

Dissertation Colloquium
American Studies, Harvard University
May 2, 2023
Thompson Room, Barker Center

9:00 a.m. Welcome and introductions

9:15 a.m. **Imani Davis**

Presenting: Dissertation prospectus
Co-Chairs: Tracy K. Smith
 Stephanie Burt

10:00 a.m. **Michael Ortiz**

Chapter Title: “The Fiction of Sovereignty and the Novel in Turn of the
 Century Black America”
Dissertation Title: American Nature: Life and Political Community in Post-
 Reconstruction America, 1877-1927
Committee member: Eram Alam

10:45 a.m. Coffee break

11:00 a.m. **Camara Brown (via Zoom)**

Chapter Title: “‘I Am Not Meant To Be Alone’: Sustaining Black Feminist
 Friendships, Sisterhood and Connection, 1977-1980”
Dissertation Title: The Intimacy They Were Looking For: Black Women
 Theorizing Feminism and Friendship, 1901-1988
Chair: Tiya Miles

11:45 a.m. Final questions, closing remarks

12:00 p.m. Lunch

Student Biographies

Imani Davis is a queer Black writer from Brooklyn. A recipient of fellowships from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Lambda Literary, StoryStudio Chicago, and the Stadler Center for Poetry, they hold a B.A. in English and Africana Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. They're currently a Ph.D. candidate in American Studies at Harvard, where they also earned their M.A. in English.

Imani's poetry appears with Best New Poets, Best of the Net, PBS News Hour's Brief But Spectacular Series, The Poetry Foundation's Ours Poetica, Poet Lore, The Rumpus, Shade Literary Arts, The Offing, Brooklyn Poets, Poetry Daily, Frontier Poetry, Honey Literary, TEDx, ROOKIE Magazine, Adroit Journal, and elsewhere. Notably, they have performed at the Teen Vogue Activism Summit, the Apollo Theater, Brave New Voices, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Kelly Writers House, and the Nuyorican Poets Café.

Michael Ortiz is a Ph.D student in the American Studies program and pursuing an AM in the Department of History of Science. His research focuses on the history of science, capitalism, and imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries and critical social theory. His current project focuses on histories and legacies of medical experimentation in the Global South throughout the post-war era.

Camara Brown holds a BA in Urban Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. She writes about 19th century African American Women's history. More generally, her interests include: Transnational Women of Color Feminisms; 20th-21st century Poetry and Poetics; Archival Theory; and Queer of Color Critique.