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SouthTalks Events Go Virtual

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SouthTalks Events Go Virtual

Speakers for this fall include Jelani Cobb, Carol Anderson and Jacqueline Olive

AUGUST 31, 2020 BY REBECCA LAUCK CLEARY

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James G. Thomas Jr.'s 'The Lebanese in Mississippi: An Oral History Project' will be the topic for a Sept. 23 discussion and Q&A session as part of the UM Center for the Study of Southern Culture's SouthTalks series. The lecture and discussion series is going virtual this fall. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Like everything else this fall, the **Center for the Study of Southern Culture's** SouthTalks are different than normal due to COVID-19. This semester, all the events are online, so although they won't take place in Barnard Observatory, viewers can watch from wherever they have an internet connection.

All SouthTalks events, which include lectures, performances, film screenings and panel discussions exploring the interdisciplinary nature of Southern studies, will be virtual, free and accessible on the center's YouTube channel. Registration is required.

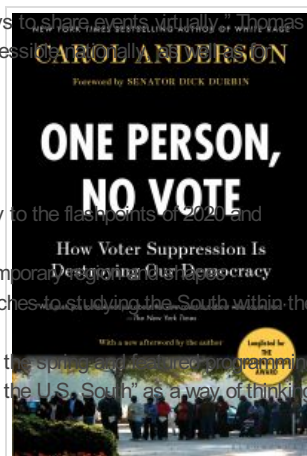
Afton Thomas, associate director of programs at the **University of Mississippi** center, spent the summer coordinating everything, and a key aspect of creating the semester's virtual lineup is the collaborative spirit among faculty and the center's three institutes, as well as the interdisciplinary nature and wide range of interests of faculty and students.

"We were up to the challenge of learning new technologies and ways to share events virtually," Thomas said. "One of many silver linings is that our events will be more accessible to virtually anyone, not just those who live close by but (are) unable to visit Barnard Observatory on a weekday afternoon."

Some of the programming falls into three categories:

- Voting Rights and Community Activism, which speaks directly to the flashpoints of 2020 and central questions around the responsibilities of citizens
- The Future of the South Initiative, which focuses on the contemporary conversations about how it will evolve, using innovative approaches to studying the South within the context of the nation, hemisphere and globe
- The Movement and Migration Series Lectures, which began in the spring and feature programming around the theme "Movement and Migration in, to and through the U.S. South" as a way of thinking about urgent issues connected to borders and belonging

"We pride ourselves in offering something for everyone, and this fall's lineup is no different," Thomas said. "We will host a documentary film screening and talks on a range of topics including the current health crisis, Maurice Carlos Ruffin's book 'We Cast a Shadow,' Southern photography, blues music, the history of voting rights and migration stories.



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Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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Thank You To Our Donors

Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

"We will welcome speakers from the comfort of their homes, such as Dr. Carol Anderson, Jelani Cobb, Jim Downs, Kevin Kruse and filmmaker Jacqueline Olive, as well as center faculty and staff, including Simone Delemer, W. Ralph Eubanks, James G. Thomas Jr. and David Wharton."



Jennifer Conner

Events begin Sept. 9 with **"Our Body Tells a Story: A Pathway to Resilience and Wholeness,"** presented by Jennifer Conner, Brookshield Laurent, Anne Cafer and Meagen Rosenthal. Cafer and Rosenthal, both UM professors and co-directors of university's Community First Research Center for Wellbeing and Creative Achievement, moderate a live Q&A at noon with Conner and Laurent of the Delta Population Health Institute.

Their discussion will expand upon the work of the Delta Population Health Institute, which will be shared in a prerecorded talk available in early September on the center's website.

During the prerecorded talk, Conner and Laurent discuss how their training has taught them to listen to the stories of our bodies. They explore how the interconnectedness of place, time and health are expressed in our bodies and can serve as the pathway for holistic healing for self and communities.

At noon Sept. 16, Southern studies graduate Hilary Word and Maurice Carlos Ruffin, the university's 2020-21 Grisham Writer in Residence, will discuss Ruffin's latest work with **"Why Dystopia Now? Exploring the Place, Value and Necessity of Speculative and Dystopian Themes in Maurice Carlos Ruffin's 'We Cast a Shadow.'"** This live session will expand on the moderators' prerecorded conversation on Ruffin's book, which will be available on the center's website in September.



Maurice Carlos Ruffin

Ruffin's novel "We Cast a Shadow" was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and was longlisted for the PEN America Open Book Prize, the Center for Fiction Prize and the Aspen Words Literary Prize. A New Orleans native, Ruffin is a professor of creative writing at Louisiana State University.

Born in Atlanta but raised in Georgia and Mississippi, Word claims Jackson as her home. She completed her undergraduate education at Tougaloo College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in history in May 2017. She entered the Southern studies master's program in 2018 and graduated earlier this year. Word's thesis,

"Post-Soul Speculation: An Exploration of Afro-Southern Speculative Fiction," earned the Sue Hart Prize for outstanding paper at the intersection of Southern studies and gender studies.



Brookshield Laurent



Hilary Word

As part of the Movement and Migration Series, James G. Thomas Jr. and Jessica Wilkerson discuss **"The Lebanese in Mississippi: An Oral History Project"** at noon Sept. 23. Thomas' recent work of the same name documents and interprets the lives of first- and subsequent-generation Lebanese Mississippians whose families immigrated to the state looking for a better life.



James G. Thomas Jr.

It is an oral record of their forbears' experiences of settling in a foreign land where they knew few people, did not speak the language and had to create their own occupations. Ultimately, however, it is the collective story of maintaining an ethnic identity while assimilating into a new culture. Thomas' collection of oral memories and photos provides a picture of a people remembering, envisioning and interpreting where they came from and the struggles of those who came before them.

In this live Q&A, Thomas and Wilkerson discuss the origins and findings of Thomas's study, which can be found online at <http://www.thelebaneseinmississippi.com>. Thomas is associate director for publications at the Southern studies center. He holds a bachelor's degree in English and philosophy, a master's in Southern studies and an M.F.A. in documentary expression, all from Ole Miss.



Jessica Wilkerson

Wilkerson is an associate professor of history at West Virginia University, where she holds the Stuart and Joyce Robbins Chair, a position she began this fall after six years at UM. She is the author of "To Live Here, You Have to Fight: How Women Led Appalachian Movements for Social Justice."

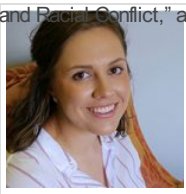
The next Movement and Migration Lecture, set for noon Sept. 30, is **"From Latino Orlando to International Memphis: Migration and Transformation in the U.S. South"** with Simone Delemer and Annemarie Anderson. In this live Q&A, Anderson, the Southern Foodways Alliance's oral historian, and Delemer, the university's McMullan Associate Professor of Southern Studies and associate professor of anthropology, discuss Delemer's recent book, "Latino Orlando: Suburban Transformation

"James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier," a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

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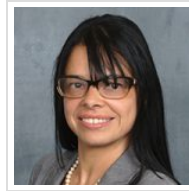
and *Racial Conflict*,” and her current work in Memphis.



Annemarie Anderson

In a prerecorded SouthTalk, Delorme discusses the findings from her book, which documents ways that Southern places are being transformed by an influx of Latino migrants. She draws comparisons to her research in Memphis, which examines how newcomers challenge the South’s historic black-white racial binary and are incorporated into the social, political and

economic life of communities that were nontraditional migration destinations. This talk will be available on the center’s website after Sept. 15.



Simone Delorme

Southern studies alumna Amanda Malloy and Jackson-based artist and curator Adrienne Domnick will present **“Art and Community Activism: Discussing Jackson’s Public Arts Programs”** at noon Oct. 7. In talking about how her own work serves to inspire and uplift the Jackson community, Domnick will focus on the large-scale public pieces she has created in coordination with the Fertile Ground Project, which seeks to bring awareness to food insecurity in Jackson.



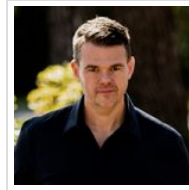
Carol Anderson

Carol Anderson presents the virtual **Gilder-Jordan Lecture** at 6 p.m. Oct. 13. Anderson, the Charles Howard Candler Professor and chair of African American studies at Emory University, is the author of “Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955,” “Bourgeois Radicals: The NAACP and the Struggle for Colonial Liberation, 1941-1960” and “White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide.” Her most recent book, “One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy,” will be the subject of her lecture.

Anderson has won numerous teaching awards, and her research has garnered fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Ford Foundation, National Humanities Center, Harvard University’s Charles Warren Center and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation. She is a regular contributor to the Guardian and adviser for its yearlong series on voting rights.

As part of the Voting Rights and Community Activism Series, Jim Downs, Carol Anderson and Kevin M. Kruse take part in the **“Voter Suppression and U.S. Elections”** roundtable at 6 p.m. Oct. 14.

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture has partnered with the University of Georgia Press to host the discussion with Downs, coeditor of the publisher’s History in the Headlines series and editor of the recent book “Voter Suppression in U.S. Elections.” He also is the Gilder Lehrman NEH Professor of History and Civil War Studies at Gettysburg College.



Jim Downs



Kevin M. Kruse

Anderson and Kruse join Downs in this conversation. Kruse studies the political, social and urban/suburban history of 20th-century America. Focused on conflicts over race, rights and religion, he has particular interests in segregation and the civil rights movement, the rise of religious nationalism and the making of modern conservatism.

Continuing the Voting Rights and Community Activism Series is **“The Half-Life of Freedom, Race and Justice in America Today,”** with W. Jelani Cobb, at 5 p.m. Oct. 19. Cobb, a journalist, educator and diversity speaker, writes about the enormous complexity of race in America.

As recipient of the Sidney Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism for his New Yorker columns, Cobb was praised for combining “the strengths of an on-the-scene reporter, a public intellectual, a teacher, a vivid writer, a subtle moralist and an accomplished professional historian” – qualities he brings to his gripping talks.

This event is part of the center’s Future of the South Initiative and is cosponsored by the Division for Diversity and Community Engagement; UM departments of English, history, political science, and sociology and anthropology; and the Sherman L. Muths Jr. Lecture Series in Law Endowment.



W. Jelani Cobb



Adam Gussow

Adam Gussow, Ken “Sugar Brown” Kawashima and B. Brian Foster will examine **“Whose Blues? Black Bluesism, Blues Universalism and the Postmodern Paradoxes of America’s Global Music”** in a live Q&A session at 3 p.m. Oct. 29. Gussow and Kawashima, a Korean-Japanese-American bluesman highlighted in Gussow’s book “Whose Blues? Facing Up to Race and the Future of the Music,” will be joined by Foster, assistant professor of sociology and Southern studies, for the conversation.

A prerecorded talk between Gussow, Kawashima and Foster will be available on the center’s website by mid-October, and Foster will

begin the live Q&A with prepared questions before opening up to viewers.

Gussow is a professor of English and Southern studies at Ole Miss and a professional blues harmonica player. He is the author of five books on the blues, including "Mister Satan's Apprentice" and "Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition." "Satan and Adam," a documentary about his decades-long partnership with guitarist Sterling "Mr. Satan" Magee, is screening on Netflix.



Ken Kawashima

Kawashima is a professor of modern Japanese history and Marxist theory in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He is author of "The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan," co-editor of "Tosaka Jun: A Critical Reader" and the English translator of Uno Kozo's "Theory of Crisis." He is also a blues musician, singer and composer who performs as "Sugar Brown."



B. Brian Foster

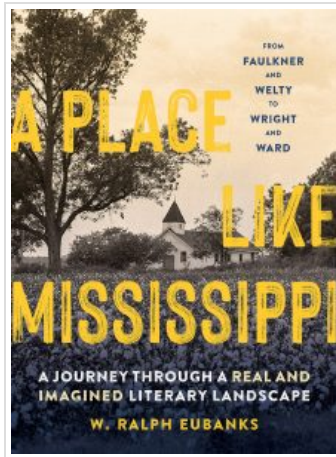
Foster is an assistant professor of sociology and Southern studies at UM. His work has appeared in the Washington Post, the Bitter Southerner and Oxford Magazine. His first book, "I Don't Like the Blues: Race, Place and the Backbeat of Black Life," which focuses on race and community life in the Mississippi Delta, will be out in December.

David Wharton and W. Ralph Eubanks present their live Q&A, "Looking at Southern Landscapes: Inspiration, Influence and Impact," at noon Nov. 11. They will engage with viewers and answer questions sparked by their

recorded talk, which will be made available Nov. 2 on the center's website.

The Southern landscape is varied and provides inspiration to photographers and writers, fueling how one sees the world through a camera and establishing settings for stories. During this prerecorded talk, Wharton and Eubanks discuss their experiences with the Southern landscape, Wharton as a photographer and Eubanks as a writer and student of Southern literature.

Wharton discusses his book "Scenes from Southern Roadside," which contains 133 black-and-white photographs made in rural areas throughout the American South. Eubanks talks about his forthcoming book, "A Place Like Mississippi," which examines how Mississippi's landscape has influenced the work of its writers. Together they discuss how photographers present the realities of the landscape and how writers overlay their impressions over those realities.



David Wharton and W. Ralph Eubanks plan to discuss the Southern landscape and how it provides inspiration to photographers and writers in 'Looking at Southern Landscapes: Inspiration, Influence and Impact,' part of the UM SouthTalks series, at noon Nov. 11.

On Nov. 12 at 5 p.m., Jacqueline Olive presents "Always in Season" as part of the Visiting Documentarian Series. Olive is an independent filmmaker and immersive media producer with 15 years of experience in journalism and film.



Jacqueline Olive

"Always in Season," her debut feature documentary, explores the lingering impact of more than a century of lynching and connects this form of racial terrorism with racial violence today. The film follows Claudia Lacy as she moves from paralyzing grief to leading the fight for justice for her son, Lennon Lacy, who was found hanging from a swing set in rural North Carolina in 2014.

As the film unfolds, Lennon's case – and the suspicions surrounding it – intersect with stories of other communities committed to breaking the silence of their own recent histories and leading the way to justice. Olive will discuss the

film, its themes and representation in the industry as well as take questions from viewers. This virtual event is cosponsored by the [Oxford Film Festival](#).

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