

*Race, Law, and American Literary Studies* draws together a range of established and emerging scholars—literary critics, cultural theorists, and legal historians—to explore the key role of racial ideologies in law and literature from the colonial era to the present. The panelists and keynote speaker will address the intertwined legal and literary discourses of race in ways that challenge our received knowledge about the relationship between law and literature across the broad span of American culture.

The law and literature movement has transformed the historical and conceptual landscape of the study of race in profound ways.

As cultural legal scholars attend to the narrative character of legal discourses and their reproduction of racial hierarchies, literary critics and historians look to the influence of racialized law on print culture, exploring how literary texts refract and engage legal crises, language, and imagery.

We envision this conference as a forum on the racial logics of legal and literary texts; as a catalyst for collaborations across and between our departments and schools; and as an impetus for rethinking earlier analytical frameworks and categories while breaking new ground in the ways we think about race, law, and American literature.



Image credits: Jacob Lawrence, *The Library* (1960), National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institutions; and Jacob Lawrence, *Lawyers and Clients* (1961), Sidney and Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College. Used by permission.

*Race, Law, and American Literary Studies* is sponsored by the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies, the Center for the History of the New America, the Department of English, the College of Arts and Humanities, and the Division of Research at the University of Maryland, and by the George Washington University School of Law.

# Race, Law, and American Literary Studies: An Interdisciplinary Conference

March 29-30, 2012



Tawes Hall  
University of Maryland

[www.english.umd.edu/RaceLawUSLit](http://www.english.umd.edu/RaceLawUSLit)

Thursday, March 29, 2012  
Race, Law, and American Literary Studies  
Tawes Hall  
Department of English  
University of Maryland

**Welcome Remarks**

**2:00 PM-3:45 PM: Plenary Panel 1: Which Law, Which Literature?**

**Chair:** Jeannine Marie DeLombard (English, University of Toronto)



Nan Goodman (English, University of Colorado at Boulder)  
“How Do You Spot an Impostor? Race, Religion, and International Law at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century”

Alfred Brophy (School of Law, University of North Carolina)  
“The Sources and Nature of Jurisprudence: Thomas R.R. Cobb’s *An Inquiry into the Law of Negro Slavery*”

Jeannine Marie DeLombard (English, University of Toronto)  
“Slave Narratives and ...Torts?”

Hoang G. Phan (English, University of Massachusetts, Amherst)  
“Bonds of Labor: Race and the Culture of Constitutionalism”

**4:00 PM: Keynote Speaker:**  
Stephen M. Best (English, University of California, Berkeley)  
“The Legacy of ‘The Legacy of Slavery’”

**5:30 PM: Reception**

**7:00 PM: Born in the USA: The Politics of Birthright Citizenship in Historical Perspective**

**Keynote Speaker:** Eric Foner (History, Columbia University)

Friday, March 30, 2012  
Race, Law, and American Literary Studies  
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**9:30 AM-11:15 AM: Plenary Panel 2: Law, Literature, and Race in a Re-united but not Re-constructed Nation**

**Chair:** Brook Thomas (English, University of California, Irvine)  
Amanda Claybaugh (English, Harvard University)  
“Law and the Fantasy of Government in African-American Literature”

Brook Thomas (English, University of California, Irvine)  
“Rehearsing Legal Arguments in Literature: The Case of Albion W. Tourgée”

Edlie Wong (English, University of Maryland)  
“Futures Past: Counterfactual Histories and Comparative Racialization in the Chinese Invasion Narrative”

Andrew Hebard (English, Miami University of Ohio)  
“Race-War and the Aesthetics of Imperial Sovereignty in Sutton Griggs’s *Imperium in Imperio*”

**11:30 AM-12:45 PM: Plenary Panel 3: Agree to Disagree? Resolving the Logics of Law and Race**

**Chair:** Robin West (Georgetown Law)

Christopher Brown (English, University of Maryland)  
“‘The Law Will Protect You’: Edward Jones and the Knowledge of Race”

Karla Holloway (English and Law, Duke University)  
“‘Bound by Law’: African America as Legal Fiction”

Imani Perry (Center for African American Studies, Princeton University)  
“Of Midnight Constitutionals and Bricolage Houses: Law and African American Thought”

**12:45 PM-2:15 PM: Lunch**

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**2:15-4:00 PM: Plenary Panel 4: The Law of Law-Breaking: The Cultural Left and the Cold War Racial State**

**Chair:** Mary Helen Washington (English, University of Maryland)

Aaron Lecklider (American Studies, University of Massachusetts, Boston)  
“‘Mann Act, Woman-Act, Being-Black-and-Talking-Back’: Race and Sexuality in US Radical Fiction”

William J. Maxwell (English, Washington University in St. Louis)  
“COINTELPRO Minstrelsy: The National Security State Writes Black”

James Smethurst (Afro-American Studies, University of Massachusetts, Amherst)  
“‘Lost in Castro’s beard?’: Bandung Postmodernism in African American Poetry”

Cheryl Higashida (English, University of Colorado, Boulder)  
“‘Home is Where the Hatred Is’: Property, Race, and Cold War Legacies”

**4:15 PM-5:30 PM: Plenary Panel 5: Closing Roundtable**

**Chair:** Alfred Brophy



**Panelists:**  
Jeannine Marie DeLombard,  
Brook Thomas,  
Karla Holloway,  
James Smethurst,  
Stephen M. Best

**5:30 PM: Reception**

Conference Directors:  
Robert Levine and Edlie Wong  
Planning Committee:  
Chris Brown | Christy DeSanctis | Karen Nelson | Mary Helen Washington |

