreamGirls Black Women's group on the significance of self-care during stressful times, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; October.

Collaborative Liberal Arts Moodle Project, national webinar presentation with Jedidiah Rex at Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; September.

Invited Faculty Panelist for the “Social Identities Panel for First Year, Transfer, and International Students,” Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; August.

“Fierce Love Keynote by Lama Rod,” keynote response panelist, hosted by the Spiritual Life Program and the Health and Wellness Center, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; March.

“#Herstory: Black Women at Beloit College,” invited panelist by the Dream Girls Black Women Support Group, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; February.

2016 “Light in the Darkness: Hope in Fearful Times,” invited speaker by the Spiritual Life Program, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; December.

COURSES DEVELOPED:

- Religions of the Black Atlantic: The Caribbean & Latin America;
- Ritual & Culture within the African Diaspora;
- Religious Thought in the Black Atlantic: Cuba;
- Anthropology of Religion;
- Healing and Religion;
- Religion and Reality;
- Visual Narration: Ritual & Art in the African Diaspora;
- Integrative Studies in Social Science: Individual and Society;
- Gender and Anthropology;
- Graduate Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology;
- Cross-cultural Qualitative Field Research Methods: Cuba, Ghana, San Andrés Island, Columbia, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

SERVICE:

Executive Board Member, Association for the Study of the World Wide African Diaspora. 2015-2021.

Service Related to Liberal Arts Education:

2018 Directing faculty person for Drew Agnew’s Honor’s Term Project, focused on Beloit College’s Logan Museum of Anthropology’s Africa holdings and religiosity within the African Diaspora, Beloit, Wisconsin; August to December.

Panelist for the #GetWork Radical Self-love as Liberation” session, sponsored by the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; February.

Organized companion social justice meditation retreat for #GetWork “Retreat for Liberation,” for the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; February.

Fall 2016—present

Advisor for Beloit College Yoga Club. Beloit, Wisconsin.

Spring 2017—present

Advanced Yoga Instructor for Beloit College Yoga Club. Beloit, Wisconsin.

Spring 2017—present

Mentor for a Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Scholar. Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.

- 2017** A featured faculty member of the Womanist Class Project, “Women of Excellence,” Beloit College. Beloit, Wisconsin; November.

Edited and consulted Logan Anthropology Museum Exhibit, “Universal Health: Why Should We Care,” by Drew Agnew. Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; December.

Job Search Committee Member, Department of Music. Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin; October.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES:

- 2019** Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Faculty Fellows Program for a Diverse Professoriate, Associated Colleges of the Midwest writing retreat with Inkwell Academic Writing Retreat, Chicago, Illinois; January.

2018—Spring 2019

National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity’s “Faculty Success Program,” to increase research and writing productivity with a focus on integrative life/work balance, On-line training; May to December.

- 2018** Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Faculty Fellows Program for a Diverse Professoriate, Associated Colleges of the Midwest day writing retreat with Inkwell Academic Writing Retreat, Chicago, Illinois; August.

- 2017** Decolonizing Pedagogies: An Andrew Mellon Funded Project for curricular design and research, Beloit College. Beloit, Wisconsin; Fall.

“Processing Negative Feedback” webinar by Erin Barnes, University of Iowa. Professional Development Series, Big Ten Academic Alliance, Professional Advancement Initiative; December.

The OpEd Project: Write to Change the World writing workshop, Beloit College. Beloit, Wisconsin; September.

AWARDS:

- 2017** Inaugural Presidential Award for Outstanding and Dedicated Service, Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora.

- 2016** Center of Excellence Certificate of Achievement for service to Michigan State University’s College of Human Medicine’s 2016 Health Science Scholars Institute.

- 2012** Certificate of Appreciation for dedicated service, African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

- 2011** Invited graduate student representative for Michigan State University, National Science Foundation, Washington D.C.

2011 Graduate Student Highlight; Michigan State University Department of Anthropology Fall Newsletter, East Lansing, Michigan.

GRANTS:

Fellowships:

Research Fellowships:

2011 NSF-Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Research Fellowships, Michigan State University Chapter: \$2,000.

2010 NSF-Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Research Fellowships, Michigan State University Chapter: \$2,000.

2009—2010

The Martin Luther King—Cesar Chávez—Rosa Parks Future Faculty Fellow: \$45,000.

2009 TIAA-CREF Ruth Simms Hamilton International Research Fellow for Research within the African Diaspora: \$10,000.

2009 NSF-Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Research Fellowships, Michigan State University Chapter: \$2,000.

2008 NSF-Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Research Fellowships, Michigan State University Chapter: \$2,000.

2007 NSF-Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Research Fellowships, Michigan State University Chapter: \$2,000.

2006 Summer Retention Fellowship, The Graduate School, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan: \$3,500.

2005 Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Spanish: \$2,400.

2004 NSF-Ethnographic Training Grant for Pre-Dissertation Research, Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan: \$4,000.

2004 Tinker Field Research Grant & Graduate School Grant, pre-dissertation field research in Cuba: \$900.

2003 Tinker Field Research Grant & Graduate School Grant, pre-dissertation field research in Cuba: \$900.

Conference Travel Grants:

2015 Big Ten Academic Alliance —NSF AGEP, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2014 African Atlantic Research Team, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2012 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Student Travel Grant.

2011 Department of Anthropology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2011 Graduate Program in African American and African Studies and College of Arts and Letters, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

2011 The Graduate School, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

MEMBERSHIPS:

2011-present Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora

2005-present National Council for Black Studies

2004-present American Anthropological Association

2004-present American Academy of Religions

2004-present Association of Black Anthropologists

Inducted Spring 2014 Society for the Study of Black Religion

2014-2016 International Sociological Association

LANGUAGE: Spanish