

## MAST Alumni Updates

**Gabriel Greaves**, '16, accepted a new job as Programs + Partnerships Coordinator at the Prince George African American Museum in North Brentwood, MD, just outside of Washington, D.C.



**Yen Rodriguez**, '15, recently joined our MAST mentoring program.



**Jessica Fisher**, '19, has begun classes in a Ph.D. program at Georgia State University in Sociology.



## Spring 2020 Classes

**AMST 6401: Literature & Culture of the Americas** — Dr. Nirmal Trivedi

**AMST 7000: AMST Scholarship** — Dr. Rebecca Hill (online w/skype discussion 2 hours per week)

**AMST 7200: American Social Movements** — Dr. Robbie Lieberman

**AMST 7330: LGBTQ Studies** — Dr. LaShonda Mims (online)



Fall 2019

# MASTER OF ARTS AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2020 Courses

Application Deadlines for Admission:

Spring: Nov. 1  
Summer: April 1  
Fall: July 1

**“The South Still Got Something to Say”:** KSU’s Dr. Regina Bradley



Reflecting on the far-reaching connections between hip hop, particularly southern hip hop, and the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Regina Bradley says, “It’s a culture, a critical lens. It’s more than just music!” To be sure, Dr. Bradley treats her calling as a post-Civil Rights southern hip hop scholar as if it were, in fact, a lifestyle — it occupies nearly all of her time. In addition to being a tenure-track assistant professor of English and African Diaspora Studies, she’s working on a book, an edited collection, and her popular NPR podcast.

Dr. Bradley’s current book-length project, under contract with UNC Press, is called *Chronicling Stankonia: Outkast & the Rise of the Hip Hop South*. An “interrogation of how Outkast in their music talk about Black



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communities after the Civil Rights Movement," Dr. Bradley's book stems from her earlier work on a YouTube series she called *Outkast Conversations*. Her continuing fascination with the subject, particularly what it reveals about "how we understand race and idealize ideas of the Civil Rights Movement," has also led to a collection of essays she is editing about the group—an "Outkast Reader" due out from UGA Press next year. And on top of it all, she's also wrapping up season one (a whopping twenty episodes) and planning season two of her popular NPR podcast, co-hosted with Christine Lee, called "Bottom of the Map," about the hip hop south, available anywhere you get podcasts.

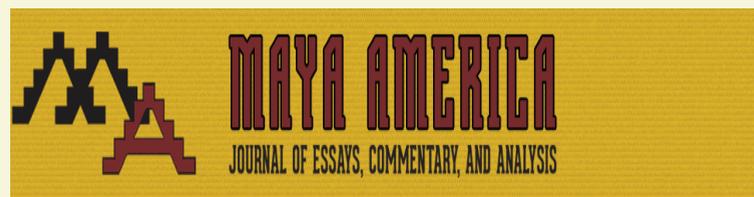
So why all this focus on southern hip hop and *Outkast*? For Dr. Bradley, there is indeed something unique about the sound of southern hip hop. She says that the distinctive southern sound "pulls from cultural traditions of gospel and funk music, live instrumentation, and call and response" systems. When *Outkast* emerged with *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* in the early '90s, it was the height of the east/west coast rap battles, and hailing from neither New York City nor Los Angeles, *Outkast* was, in fact, an outcast of the genre.

That's when it all came to a head at the 1995 Source Awards held in New York City. *Outkast* was announced Best New Rap Artist, and the audience immediately erupted in boos in response. Unphased, Andre Benjamin took the mic and proclaimed, "The South got something to say," inspiring a whole generation of southern artists who would answer his call for a new southern voice in hip hop. It would seem that Dr. Bradley heard that call, too, all the way from rural southwest Georgia.

In her classes, Dr. Bradley says she encourages both undergrad and graduate students "to apply readings to larger conversations, using hip hop as a critical means," while focusing on the intersection of region and identity. She puts academics like Jesmyn Ward and Kiese Laymon in conversation with artists like *Outkast* and T.I., and in her current American Popular Culture: Hip Hop South course, she's asking graduate students to pair up with undergraduates to create their own podcasts, on which the class provides feedback, a kind of exercise in peer review, she says.

Dr. Bradley says she incorporates major themes of American Studies in her interdisciplinary approach to teaching the class and says that she's particularly pleased to be working in a program that "is welcoming and embraces new ideas." "Without being afraid of retaliation," she adds with a smile.

## MAST Students Publish in New Maya America Journal



Dr. Alan LeBaron

Two students in the MAST program wrote essays for the new journal, *Maya America: Essays, Commentary, and Analysis*. David Galban authored "Measuring Levels of Collectivism and Individualism with one Maya Volunteer". Anna Tussey authored "Maya Indigeneity in the Public School System: Institutional Barriers between Educators and Students". Anna's essay draws upon her MA thesis, and David's essay is taken from part of his capstone project.

The journal *Maya America* published its first issue in July, with 12 strong essays from around the United States and Guatemala. Exactly one-half of the essays were written by Maya. The journal has received enthusiastic support, and will be a publication for well-established scholars, graduate students, community leaders, and the personal stories and commentary of the Maya people. The journal is currently hosted by the Maya Heritage Community Project and KSU. If you have an interest in volunteering or writing something for the journal, follow the link to the journal website:

<https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mayaamerica/>