

# CITY LIGHTS BOOKSTORE

## AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

### Northumbria University

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**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE

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#### WELCOME TO AMERICAN STUDIES AT NORTHUMBRIA

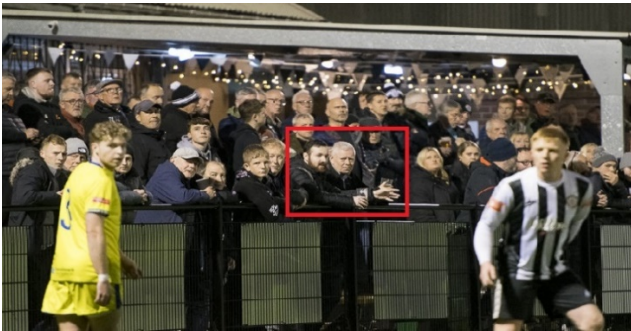
So, Donald Trump is US President. Again. Consequently, as an article by Sarah Trott in the *Conversation* explains, there has never been a moment when American Studies has been more relevant to anyone hoping to understand the workings, or otherwise, of the modern world. “By immersing ourselves in the study of the United States and its global position, we gain a clearer understanding of the society that produces such globally significant culture, literature, film and politics, and recognise the legacies it creates,” Trott writes. American Studies “is a valuable conduit for understanding the world around us.” Too right! And, we humbly suggest, there’s no better place in the UK to study the US than at Northumbria University.



Spreading the word. Brian Ward represents Northumbria at a meeting of the Swiss Association for North American Studies.

Don't take my word for it. Inside this Newsletter, you can read testimonials from students who have passed through, or who are currently engaged in, American Studies at undergraduate and graduate levels. And you'll find evidence of the extraordinary range of activities undertaken by Americanists inside and outside the University. Among the highlights are fine new books by Joe Street - a pathbreaking history of the Black Panther Party; by Rebecca Wright - on how ideas about energy shaped US history, politics, and culture in the early Twentieth Century; and by Brycchan Carey - explaining the links among slavery, abolitionism and environmental writings in the long Eighteenth-Century.

Former Northumbria PhD students Jack Hodgson and Megan Hunt also published their first books, while Lewis Kimberley completed his doctoral studies and joined the team of the Historical Association's journal *History*, which is now based at Northumbria.



Brian Ward and Jack Hodgson take in beers and champagne football at Heaton Stannington after Jack's research talk to the Institute of Humanities. Photo courtesy of Joe Street.

We've also hosted several symposia (many of them tied to the 2024 US elections, when Patrick Andelic was a regular press commentator) and welcomed some tremendous experts on US topics to campus, whether virtually or in person. Guests included Adam Smith, Director of the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University, Jack Hodgson, Nevada Assemblywoman Erica P. Roth, and Deputy Cultural Attaché Jennifer Schueler from the US Embassy in London. We only attract this calibre of visitor because of

the strength and international reputation the American Studies programme has built up over the past decade.

Staff have also travelled far and wide, sharing their research and doing more of it. David Gleeson and Damian Shiels marched their Civil War Bluejackets Project, Sherman-like, across the US South; Elsa Devienne was all over the media in the US and Europe as *Sand Rush*, her book on California beaches, made a major splash; Brycchan Carey delivered a prestigious keynote lecture in Tulsa, Oklahoma; I did the same in Switzerland - and in Sunderland. As this newsletter goes to print, Patrick Andelic is preparing to host a major Schools Conference on behalf of the British Association for American Studies.



Evil, power-hungry monster bent on intergalactic domination, pictured here with a Dalek...

And so it goes. Enjoy news from the cutting edge of American Studies!

With very best wishes,

Brian Ward  
Professor in American Studies  
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## NEWS & EVENTS

### American Studies Research Group Hosts Prof. Adam Smith

On 31 January 2024, the American Studies Research Group hosted Prof. Adam Smith, Director of the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University, as part of the Institute of Humanities Seminar Series. Prof. Smith's talk was entitled "Historians, Nationalism, and the Things That Didn't Happen: Why Gettysburg Has Mattered." This will form the basis of the new book he is currently completing for Oxford University Press on the battle of Gettysburg in history and memory which, among other things, situates the meanings of that great battle in a transnational context. In the great tradition of North-East hospitality, Prof. Smith was then taken out for a (frigid!) night on the town.



Paddy Andelic, David Gleeson and Brian Ward (from left to right) show Adam Smith around Newcastle on the occasion of his talk at the Institute of the Humanities

### American Studies & History Movie Night

Every year, the American Studies and History staff host a movie night during the first week of teaching to welcome students back to campus. The event has quickly become a beloved Humanities tradition at Northumbria. After *Dear White People* in 2022 and *Hamilton* in 2023, students were treated to the multi-Oscar-winning Hollywood classic, *Cabaret* (1972) for the 2024 edition of the event held on 1 October.



Humanities staff and students enjoy a night of popcorn and good cinema in the Squires building



Laura O'Brien introduces *Cabaret* (1972) to the students

Directed by Bob Fosse, adapted from a Broadway musical based on the work of Christopher Isherwood, and starring Liza Minnelli, *Cabaret* was expertly introduced by Laura O'Brien. A specialist in French history, Laura is also a key member of the team-taught module "History/Film: Using Popular Film as Historical Evidence." Her presentation showed how the film was the product of a complex adaptation and alteration process as a movie adapted from a 1966 musical itself adapted from a 1951 play. While the film depicts 1930s Berlin and the rise of Nazism, it is very much a product of Hollywood and, as such, represented a perfect entry into the transnational world of American Studies. This was the first Humanities social event of the new academic year and, as usual, offered a great opportunity to mingle with other students and staff in a relaxed atmosphere.

## US Presidential Elections Roundtables

With the presidential election campaign in full swing, the American Studies Research Group joined forces with the Politics staff at Northumbria to organise a roundtable on 30th October 2024 featuring an impressive line-up of North-East-based experts on American politics, including our very own Patrick Andelic as well as Dr Skyler Hawkins (Newcastle University) and Dr Robert Nyenhuis (Northumbria). Erica Roth, a civil rights attorney running for office in Nevada (Assembly district 24) on a democratic platform including reproductive freedom for all (she won!), joined the panel via Microsoft Teams. The panel was organised and chaired by Dr Felix Bender (Northumbria).



Nevada State Assemblymember (District 24) Erica P. Roth contributed to the US election roundtable held on 30th October 2024 at Northumbria University.

The event was so popular with students that a second instalment was organised to analyse the results of the presidential election and Donald J. Trump's victory. Entitled "What Happened (Again)?: On the Risks of a Second Trump Presidency," the event took place on 11 December 2024 and featured two Northumbria Americanists. In addition to Patrick Andelic, whose services are in high demand these days as a specialist on US party politics, Elsa Devienne talked about the grave threat that a second Trump presidency represents for global climate action, climate disaster preparedness and environmental justice in the US. Chaired again by Felix Bender, the panel also included Dr. Olivier Burtin (Université de Picardie-Jules Verne), a

specialist of the history of the US Far-Right, and Dr Tessa Ditonto (Durham), who studies the perceptions of female political candidates and the role of stereotypes and prejudice in voter decision-making. At a time of heightened ideological polarisation and increased political violence in the US, the American Studies Research Group is committed to offer Northumbria students opportunities to debate and analyse current American affairs. More collaborations with Politics are in the works.



From left to right: Felix Bender, Tessa Ditonto, Patrick Andelic and Elsa Devienne at the "What Happened (Again)?" roundtable. In the background is Olivier Burtin who joined the panel via Teams.

## Institute of Humanities American Studies Speakers, 2024-25

All events are open to the public and held in Lipman 121 and online. Please contact Richard O'Brien for the Teams link at [r.obrien@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:r.obrien@northumbria.ac.uk)

25 September 2024, 2pm. **Danielle Maggio** (Pittsburgh University): "The Erotic Intellectualism of Betty Davis" (chaired by Joe Street)

26 February 2025, 2pm. **Sherryl Vint** (UC Riverside), A work-in-progress talk on gender in *The Terminator* (chaired by Joe Street)

14 May, 4pm. **Jenna Gibbs** (Florida International University), "The African Grove Theater, Then and Now: Theatre as Activism" (chaired by Brycchan Carey)



## American Studies and History at Northumbria leave X/Twitter

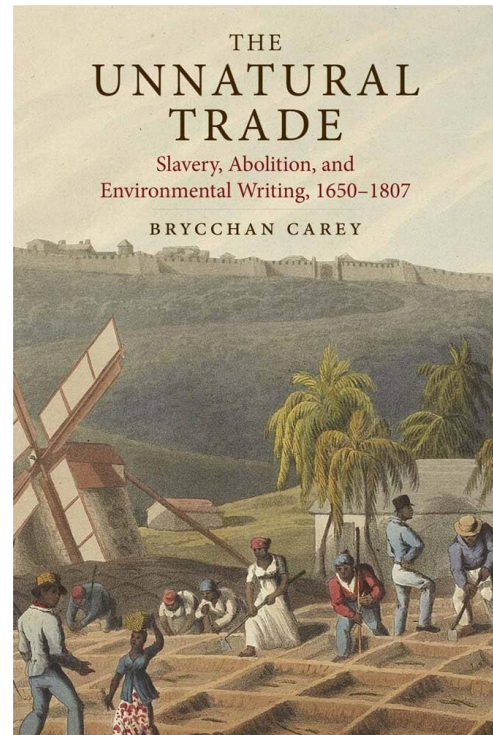
The American Studies Research Group and the History subject at Northumbria used to promote their activities on the social media platform X/Twitter. Like many others in academia, we have become increasingly concerned with the platform's governance and its use as a tool to spread white supremacist views and disinformation. Our X/Twitter account remains open for the time being (to avoid others misusing the name), but all activity on the profile will cease from 2025 onwards. We have recently opened an account on the Bluesky platform where many university accounts and academics have migrated. We encourage you to give us a follow:

<https://bsky.app/profile/nuamstudies.bsky.social>

## AMERICAN STUDIES STAFF NEWS

**Brycchan Carey's** new book, *The Unnatural Trade: Slavery, Abolition, and Environmental Writing, 1650–1807*, was published on 22 October 2024 by Yale University Press.

The book asks: How did late eighteenth-century British abolitionists come to view the slave trade and British colonial slavery as unnatural, a “dread perversion” of nature? Focusing on slavery in the Americas, and the Caribbean in particular, alongside travelers' accounts of West Africa, Brycchan Carey shows that before the mid-eighteenth century, natural histories were a primary source of information about slavery for British and colonial readers. Brycchan presented the book at the University of Oklahoma (April 2024), Queen's University Belfast (May 2024), and the University of Galway Humanities seminar (May 2024).



Brycchan Carey's *The Unnatural Trade: Slavery, Abolition, and Environmental Writing, 1650–1807* (Yale UP, 2024)

**Brycchan Carey** delivered the keynote “Writing the Book of Nature: The Anglican Naturalist in the Literary Canon” at “Voices Lost and Found: The Conference of the English Graduate Students' Association,” University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA (April 2024).

**Brycchan Carey** gave a paper on “Dolphins, Flying Fish, and Sea Hawks: Protoecological Accounts of Atlantic Habitats in British Colonial Writing” at the 10th Biennial Conference of The European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and Environment, University of Perpignan, France (June 2024). He also presented “Seabirds and Cetaceans Fish: Shipboard Natural History on the Atlantic Crossing” at the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference, St. Hugh's College, Oxford (January 2024) and “Sea Hawks, Dolphins, and Flying Fish: Protoecological accounts of ‘merciless enemies’” at the 54th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Toronto, Canada (March 2024).

**Elsa Devienne** had a busy spring and summer publicising her book, *Sand Rush: The Revival of the Beach in Twentieth Century Los Angeles* (Oxford UP, 2024). She gave book talks at the Book Club of California (online), the Santa Monica History Museum, the Caen War Memorial in France, Redlands University, and the University of Stavanger in Norway (online). In May 2024, she gave the annual Clark Davis Memorial Lecture at the Huntington Library.

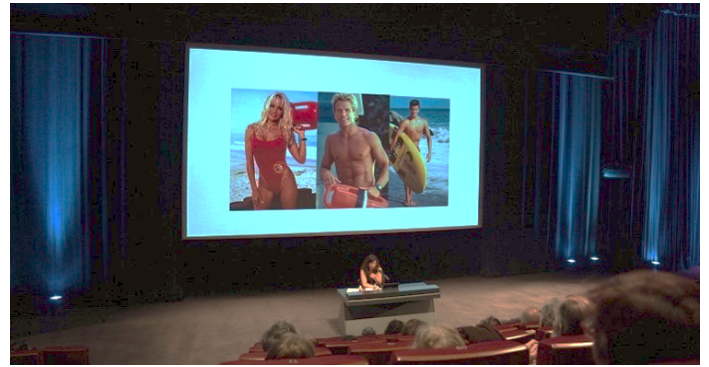


Elsa delivers the Clark Davis Memorial Lecture at the Huntington Library

With several interviews on US local and national radios, podcasts, and op-eds for various magazines and blogs, it's safe to say that her beach book has made a splash. The *Los Angeles Times* even called it a “masterful history”! If *Sand Rush* is not enough to satisfy your beach read cravings, make sure to read Elsa's column in the *Wall Street Journal* on her “[Five Best Books on the Seaside.](#)” You can also enjoy a [Sand Rush playlist](#) to go along with your reading.

Finally, Elsa brought the California lifestyle to the Parisian scene when she gave a public lecture on LA cinema at the Forum des Images, a film-lovers' institution in the French capital.

**Elsa Devienne** won a British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant for her new research project “The War On Plastics: A History of the Anti-Plastics Movement.” The project started in January 2025 and will lead, over the next two years, to a conference, podcast episodes, and academic and public-facing outputs.



Elsa Devienne discusses *Baywatch* and the origins of California body aesthetics at the Forum des Images in Paris

**David Gleeson and Damian Shiels**, as part of their AHRC-funded project “[Civil War Bluejackets](#): Race, Class and Ethnicity in the US Navy, 1816-1865,” travelled to the US in April 2024 to speak to public and academic audiences. They first spoke at Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, on “The Civil War Bluejackets Project: Citizen Science, Data Science and the Civil War U.S. Navy.” The talk focused on the contributions of Citizen Scientists to the project, the methodologies they employ on the crowdsourcing platform Zooniverse, and their use of computer science. In Baton Rouge they visited the National Cemetery, where many of the U.S. servicemen who died in and around the city are interred. One of the graves was of Landsman William Brass. An 18-year-old farmer from Michigan when he enlisted in the Navy on 31st August 1864, he was assigned to the USS *Avenger* in the Mississippi River “Brown Water Squadron” Unfortunately, William only saw weeks of service. He died of Typhoid Fever in the General Hospital at Baton Rouge on 3rd November.



Landsman William Brass's grave.



They then went up river to the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi to present: “Meet the Bluejackets: Exploring the Lives of Immigrant and African American Sailors in the U.S. Navy Mississippi River Squadron” as part of the National Park Service’s public outreach program Under-told Stories. They included a “hands on” element with the audience, exploring a muster sheet page from the famed ironclad USS *Cairo*. It was particularly moving to see the remains of the *Cairo* in the park itself. It sank when it struck a Confederate torpedo on the Yazoo River in December 1862 and was raised a century later. Today it represents the most important ironclad survival from the Civil War.



David Gleeson presents the Bluejackets project to the Vicksburg National Military Park



The remains of the USS *Cairo* (which sank in 1862) at the Vicksburg National Military Park

**David Gleeson and Damian Shiels** then travelled to New Orleans for the 2024 Organization of American Historians (OAH) Conference. They were part of a panel entitled “Connecting People to the Past in New Ways:

Three Civil War Digital History Projects.” Their paper was “Civil War Bluejackets: Telling the Macro and Micro Stories of the Common Sailor through Big Data.” They were fortunate in the session to have an opportunity to engage with and consider the work of the digital history projects, The Civil War & Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi and the Experiencing Civil War History through Augmented Reality projects.



Damian Shiels on the Civil War Digital History Panel at the 2024 OAH conference

**Joe Street** published *Black Revolutionaries: A History of the Black Panther Party* on 1 November 2024 with the [University of Georgia Press](#).



Joe Street’s *Black Revolutionaries: A History of the Black Panther Party* (University of Georgia Press, 2024)

According to Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, Professor of History and Director of the Center for the Study of Popular Music, University of Connecticut, the book is “a very good addition to the corpus of scholarship on the Black Panther Party. In particular, Joe Street unveils innovative and insightful examinations of the role of the carceral state in the development and decline of the BPP.” *Kirkus Reviews* called it a “comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party” and “a welcome contribution to the literature of Black political activism.”

**Joe Street** also published (with Russ Hunter), “Prometheus by the Bay: Hollywood and techno-capitalism in Silicon Valley” *Journal of Popular Culture* 57 (2024), 7-19 (click [here](#)). This fulfilled Joe’s ambition (which he had since he was an MA student) of getting something into the *Journal of Popular Culture*!

**Joe Street** was also interviewed by BBC History magazine on the O.J. Simpson trial, which appeared as “What the O.J. Simpson Trial Revealed About Modern America” [BBC History 2024](#) (paywalled)

**Brian Ward** gave public talks to local history societies in Hexham and Warkworth, and was a keynote speaker at the Hope Exchange, Sunderland, for the launch of *Project North Star*, an online teaching resource for schools on Black History from the perspective of the North-East. Free to access [here](#).

For Black History Month, 2024, **Brian Ward** gave a talk on African American links to the North East as part of a hybrid “Breakfast Club” event for the staff of DRS Solicitors in London and Newcastle. In lieu of paying Brian’s usual astronomical speaking fee, DRS kindly agreed to make a donation to the Crossings charity, a community education project that supports social integration through musical activities in the North East.



Brian joins Ruby Palmer of DRS Solicitors, Newcastle, for a Black History Month Breakfast Club talk.

**Brian Ward** was the keynote speaker at the Spring Symposium of the Swiss Association for North American Study held at St. Gallen University in May 2024. He workshopped his research on country singer Loretta Lynn and the health environment in Eastern Kentucky during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

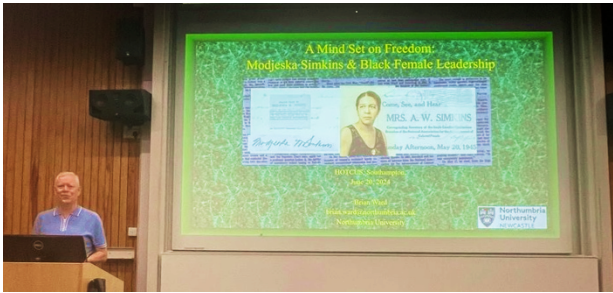


Brian with SANAS President, Dr. Barbara Stausmann (Zurich University), and Dr. Suzanne Enzerink of St. Gallen University.

At the annual conference of the Historians of the Twentieth Century United States (HOTCUS) held at the University of Southampton in June 2024, **Brian Ward** presented his research on South Carolina civil rights activist Modjeska Simkins. At the same conference, he was invited to participate in a panel to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the influential *Journal of American Studies* Forum “What’s New in Southern Studies – And Why



Should We Care?” that he organized and edited.



Brian presenting his research on Modjeska Simkins at the 2024 HOTCUS conference

**Brian Ward** was honoured to be invited by the North Shields Heritology Project to unveil a headstone at Preston Cemetery for Robert Renoldson (1846-1916), an apprentice mariner from North Shields who fought for the Union Army during the US Civil War. The white marble headstone was donated by the Veterans Association of America.

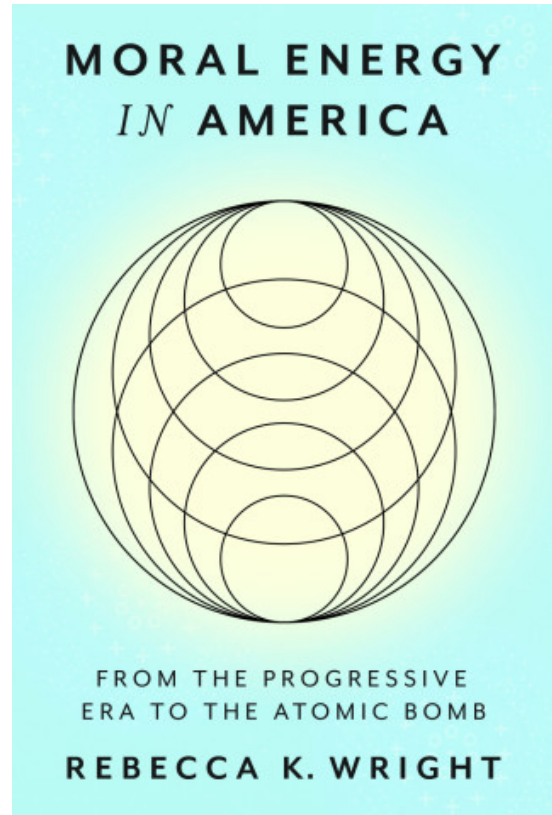


Brian unveils the new headstone at Robert Renoldson's gravesite, Preston Cemetery, North Shields.

**Rebecca Wright's** [monograph](#) *Moral Energy in America: From the Progressive Era to the Atomic Bomb* will be published by Johns Hopkins University Press in April 2025. This book provides an account of the centrality of energy to American social and political thought in the twentieth century. In 2024

**Rebecca Wright** was awarded a Wellcome Trust Career Development Award for the project, “Carbon Bodies: Warmth and Fuelling Health in Britain, 1918 to 2022” to expand her research on histories of heat, energy and health into the British context. Although she won't be working on America

for the foreseeable future, she will remain, forever at heart, a US historian!



Rebecca Wright's *Moral Energy in America: From the Progressive Era to the Atomic Bomb* (Johns Hopkins University, April 2025)

## Postgraduate News

**Lewis Kimberley** defended his thesis, “Rumours and Racial Violence in the United States, 1873 to 1908,” with no corrections in January 2024. The examiners (Prof. Bruce Baker and Joe Street) noted Lewis's “methodologically innovative” thesis based on “extensive archival research” in awarding his degree.

**Lewis Kimberley's** article “‘If you kill him, you have got to kill me first’: examining individual and collective loyalties during the Memphis Massacre (1866)” was published in *American Nineteenth Century History* in [open access](#).

**Lewis Kimberley** was also recently appointed editorial assistant of *History*, the Journal of the Historical Association.



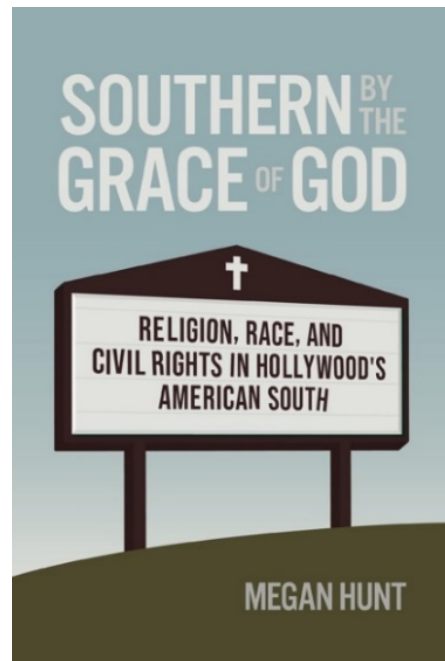
Some members of *History's* editorial team (from left to right): Daniel Laqua, Katarzyna Kosior, Lewis Kimberley, Charlotte Alston and Henry Miller

**Jack Hodgson**, who defended his PhD at Northumbria in 2022, recently published his first book, *Young Reds in the Big Apple: Children, Red Scares, and Political Violence in New York, 1923-1934*, with Fordham University Press.



Jack holds a copy of his first book, *Young Reds in the Big Apple* (Fordham University Press, 2024)

**Megan Hunt**, another Northumbria PhD, also published a new book in 2024. *Southern by the Grace of God: Religion, Race, and Civil Rights in Hollywood's American South* appeared from the University of Georgia Press.



The cover of Megan Hunt's *Southern by the Grace of God: Religion, Race, and Civil Rights in Hollywood's American South* (University of Georgia Press, 2024)

## SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN STUDIES PHD STUDENTS: PAULA MURPHY

### Paula Murphy

Paula started her PhD under the supervision of Brian Ward in Autumn 2024



Paula and her very large foam hand at a Yankees game

### Could you tell us a little about how you became interested in American Studies?

I was born on the Fourth of July, so from childhood, whenever I told anyone my birthday they would make the connection with American Independence Day, triggering a



slightly odd fascination with American culture. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, I remember being inundated with American TV, film, music, and sports - my brother's bedroom even had NFL wallpaper - and movies like 'Pretty in Pink', 'The Breakfast Club', and 'Uncle Buck' represented what I thought American life was like. Only later did I recognise that the image I knew of America's cultural landscape as a child was not reflective of its history, diversity, or reality. This gradual realisation led me more towards stories and experiences that exist outside of, or on the fringes of, the 'American Dream' myth.

**You're starting a PhD on an American Studies subject, could you tell us about your research and how you came to choose your topic?**

My research looks at hip hop culture in NYC in the long-1970s to challenge the academic and cultural understanding of early hip hop as 'party music' with little to contribute to discussions on social and political issues.

A lot has been written on links between Black music and protest in the 1960s, and on conscious rap in the 1980s. When looking for scholarship on similar work for the 1970s, I found that early hip hop has often been treated as a prelude to the conscious rap of the 1980s and 1990s, when artists such as Run DMC, A Tribe Called Quest, Queen Latifah, and Public Enemy, among others, openly used their music to speak about social issues.

Although I have been a fan of hip hop music since I was a teenager, it wasn't on my radar for academic study when I started my BA in Literature & History. My initial focus was on the colonisation of the Americas, and my first essay was on the Roanoke expedition of 1585 - slightly earlier than my current period of interest! In the second year of my degree, I took a couple of history modules that changed the direction of my studies - one was 'Racism and Resistance' which introduced me to US Black protest and the realities of structural and

systemic racism, and the other was '1968', which touched on music as a form of protest. Together, these modules compelled me to change my focus to African American history and protest, through slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow, to civil rights, Black power, and eventually 1970s hip hop.

**Do you have any advice for someone who is considering studying American Studies at Northumbria?**

My advice would be that this is the best place to study American Studies, as I've spoken to US History students at other universities that don't have an American Studies network, so they don't have the same level of support and opportunities for discussion and ideas exchange that we have here. I would also advise being open about your ideas with people in the department - at this early stage it has occasionally been quite daunting to talk about my research and ideas, but talking about it is the fastest way to find out if it's been done before, or if it has potential to go somewhere, from people who have been researching the US for a lot longer!

**Tell me about an American studies book (or American novel) that you've recently enjoyed and why.**

I recently read Elizabeth Hinton's *America On Fire* and really enjoyed the way she reframed 'race riots' as rebellion. Words matter and, in the current political climate, media and social media depictions of reasonable and necessary Black protest are often mischaracterised as violent, aggressive, senseless acts of destruction. However, Hinton deftly shows that this view is based on racism, stereotypes, and White supremacy, and the book is filled with interesting case studies giving new insight to old narratives.

**Finally, a silly question: who would you invite to your dream historical party?**

I would invite Keith Haring, Angela Davis, and Frank O'Hara for a dinner party that would be filled with fascinating stories and deep conversation. I would love to chat to Keith about his art and his activism, and I'm sure he would have very cool anecdotes about the 1980s art scene in NY. Angela Davis would be invited because she is iconic and would hopefully engage everyone in thoughtful discussion around activism, racism, and America's mass incarceration problem. Lastly, Frank O'Hara is on the list as my favourite poet. His poetry beautifully captures the vibrancy of New York, and he makes having a Coke sound like the most romantic thing on earth. I'm sure he would take centre stage and regale us with tales of his days at the Museum of Modern Art, and maybe even give us all tips on how to write poetry on our next lunch break!

## SPOTLIGHT ON AMERICAN STUDIES ALUMNI

### Isabel Waterhouse

*BA (Hons) American Studies*



Isabel Waterhouse

**Tell us about yourself in 3-4 sentences. What did you study at Northumbria? Why?**

I did the Humanities Foundation year at Northumbria before going on to do the American Studies degree. I always knew I wanted to do American Studies and when I

was offered a place by Northumbria I knew that was where I wanted to be.

### What are you doing now?

Since graduating from Northumbria I worked for Skills for Care, the strategic workforce development and planning body for adult social care in England, as a Corporate Resource Assistant, providing project support for all areas of the charity, including Business Development, Project Management, Evidence and Impact, Equality, Culture and Diversity, and Skills for Care Development which coordinated the four nations' respective social care charities.

Since leaving Skills for Care I have travelled around South East Asia, visiting Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia before moving to Australia on the 417 Working Holiday Visa. When I settle in Melbourne after my travels, I am hoping to find a job that relates to what I want to be doing in the future. (*Update: Isabel now works for a not-for-profit in Melbourne!*). The great thing about the transferable skills I have gained from the American Studies degree is that I am able to find work anywhere in the world.

### What was it about Northumbria that made you decide to study here? And Why American Studies?

When visiting Northumbria on an open day I loved Newcastle as a city, how easy it was to get around and how social it seemed to be. The university itself was central and the library was modern. Friends I knew who had already studied at Northumbria only had great things to say about the university and Newcastle.

I chose to study American Studies because I always had a love of American History and Literature. The course description seemed to be everything I wanted to learn about and more. I loved that some of the modules were niche and provided such a wide breadth of knowledge. The option to study abroad in



America in my second year was also something that drew me to Northumbria.

### **What was it like studying at Northumbria?**

I loved studying at Northumbria. The American Studies faculty in particular, but also the History and Literature faculties, are full of enthusiastic professors who love the subject and make you love it too. I only had positive interactions with staff who were willing to help with any issues you were having, work based or not. I felt supported and genuinely enjoyed going to all my lectures and seminars.

### **If you took on a placement during your course how did you feel this helped you in your career/ with your studies?**

During my second year I took part in the study abroad programme at The College of New Jersey. Learning about America in America provided me with a completely new perspective, as well as engulfing me in their education system which differs hugely from ours. It gave me the opportunity to take modules that weren't necessarily offered in Northumbria's American Studies course, such as The History of the AIDS Crisis and Women's Gender Studies and I was also lucky enough to join the Softball team at TCNJ which completely immersed me in their culture.

### **What was the best thing about your course?**

The variety of different module topics, some of which I'd never even thought about but which were incredibly interesting.

### **Which skills/ knowledge did you learn on your course that you use most now?**

The demanding and diverse workload of the American Studies degree, particularly in third year, which is largely independent learning based, required me to be highly self motivated,

and to balance competing priorities - both of which are essential in a working environment.

### **What did you enjoy most about your time at Northumbria University?**

I loved my course and would do it again if I could. Newcastle itself has everything you could want in a city, it has a great atmosphere with open-minded people, almost everything is within walking distance and Tynemouth beach is just down the road. Living in Jesmond was three of the best years of my life and I met life-long friends here. The food in Newcastle is some of the best in the UK and the nightlife is always fun. I can see myself living back in Newcastle in the future.

### **What advice would you give somebody who is thinking of studying at Northumbria?**

Do it, you won't regret it.

### **How would you describe your time at Northumbria in 3 words?**

Fun, rewarding, future-proofing

### **WHY AMERICAN STUDIES? WHY NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY?**

Intellectually challenging and hugely enjoyable, American Studies is an ideal subject to study at university if you want to learn more about American life and culture, wish to develop your critical, imaginative and communication skills, and have an interest in multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to studying the American experience and its global significance.

In American Studies at Northumbria University, you will receive an excellent education in a friendly environment, in partnership with an exceptional collection of internationally acclaimed scholar-teachers.

Through a variety of lectures, smaller group seminars, and guided individual study, our staff will help you develop your skills, work towards a successful degree and prepare yourself for life beyond the university.

Our commitment to teaching excellence is regularly recognized at the Northumbria Student Union's Student-Led Teaching Awards, when many members of the American Studies staff are commended for their engaging teaching and overall commitment to their students' education.

### Employment and Study Abroad

Many careers require self-motivated, creative, and ambitious individuals with a dynamic skill set. American Studies graduates are especially valued because of their excellent communication skills and ability to think intelligently, critically, and laterally as they draw on a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and skills to analyze and interpret the American experience. The American Studies BA and related programmes (English Literature and American Studies; History and American Studies) at Northumbria will enable you to develop into this type of graduate.

American Studies graduates are attractive to employers in such fields as teaching, publishing, journalism, cultural administration, advertising, public relations, the civil service, heritage management, social research, non-governmental organisations, public history, and the Foreign Office.

As part of an innovative "Your Graduate Future" module many of our students will hone their employability potential. Here students will build resumes, refine experience for future careers, and link their work in American Studies to the job market.

Students also have the opportunity to spend a period of time studying abroad during their second year. American Studies has established links with a large number of institutions in

North America, including Florida Atlantic University, Georgia State University, the University of Arkansas, Middle Tennessee State University, and Montclair State University (near to New York City). This exchange programme is covered within the existing tuition fee structure.

### TEACHERS – WE NEED YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS!

If you or your students would like to learn more about American Studies, or to participate in events at Northumbria University that offer you and your students the latest insights into US history, literature, and politics in preparation for GCSE, A-Level or International Baccalaureate Exams, please contact:

Dr. Elsa Devienne  
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For more information on American Studies at Northumbria University, please visit us at: <http://northumbria.ac.uk/americanstudies>

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