

# **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously-funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current Institutes guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at <a href="https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/institutes-k-12-educators">https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/institutes-k-12-educators</a>

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads

Institution: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Project Director: Howard Rambsy

Grant Program: Institutes for K-12 Educators (Level II)

**A. Nature of the request:** The proposed one-week (July 11 – 17, 2021) institute, "Frederick Douglass and Literary Studies," builds on the success of our first institute and seeks to strengthen pedagogical engagements with *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845). We plan to offer a unique, interactive learning experience for twenty-five secondary school teachers. In addition, we will establish a web-based program for creating access to learning resources to a broader public of teachers, exposing them to an array of lessons plans and educational materials related to Douglass and African American literary studies in general.

**B. Project development:** The NEH Summer Institute on Douglass that we hosted in July 2019 received a total of fifty-four completed applications. The twenty-five summer scholars who participated responded to surveys expressing overwhelming positive feedback. Representative statements here reflect participants' repeated observations that the institute succeeded in pairing wide-ranging knowledge on Douglass's Narrative and practical tools for engaging students in studying Douglass's work. As one participant notes, "I have come away from this institute with a wealth of knowledge about not only Douglass and the Narrative, but also numerous authors of varied genres." And, echoed across participant feedback, another summer scholar observed that "The things I learned and ideas that were shared have given me a fresh and engaging way to approach teaching this text in my classroom. This institute also provided me with tons of resources to make these difficult, historical texts more accessible to all of my students." The collective encouraging feedback as well as the excitement of learning and collaborating among the core organizing team - Tisha Brooks, Elizabeth Cali, and Howard Rambsy II - has motivated us to facilitate another institute. The NEH institute program provides us with a special opportunity to bring together scholars and high school teachers from across the country to engage in invigorating, extended discussions about an extraordinary author and enduring American autobiography, which serves as a gateway to multiple other texts.

Thanks to comments from summer scholars, we also see valuable chances to improve what we offer. For one, participants requested more time with faculty presenters, suggesting our schedule "Start earlier in the day and end later to facilitate more discussion." As a result, our revised schedule will include follow-up, smaller group sessions exploring the content with each of the major presenters. Most notably, we will have fewer faculty presenters so that summer scholars have more time for extended discussion with select scholars. In addition, summer scholars noted that they would like more from the institute director Rambsy, observing that "the wealth of information he provided via his presentation" and "his approach to the work he does with his students would probably resonate with many teachers searching for a way to make the academic study of African American literature both relevant and engaging."

Consequently, Rambsy will lead the daily introduction and overview, direct sessions on poetry and host a lecture and exhibit on editions of Douglass's autobiography.

Summer scholars also requested that some of the readings be less dense and shorter. In response to this, we will include fewer required readings and of those required readings we will provide differentiated texts such as Barbara McCaskill's overwhelmingly popular *Criminal* podcast, "In Plain Sight." Additionally, we will provide checklists for extensive primary sources so that everyone has opportunities to contribute to the discussions. Summer scholars enjoyed and requested more close reading activities, which we have addressed in our revised schedule.

C. Intellectual rationale: We view Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* one of the most significant individual texts in American and African American literature that can offer even more rewards to readers when considered in the context of other works by Douglass, signal black authors and literary texts, and an array of visual compositions and cultural artifacts. Given our collective expertise and experiences covering these subjects in relation to Douglass, we are especially excited about sharing our knowledge and resources with high school teachers.

Despite many initiatives designed to support and celebrate diversity, secondary school teachers struggle to gain adequate access to conversations and discoveries based on new scholarship concerning major African American authors. Since the 1980s, literary scholars began producing specialized research projects, thus diminishing the likelihood that scholarship on black authors and literature would become widely available to secondary teachers and their students. To address those challenges, this Institute will offer secondary teachers constructive strategies for understanding the *Narrative*'s relationship to a network of useful complementary texts — including poems, fiction, essays, graphic novels, photographs, and digital resources. The proposed Institute will involve participants in extensive conversations exploring Douglass's creative practices and new scholarship on his work that can enrich their approaches to understanding and teaching Douglass's book and more African American literary texts.

The current moment, not long after the bicentennial of Douglass's birth, is especially imperative for providing teachers with substantial educational humanities experiences studying one of our most historically significant authors. More, in recent years, we have witnessed the resurgence of scholarly treatments on Douglass's work, most notably focusing on Douglass's historical significance. These include David A. Blight's *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), which won the Pulitzer Prize for history, Robert A. Levine's *The Lives of Frederick Douglass* (2016), and *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* (2015). Indeed, Douglass's life experiences stand as an important work of history, and is reflected in the persistence of discussions of slavery in popular culture including *Harriet* (2019), *The Birth of a Nation* (2016), *12 Years a Slave* 

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 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  Maryemma Graham notes that African American literary studies turned away from pedagogical interests as scholarship increasingly focused on specialized subject matter (65 – 67). See Graham's "Black is Gold: African American Literature, Critical Literacy, and Twenty-First-Century Pedagogies." ("Reading List" in appendices).

(2013); the television miniseries *Roots* (2016); the television show *Underground* (2016); *The 1619 Project* produced by *The New York Times*; and the widespread attention concerning Colson Whitehead's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Underground Railroad* (2016), Ta-Nehisi Coates's novel *The Water Dancer* (2019), and the New York Times's *The 1619 Project* (2019). Together, these popular and mainstream representations of slavery mark a critical moment for including Douglass scholarship and innovative pedagogy into what promises to be a unique alchemy. Our proposed Institute promises support and enrichment for educators to think about Frederick Douglass as historical subject and as literary artist whose creative practices require additional attention. Moreover, the presence of Douglass's *Narrative* in high school curriculum across the country? was reflected in our participants' repeated observations that the institute offered new methods for teaching the *Narrative*, where one participant observed "I have tinkered with my existing unit on Frederick Douglass during the course of the seminar," and many more referenced the "relevance" of the institute on Douglass to their classrooms.

"Frederick Douglass and Literary Studies" is designed to assist secondary teachers in expanding their knowledge and interpretative capabilities by connecting Douglass and the *Narrative* to a variety of American and African American literary works and scholarship. The Institute, guided by experienced and accomplished scholars of African American literature, offers an intensive learning experience for teachers. This institute raises awareness about how Douglass and the *Narrative* connect to a broad network of texts. Douglass, after all, is an autobiographer, a literary artist, a prominent historical figure, and a recurring subject of poetry and scholarly articles. The project is significant as it provides school teachers with immersive experiences reading and discussing Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* in multiple contexts and offers considerable guidance on how to coordinate innovative learning activities for students.

The proposed Institute facilitates **four main outcomes**, as Summer Scholars will: 1.) gain a clearer perspective on Frederick Douglass as a literary artist; 2.) recognize the relationship between Douglass, the *Narrative*, and multiple authors, texts, and genres; 3.) receive and produce lesson plans featuring Douglass and African American literature; and 4.) become aware of how digital tools can strengthen coverage of the *Narrative*.

Our proposed institute seeks to make a unique contribution to the annual line-up of NEH Summer Institutes. During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most of the NEH Institutes that concentrated on slavery and African Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century privileged the discipline of history, while the Institutes that privileged African American literature typically concentrated on 20<sup>th</sup>-century topics.<sup>2</sup> Relatively few NEH Summer Institutes have foregrounded 19<sup>th</sup>-century African American literary studies for school teachers—a void our project fills. Finally, our institute presents Douglass as canonical writer and thus merges ideas about history and literary art.

Our team is uniquely qualified to coordinate an institute on Frederick Douglass and literary studies at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). The core institute faculty – Tisha Brooks, Elizabeth Cali, and Howard Rambsy II – are specialists in African American literature and have collectively taught about fourteen African American literature courses each year since 2013 – more than most English departments in the country. Teaching so many African American-based courses and students has given us extensive expertise. Beyond the conventional classroom, we have coordinated more than 300 public programs, including mixed media exhibits, listening sessions, public thinking events, crowd-sourced annotation projects, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ann Schoenacher, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Maryemma Graham – three of the most recurring directors of African American-related NEH Summer Institutes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – have concentrated on 20<sup>th</sup>-century topics. Schoenacher directed recurring institutes on Zora Neale Hurston; Gates directed recurring institutes on Civil Rights; and Graham directed institutes on black poetry and Richard Wright. In 1991 and 1993, Graham directed institutes on African American literature in general, including one entitled "From Phillis Wheatley to Toni Morrison."

online reading groups.<sup>3</sup> The Institute also features a nineteenth-century book historian, Jessica DeSpain, who focuses on the transatlantic relations so central to Douglass's influence. We also have an early Americanist, Jill Anderson, who includes Douglass prominently in her own instruction with pre-service teachers. The Interdisciplinary Research and Informatics Scholarship Center (IRIS), SIUE's digital humanities center, has been an important partner in the activities of the African American literature program, which makes SIUE a unique site for considering African American literature in the context of the digital humanities. The involvement of established scholars Maryemma Graham, Barbara McCaskill, and Joycelyn Moody, who have published works on black literature, extends the range and collective knowledge of the institute. **D. Program of Study:** Regular sessions of the Institute will meet daily Monday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., including a 90-minute break for lunch. The schedule will include daily presentations by experts in American and African American literary studies, who will collectively orient Summer Scholars to reading practices that can support new understandings of Douglass's Narrative and teaching. Resident faculty experience and feedback from Institute participants emphasized the importance of opportunities for additional discussion, more focused secondary reading selections, and increased access to instruction session leaders. The proposed Institute program refines the focus of session topics, includes abbreviated secondary reading selections, offers additional flex time between sessions for intellectual conversation, and incorporates "Making Connections" sessions for reflexive discussion to close each day.

The Institute will culminate with a symposium on Douglass and literary studies, which will include a full day of interactive presentations by Summer Scholar participants. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For summaries of our programs, see "Public Programming." <a href="http://www.culturalfront.org/p/public-programming.html">http://www.culturalfront.org/p/public-programming.html</a>

symposium and Institute will end with a closing reception and lodging checkouts on Saturday, July 17. Participants will be required to attend all sessions.

Week Setup: Reading, Analyzing, and Engaging Frederick Douglass's Narrative

During the Institute, Summer Scholars will address the following questions: How can the recognition of Douglass as a literary artist enhance how students interpret the *Narrative*? To what ends does Douglass's second and extended autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), extend and depart from the *Narrative*? How can understanding new developments in African American literary studies, visual culture studies, and book history assist in building knowledge about Douglass and the *Narrative*? How can the use of digital resources strengthen pedagogical approaches to Douglass's autobiography?

Monday: Foundations for Studying Douglass

Professors of African American literature at SIUE, Tisha Brooks and Elizabeth Cali, who will serve as resident lecturers for the institute, will engage institute participants in exploring the historical, institutional, bodily and linguistic violence that shapes Douglass's *Narrative* as a foundational text in American and African American literary studies. This session draws on participants' and session leaders' experiences teaching the *Narrative* to explore the multifaceted challenges of teaching Douglass's work. Brooks and Cali will introduce foundational methods for tracing, analyzing, and unpacking the violence and struggle for narrative authority which shapes the *Narrative*. This session informs the subsequent coverage of Douglass, his writings, and African American literary studies. The lecture will assist educators in developing practices for engaging students with the complexities of Douglass as creative and imaginative writer, as historical figure and literary entrepreneur, and as autobiographer and curator of early African American literary expression.

University of Texas at San Antonio endowed professor Joycelyn Moody, a visiting lecturer for the institute, will give a presentation focusing on Douglass and the tradition of African American autobiography. The session will make participants aware of how Douglass's autobiographical narratives correspond to a range of slave narratives and modern autobiographies and memoirs. Moody's expertise as a leading scholar in African American autobiographical practices will offer participants unparalleled insight into the *Narrative*'s impact on the slave narrative genre, on the writings of Douglass's contemporaries, and on the literary arc of African American and American life writings.

SIUE literature professor Jessica DeSpain, a visiting lecturer for the institute and scholar of nineteenth-century literature and digital humanities, will teach a breakout session that introduces participants to digital resources that can illuminate Douglass's life and writings. The session will empower participants to utilize digital tools when they cover Douglass's *Narrative* with students. Concurrently, Jill Anderson, a visiting lecturer, will lead a close reading workshop on aspects of Douglass's *Narrative*. As an English professor and program director for secondary English Education, she has extensive experience preparing teachers on multiple approaches to introducing Douglass into high school curriculums. The opening day presentations by Anderson, Brooks, Cali, DeSpain, and Moody will assist Summer Scholars as they build a foundation for developing perspectives on "Douglass Studies" and African American literary studies in general. *Tuesday: African American, African American Literary Studies, and Autobiography* 

University of Kansas distinguished professor Maryemma Graham, a visiting lecturer for the institute, will give a presentation focusing on the histories of African American literary studies, giving special attention to Douglass as a canonical figure and frequent subject of scholars. Given her expertise in the field, Graham's presentation will offer participants important

opportunities to consider how Douglass fits within multiple literary and historical contexts. Cali will follow with a presentation about Douglass and literary revision, paying close attention to how he revised his autobiographies and the scholarly conversation regarding those revisions.

Building on Cali's discussion of literary revision, Brooks will lead breakout sessions focusing on Douglass and representations of black women. To accommodate participants' desire for closer attention to the text, we will engage in a comparative reading of Douglass's 1845 narrative and his 1855 revision of Aunt Hester, locating that revision within a broader conversation about 19<sup>th</sup>-century visual culture. In concurrent breakout sessions, Graham will lead follow-up discussions with participants, addressing questions and offering more information about African American literary studies. Rambsy will mount an exhibit at SIUE's Lovejoy Library concentrating on more than twenty editions of the *Narrative*. The exhibit will introduce Summer Scholars to Douglass's autobiography in the context of Book History, highlighting how publishers, editors, and book designers have employed different bibliographic codes to present *The Narrative* to audiences across the last five decades.

Wednesday: Douglass, Slavery, and Escape Artists

University of Georgia literature professor Barbara McCaskill, a visiting lecturer for the institute, will identify and discuss the resourcefulness of enslaved people who sought to flee enslavement. McCaskill has produced significant scholarship on the daring escape of William and Ellen Craft, as well as various other ex-slaves. McCaskill's presentation will give Summer Scholars opportunities to consider multiple approaches that enslaved people took to acquire their freedom. The presentation will shed light on Douglass's identity as one of many escape artists.

In one set of breakout sessions, Cali will involve participants in examining Douglass's textual and photographic practices with revision as an endeavor linking individual and

community rebellion. Together we will explore and discuss Douglass's textual and visual work as a radical liberatory enterprise. In concurrent breakout sessions, McCaskill will lead follow-up discussions with participants, extending key points from her previous lecture and responding to specific questions and concerns from participants.

Thursday: Douglass and Contemporary African American Literature

Rambsy will give a presentation on Douglass and African American poetry, assisting Summer Scholars in expanding their capabilities incorporating the study of poetry into their curriculums on Douglass and slave narratives in general. Rambsy's presentation will provide institute participants with an understanding of how poets, such as Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robert Hayden, Elizabeth Alexander, Natasha Trethewey, and Kevin Young, have addressed Douglass and other fugitive slaves in their works.

In breakout sessions, Brooks will discuss the evolving self-representation of Douglass through pictures. Drawing from the critical texts *Picturing Frederick Douglass* and *Pictures and Progress*, Brooks will highlight Douglass' commitment to photography as a medium for social change, as well as his persistent deployment of photography as a tool of self-representation throughout his life. In the other breakouts, Rambsy will discuss books by various contemporary writers that correspond to Douglass's *Narrative*. The sessions make summer scholars aware of several important African American literary works and multiple possibilities for linking historical and contemporary books. We will gather in the evening for a poetry reading.

Friday: Educator Exchange Symposium

The closing Institute symposium will provide opportunities for participants to present and exchange ideas and applications that they covered during the Institute in a conference-style format and thus crystallize some of what they have learned. The goal of the symposium is for

participants to create a plan for applying the knowledge they have gained throughout the week to their own classrooms and curriculums. While some presentations went well in our 2019 symposium, others veered off course. In response to this, we will add greater structure to the symposium by providing written guidelines and focusing questions/prompts for participants to keep the presentations on target.

**E. Project Faculty and Staff:** This Institute is directed by Dr. Howard Rambsy II, Professor of literature at SIUE in collaboration with program co-leaders Drs. Tisha Brooks and Elizabeth Cali, Associate and Assistant Professors of literature at SIUE. The Institute features prominent visiting faculty specialists in African American literature, Drs. Maryemma Graham, Barbara McCaskill, and Joycelyn Moody, and two SIUE resident faculty specialists in American literature and Digital Humanities, Drs. Jill Anderson and Jessica DeSpain.

Howard Rambsy II is the author of *The Black Arts Enterprise* (2011), a study on African American poetry and print culture, and *Bad Men: Creative Touchstones of Black Writers* (2020). Douglass's *Narrative* has been a mainstay in Rambsy's literature courses since 2003. Rambsy has several experiences working with NEH Institutes. In 2019, he directed the summer institute, "Fredrick Douglass and Literary Crossroads." In 2010, he served as a resident faculty member at the NEH Institute "Making the (Richard) Wright Connection" at the University of Kansas for high school teachers; in 2012, he served as a presenter at the NEH Institute "Contemporary African American Literature" for college professors at Pennsylvania State University. In 2013, he served as resident faculty at the NEH Institute "Don't Deny My Voice: Reading and Teaching African American Poetry" and again at the NEH Institute "Black Poetry after the Black Arts Movement" in July 2015, both at the University of Kansas.

Tisha Brooks will serve as a resident faculty member. Brooks is an Associate Professor of English at SIUE. With a focus on African American Literature, Women's Studies, and Religion, Brooks's scholarship and teaching centers on 19<sup>th</sup>-century African American autobiography. Douglass' autobiographies are a foundational part of Brooks's courses, as students have the opportunity to work extensively with mixed media resources related to Douglass's writing and speaking, engage with 19<sup>th</sup>-century visual culture, and create their own mixed media projects. Brooks served as a resident faculty member for "Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads" in 2019 and is excited to work again with participants to develop new methods for engaging students in 19<sup>th</sup>-century African American literature.

Elizabeth Cali will serve as a resident faculty member. Cali has given scholarly presentations on Douglass's role as a periodical editor and on19th-century African American print culture and literature at national and regional conferences. Cali's scholarship examines links between 19th-century African American print culture and literary practices and African American practices of resistance, rebellion, and revolution. Douglass's editorial practices and his ethics of revision in his written and visual work play a significant role in Cali's courses as well and constitute the heart of her contributions to this institute. Cali served as a resident faculty member for "Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads" in 2019.

If necessary, Brooks and Cali will take over for the director duties.

## **Visiting Faculty**

Jessica DeSpain, Associate Professor of English at SIUE, co-directs the IRIS Center.

She is the author of *Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book*(Routledge, 2014), and the lead editor of *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition*. She has published several articles on the intersections of Book History and digital humanities pedagogy

and looks forward collaborating with Summer Scholars on digital humanities approaches in secondary education spaces DeSpain served as a visiting faculty member for "Frederick Douglass and Literary Crossroads."

**Jill Kirsten Anderson**, Associate Professor of English at SIUE, directs SIUE's program in secondary English Education and supervises pre-service teachers. She specializes in American novels from the early republic to the antebellum period, and brings her practical experience in guiding pre-service teachers in close readings of foundational American texts, including Douglass's narrative, as she did for the 2019 institute.

Maryemma Graham, Distinguished Professor of English, University of Kansas, founded the Project on the History of Black Writing, an archive and programming body that she has directed for over twenty-five years. She has directed several NEH institutes and projects and has extensive experience introducing school teachers to concepts pertaining to African American literary studies.

**Barbara McCaskill** is a professor of African American and American literature at the University of Georgia, where she is also the co-director of the Civil Rights Digital Library Initiative. She is the author of *Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery: William and Ellen Craft in Cultural Memory* (2015), and *Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem: African American Literature and Culture, 1877-1919* (2006).

Joycelyn Moody, Sue E. Denman Distinguished Chair in American Literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio, was really well-received by summer scholars in 2019. She is a specialist in black autobiography and will provide invaluable guidance and ideas to participants.

F. Institutional resources: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is an ideal site for the Institute for five main reasons. First, the African American literature program in the English

department at SIUE has demonstrated a deep commitment to the field as well as to students by consistently offering a large number of African American literature courses over time. 4 Second, Howard Rambsy, who has coordinated dozens of public humanities activities, previously directed an NEH Summer Institute and served as a resident faculty member at four NEH Summer Institutes, has rich and varied organizational expertise to successfully direct the proposed Institute. Third, the Institute resident faculty members, Tisha Brooks and Elizabeth Cali, have extensive experience teaching nineteenth-century African American literature, particularly slave narratives such as Douglass's *Narrative*, and their work is central to putting Douglass within a broader network of nineteenth-century African American writers. Fourth, the African American Literature Program's collaboration with IRIS faculty Jessica DeSpain will give teachers an unprecedented opportunity to see Douglass's text anew via the application of digital tools. Fifth, participants will have access to Maryemma Graham and Barbara McCaskill, two noted scholars in the fields of American and African American literary studies.

The SIUE campus is qualified to serve as the site for an NEH summer Institute on African American literature and digital resources. The St. Louis, MO, airport, which services flights from major hubs, is only 30 minutes from the Edwardsville campus. The city is close enough for participants to plan evening trips. Daily Institute meetings, exhibits, and receptions will be held in meeting rooms in Lovejoy Library.

In collaboration with IRIS, an Institute website will be established months before the start of the program that will provide information about the Institute, a portal to the application form, and resources concerning African American literature.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> To view a chronological list of the courses offered, see Howard Rambsy II's "A List of African American Literature Courses at SIUE, Fall 2003- Fall 2016." <a href="http://www.culturalfront.org/2017/01/a-list-of-african-american-literature.html">http://www.culturalfront.org/2017/01/a-list-of-african-american-literature.html</a> (January 22, 2017).

Summer Scholars interested in earning graduate credit (English) will receive an SIUE graduate tuition waiver for up to three units of graduate course credit. University fees will still apply. To receive course credit, an additional series of three lesson plans must be submitted to the project director, following the conclusion of the Institute. Registration for the tuition waiver will be processed on campus during the Institute.

G. Participation outreach and communication: The audience for this institute will be any secondary school teacher who teaches African American or American literature, history, or social studies. The audience will be those interested in becoming better informed about trends in literary studies, pedagogical resources, and cultural history. Brooks, Cali, DeSpain, and Rambsy will serve as the selection committee. The committee will consider factors such as types of schools, geographic location, teaching interests, and technological experience in order to ensure a diverse enrollment. Selection will be based on participants' commitment to teaching and personal statements.

Rambsy, who led the marketing and outreach efforts for the initial institute, will do so again. The main plan will be to circulate information to more than five hundred principals with attention to identifying a diverse group of participants. In addition, we will work with the twenty-five summer scholars from the last institute who informed us that they would welcome opportunities to pass the word along to colleagues in their various networks. We will design postcards about the institute to circulate at the annual National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conference, as we did with our first institute.

**H. Dissemination:** We are excited about sharing our core Douglass institute concepts such as literary revision, book history, visual culture, language and violence, as well as black autobiography and rebellion with a broad, public audience. We will disseminate information in

two main ways. For one, we will launch a website on Douglass and the literary crossroads he occupies, and the site will contain several educational resources for teachers, including primary source locations, lesson plans, and archival resources. In addition, Rambsy will lead an extended blog series that highlights approaches to teaching Douglass and includes interviews with a range of teachers who covered Douglass or topics concerning diversity.

The site will provide educators with an opportunity to utilize a visually stimulating and interactive educational platform that showcases information and artifacts about the histories of slave narratives, African American autobiographies, fiction, and volumes of poetry. Visitors to the site will be able to select authors, decades, genres, and other categories in order to view a wide variety of book covers. Visitors can also select to read several different articles by Brooks, Cali, and Rambsy. Thus, the site will provide materials for the casual browsing visitors, as well as visitors interested in more in-depth treatments.

Blogging has proven to be an effective way of circulating information about African American literary studies. Since 2008, Rambsy has produced blog entries about black literary art and history on his site, Cultural Front (<a href="http://www.culturalfront.org/">http://www.culturalfront.org/</a>). The publication of blog entries about how teachers are covering Douglass will be invaluable to teachers, who are often in search for resources on diverse texts. The guest entries by Brooks and Cali on the challenges of teaching Douglass's narrative, his autobiographical legacy, and textual and photographic revision extend principles addressed in the institute and now repurposed for multiple audiences.

Brooks, Cali, and Rambsy will convene a small advisory group of teachers, comprised of participants from the 2019 and 2021 summer institutes. They will assist us in reaching out to educators for the audience that we plan to cultivate for this phase of the project. In order to develop a core of followers for the site and blog entries, we plan to develop a list of

approximately one hundred subscribers. We will send them email notices twice per month during the year, alerting them to updates on the project website and the publication of new entries. The release of a regular, weekly posting schedule will assist us in nurturing an audience. To seek out and identify new audiences and communities, we will follow popular educational and literary hashtags such as #edchat, #diversity, #slavery, #AfAmLit, and #BookHistory, to name a few.

Rambsy and DeSpain will serve as the main website designers. DeSpain, co-founder/co-director of the IRIS Center at SIUE, has extensive experience producing various digital humanities projects. Rambsy has coordinated several web-based projects and his extensive experience curating analog and virtual exhibits related to African American book history.

Our goal is to build a site that has more than two dozen lesson plans and other resources on Douglass and African American literature for educators. We will measure our project on how close to our goal of one hundred subscribers that we reach. We will also measure the quality of our site and entries based on feedback that we solicit from our audiences. A major imperative of the institute is bringing high school teachers together with scholars, and the blog entries will extend that practice by having scholar address common, interrelated topics. Therefore, we will seek responses from our advisory committee and our general audience about the relevance of the materials they encounter through our site and blog entries. Since our blog entries will include interviews from teachers – participants from the 2019 and 2021 institutes – we will view our ability to incorporate a range of educator voices/insights into the writings as a mark of the success of the project.

#### **Institute Schedule**

<u>Readings:</u> In preparation for the week, participants will read Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and select chapters from Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*. The required readings will be listed in the Institute syllabus, which will be distributed to Summer Scholars at least a month prior to arrival of the Summer Scholars.

Guiding questions: During the Institute, Summer Scholars will address the following questions: How can literary and mixed media approaches to reading Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* enhance student engagement with his work? To what ends does Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom* enrich student understanding of the *Narrative*, the challenges Douglass faced as an autobiographer, and his commitment to literary revision? How can understanding visual culture studies, Book History, and public humanities assist in building knowledge about Douglass and his contributions to African American literary art and to larger conversations about progress and freedom? How can the use of various digital resources and tools strengthen teacher and student capabilities in approaching Douglass's autobiography?

Institute Director: Howard Rambsy II Resident faculty: Tisha Brooks and

Elizabeth Cali

Visiting Faculty: Jessica DeSpain, Jill Anderson, Barbara McCaskill, Maryemma Graham, and

Joycelyn Moody

**Sunday (July 11)** Residence Check in 4:00pm–6:00pm Opening Reception

#### Monday (July 12) Foundations for Studying Douglass

9:30 – 10:00 am: Institute overview – Professor Howard Rambsy II

10:00 – 11:45 am: Challenges of Teaching Douglass: Language, Violence, and the Slave

Narrative – Profs Tisha Brooks and Elizabeth Cali

This interactive session lays the groundwork for subsequent discussions of Douglass, his writings, and African American literary studies. Beginning with an open discussion of participants' and session leaders' experiences teaching the *Narrative*, participants will explore the multifaceted challenges of teaching Douglass's work. During the first half of the session, participants will explore the historical, institutional, bodily and linguistic violence that shapes Douglass's *Narrative*, while the latter portion will assist educators in developing practices for engaging students with the complexities of Douglass as creative and imaginative writer, autobiographer and curator of early African American literary expression.

Required Reading: James Olney's "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," 46-52; William Andrews's *To Tell A Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography*, 1760-1865, 1-7, 16-19 and 97-111.

11:45 am –1:10 pm: *Lunch* 

1:15 - 2:30 pm: Professor Joycelyn The Traditions and Legacies of African American Autobiography –

Moody

This presentation provides an overview of autobiographies and memoirs produced by African Americans, from slave narratives to contemporary works. The session will assist Summer Scholars in understanding how Douglass's narratives fit within a larger system of autobiographies and life writing.

Required readings: Joycelyn Moody's "Foreword," A Mysterious Life and Calling: From Slavery to Ministry in South Carolina, vii- xii; Frances Smith Foster's "In Respect to Females..." (xxix - xli); Foster's "Slave Narratives and their Cultural Matrix," 3-23.

(2:30-2:45)2:45 - 3:45 pm:

Group A: Frederick Douglass & Digital Resources – Prof. Jessica DeSpain

This DH workshop will introduce participants to Douglass's importance within the networks of transatlantic abolitionism and the literary marketplace.

Interactive Session: Using distant reading tools like Voyant, teachers will learn how to put Douglass's slave narrative side-by-side with a host of other slave narratives, newspaper articles, and abolitionist novels to examine his word usage, discover common themes, and consider how his writing compares to the corpus of writing on slavery during the period.

Required readings: Franco Moretti's Distant Reading, 211-241, Alasdair Pettinger's "The Black Atlantic," 355-372.

2:45 - 3:45 pm:

Group B: Douglass close reading exercise – Jill Anderson

This session will cover Frederick Douglass and Common Core State Standards Initiatives. As a professor of English and program director for secondary English Education, she has extensive experience preparing teachers on multiple approaches to introducing Douglass into high school curricula. This session will offer close reading exercises with Douglass's Narrative and highlight various approaches for teaching Douglass in variety of secondary school contexts.

(3:45-4:00)

4:00 - 5:00 pm: Group C: Frederick Douglass & Digital Resources – Prof. Jessica DeSpain

4:00 - 5:00 pm: Group D: Douglass close reading exercise – Jill Anderson

5:10 - 5:30 pm: **Making Connections**  Tuesday (July 13)

Douglass, African American literary studies, and Autobiography

9:30 – 10:00 am: 10:00 – 11:45 am: Introduction and Overview for the day – Prof. Rambsy

The Sagas of African American Literary Studies – Professor Maryemma

Graham

This session will address Frederick Douglass's work as an anchor in African American literary studies, highlighting the ways that study of Douglass's work enables discussion and pedagogical innovation with major African American authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Toni Morrison. Graham will also offer a contrast to this connectivity by demonstrating how increasingly specialized research in literary studies can limit the presentation of major African American authors.

Required readings: Maryemma Graham's "Black is Gold: African American Literature,

Critical Literacy, and Twenty-First-Century Pedagogies," 55-90. Maryemma Graham and Jerry W. Ward, Jr.'s "Introduction." The Cambridge History of African American Literature, 1-17.

11:45 am –1:10 pm:

Lunch 1:15 – 2:15 pm:

Frederick Douglass and Literary Revision – Professor Cali

Cali will introduce frameworks for viewing Douglass as a significant literary artist and formative contributor to practices of revision across the slave narrative genre. Summer Scholars will work in small groups, engaging in hands-on annotation workshops which will guide educators in developing annotation techniques for engaging students in examining how Douglass and many more African American authors utilize literary revision practices as methods for self-authorization and resistance to white abolitionist control.

Required readings: James Olney's "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," 46-52; John Sekora's "Mr. Editor, If You Please': Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, and the End of the Abolitionist Imprint," 608-626.

(2:15-2:30)

2:30 - 3:30 pm:

**Brooks** 

Group A: Douglass and Representations of Black Women – Professor

This breakout session will build on earlier conversations about language and violence in Douglass's Narrative focusing more explicitly on representations of black women. The session will also extend participants' understanding of Douglass's commitment to literary and autobiographical revision, as they engage in a comparative reading of Douglass's 1845 Narrative and his 1855 revision of Aunt Hester, a key black female figure in his narratives. Brooks will work with participants to locate that revision within a broader conversation about 19<sup>th</sup>-century visual culture and representations of black women.

Required readings: Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Chapter V; Christina Sharpe's Introduction, "Making Monstrous Intimacies: Surviving Slavery, Bearing Freedom," 1-13.

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Group B: Follow-up with Professor Graham

(3:30-3:45)

3:45 – 4:45 pm: Group C: Douglass and Representations of Black Women – Professor

**Brooks** 

3:45 – 4:45 pm: Group D: Follow-up with Professor Graham

(4:45-5:00)

5:00 - 5:30 pm: Making Connections

Evening Event: Frederick Douglass Book History Exhibit – Professor Rambsy

Curated by Professor Howard Rambsy, this exhibit will showcase multiple editions of

Douglass's *Narrative*, highlighting how publishers have re-presented Douglass and *The Narrative* over the last two decades. The exhibit will acquaint Summer Scholars with a firm sense of the possibilities of using book history for pedagogical purposes.

#### Wednesday (July 14) Douglass, Slavery, and Escape Artists

9:30 – 10:00 am: Introduction and Overview for the day – Professors Rambsy 10:00 – 11:45 am: Douglass and other Escape Artists – Professor Barbara McCaskill

This presentation offers considerations of the various and sometimes ingenious ways that enslaved people endeavored to escape from bondage. Summer Scholars will gain an awareness of how Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Henry Box Brown, William and Ellen Craft, and others eluded capture and secured freedom.

Required readings: Selections from McCaskill's Love, Liberation, and Escaping Slavery: William and Ellen Craft in Cultural Memory (2015); "In Plain Sight" (podcast episode of Criminal).

11:45 am –1:10 pm: *Lunch* 

1:15 – 2:15 pm: Group A: Douglass, Community, and Open Rebellion – Prof. Cali

This breakout session will extend previous discussions on Douglass's practices of literary revision and his life-long project of articulating black liberation. Bringing together Douglass's revision of one of the most frequently taught scenes from the *Narrative* and Douglass's archive of portraiture, this session offers a critical frame for analyzing Douglass's textual and visual practices as agitating for a community project of

rebellion. This session will share pedagogical tools to enrich classroom approaches to reading Douglass's work as an ongoing labor of community building and rebellion.

Required Readings: Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Chapter XVII; Excerpts from Eric Sundquist's *To Wake the Nations* and Lora Romero's "Black Nationalist Housekeeping."

1:15 – 2:15 pm: Group B: Follow-up with Professor McCaskill

(2:15-2:30)

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Group C: Douglass, Community, Open Rebellion – Prof. Cali

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Group D: Follow-up with Professor McCaskill

(3:30-3:45)

3:45 – 5:00 pm: Making Connections and Discussion of institute symposium

### Thursday (July 15) Douglass, Poetry, and Photography

9:30 – 10:00 am: Introduction and Overview for the day – Prof. Brooks 10:00 – 11:45 am: Douglass and African American Poetry – Professor Rambsy

This presentation will highlight the abundance of poems concentrating on Frederick Douglass and other enslaved figures, highlighting how a range of poets, including Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Robert Hayden, Elizabeth Alexander, Evie Shockley, Vievee Francis, and others have written about venerable fugitive slaves in their poetic compositions. The presentation will provide Summer Scholars with opportunities to consider ways of incorporating more poetry into their coverage of Douglass's *Narrative*.

12:00 pm-1:10pm: *Lunch* 

1:15 – 2:15 pm: Group A: Picturing Frederick Douglass – Prof. Brooks

While previous sessions address Douglass' self-representation in print, this session will extend participants' understanding of Douglass' evolving self-representation through pictures. Drawing from the critical texts *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* and *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*. An interactive workshop, this session highlights the study of Douglass's photographs as visual texts. Summer Scholars will discuss and explore Douglass' commitment to photography as a medium for social change—a recurring theme in his writing and speaking, as well as his persistent deployment of photography as a powerful tool of self-representation throughout his life.

Required readings: Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s Epilogue and other selections from *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century's Most Photographed American* (2015)

1:15 – 2:15 pm: Group B: Douglass and contemporary African American books – Prof. Rambsy

This presentation provides an overview of select, prominent writings by modern and contemporary African American writers. Rambsy will explain how Douglass's work corresponds to a range of novelists, including Toni Morrison, Octavia Butler, Colson Whitehead, and others. Summer Scholars will develop an understanding of contemporary novelists extend and rework themes presented in the *Narrative* and consider ideas for introducing contemporary novelists into classroom discussions about Douglass.

Required reading: Howard Rambsy II, "Novels by black writers, 2000 – 2019."

(2:15-2:30)

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Group C: Picturing Frederick Douglass – Prof. Brooks

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Group D: Douglass and contemporary African American books – Prof.

Rambsy (3:30-3:45)

3:45 – 4:15 pm: Making Connections

4:15-5:15 pm: Preparations for institute symposium

Evening Event: Poetry Reading

Friday (July 16) Institute symposium on Teaching African American literature

10:00 – 11:00 am: Session #1
11:10 – 12:00 pm: Session #2
12:00 – 1:30 pm: Lunch
1:30 – 2:45 pm: Session #3
3:00 – 4:00 pm: Session #4

Saturday (July 17) Residence check out

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### **Reading Lists**

### **Primary**

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- Hayden, Robert. "Frederick Douglass." *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*.

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