

David Todd Lawrence, Ph.D.

University of St. Thomas
Department of English
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Academic Positions

Assistant Professor 2003-2008

Associate Professor 2008 - present

University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN)

Department of English; Interim Director, American Culture and Difference Program

Education

Ph.D. English Aug 2003

University of Missouri (Columbia, MO)

Primary Area: African American Literature and Culture

Secondary Area: Folklore Studies & Folkloristics

MA English May 1997

Creighton University (Omaha, NE)

BA English May 1995

Rockhurst University (Kansas City, MO)

Articles

“From Affiliation to Action: Police Incident Videos, Social Media, and Counter Narratives of Blackness.”
In *Race and Ethnicity in Digital Culture*. Ed. Anthony Bak Buccitelli. Praeger Books, 2017. 153-172.

“The Rural Black Nowhere: Invisibility, Urbannormativity, and the Geography of Indifference.”
Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association 48.1 (2015): 221-244.

“Talk Like a Man: Internal Dissonance and the Performance of Masculinity in Etheridge Knight’s *Poems From Prison*.” *The Griot: Official Journal of the Southern Conference on African American Studies* 27.2 (2008): 10-23.

“We Are Family: Gender Tensions and the Construction of the Black Family in the Early Poetry of Sonia Sanchez.” *B.M.A.: The Sonia Sanchez Literary Review* 10.2 (2005).

“Folkloric Representation and Extended Context in the Experimental Ethnography of Zora Neale Hurston.” *Southern Folklore* 57.2 (2000): 119-134.

Book

When They Blew the Levee: Politics, Race, and Community in Pinhook, Mo. With Elaine Lawless. Oxford: University of Mississippi Press, 2018.

Film

Taking Pinhook. Dir. Documentary film produced in collaboration with Elaine Lawless (Co-director) and Emilie Sabath (Consulting Producer). Unspeakable Pictures Productions. 2014 (26 min).
(Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pfr8AFpUKDM>)

Reviews and Entries

Near Black: White-to-Black Passing in American Culture (2010). Book review in *MELUS* 35.1 (2010) 190-192.

“Lawrence P. Neal” In *African American National Biography*. Edited by Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham. Oxford University Press, 2008.

American Pimp (1999); *American Pimp: Raw Outtakes and the Hard Truth* (2004). Film Review Essay
Journal of American Folklore 120.475 (2007): 85-87.

“Pimps,” “Tricks,” “Iceberg Slim,” and “Cool”: In *Encyclopedia of African American Folklore [Four Volumes]*. Edited by Anand Prahlad. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.

Selected Conference Panels and Presentations

“Folklore and Critical Race Studies: Practice, Theory, Curriculum, and Pedagogy Within and Beyond the Discipline” – Invited Panelist
American Folklore Society Meeting
Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 2017

“‘Northside for Life’: Narratives of Community and the Politics of Urban Agriculture”
American Folklore Society Meeting & College Language Association Meeting
Miami, Florida, October 2016 & Columbia, Missouri, April 2017

“It Still Isn’t Easy – Witnessing Vulnerability in the Field with Elaine J. Lawless”
American Folklore Society Meeting
Long Beach, California, October 2015

“‘That’s how it is . . . it’s a fact’: Contested Truths and Competing Positionality in an Ethnographic Interview Narrative”
American Folklore Society Meeting
Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 2014

“Urbanormativity and Black Invisibility in the Destruction of Pinhook, Mo” (Plenary Session)
Cultures of Disaster International Conference
Oslo, Norway, November 2013

“We don’t quit around here”: Narratives of Resilience and Rebuilding Community in the Birds Point Levee Disaster”
American Folklore Society Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana, October 2012

“‘Telling All Our Stories’: Institutionalization, Vernacular Expression, and Contested Meaning at the Flight 93 National Memorial”
American Folklore Society Meeting
Bloomington, Indiana, October 2011

“*Beneath the Underdog*, Between Traditions: Charles Mingus’s Use of the Black Pimp Figure”
The Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900
Louisville, Kentucky February 2010

“‘Telling the Story of My Life’: Collaboration and Privileged Voice in *What is the What*”
American Folklore Society Annual Meeting
Boise, Idaho, October 2009

“‘America Has Really Grown Up’: Percival Everett, Barack Obama, and the Illusion of a ‘Post-Racial’ Society”
Midwest Modern Language Association Annual Meeting
Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 2008

Invited Presentations, Lectures, and Discussions

Screening and discussion of *I am Not Your Negro*. (featured discussant with Dr. Bill Green)
Indie Lens Pop Up Series – Minnesota History Society and Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)
Minnesota History Center
St. Paul, MN, January 9, 2018

Screening and discussion of *Taking Pinhook* excerpts as part of “Changing Currents: Valmeyer and Pinhook Reclaim Community After Flooding”
Greater St. Louis Humanities Festival
Alton, Illinois, October 2, 2015

Screening and discussion of *Taking Pinhook*. (with Elaine Lawless, Emilie Sabath, and Debra Tarver)
University of Missouri Department of Black Studies Black History Month Series
Columbia, Missouri, February 20, 2014

Invited Speaker (with Elaine Lawless and Debra Tarver), “We don’t quit around here”: Narratives of Resilience and Rebuilding Community in the Birds Point Levee Disaster”
State Historical Society of Missouri
Columbia, Missouri, December 1, 2012

Respondent, 2010 *Don Yoder Lecture on Folk Belief and Folklife* delivered by Elaine Lawless, “What Zora Knew: A Crossroads, a Bargain with the Devil, and a Late Witness”
Response Title: “Zora Neale Hurston as Scholar and Practitioner”
American Folklore Society Annual Meeting
Louisville, Kentucky, October 2010

“Black Pimp, White Ho: Sexual Desire, Racial Anxiety, and the Politics of Representation”
Inaugural University of St. Thomas English Department Colloquium Series Presentation
Saint Paul, Minnesota, September 2006

Teaching

Selected Undergraduate English Courses:

Folklore and Literature; *Crossing the Color Line*; *Work, Workers, and the American Dream* (honors); *Your Utopia/My Dystopia* (honors); *Reading Black Resistance*; *American Authors II*; *20th Century African American Literature*; *Queering the Harlem Renaissance*; *The Black Mystery Novel*; *Ethnographic Writing*; *James Baldwin and Contemporary Black Writers*; *African American Folklore in Literature*; *The Badman in African American Literature*

American Culture and Difference Program Courses:

Foundations of American Culture and Difference

Selected Graduate English Courses:

The Neo-Slave Narrative; *African American Literary Theory*; *The Black Arts Novel (1964-1978)*; *Trauma and the Slave Narrative*; *Black into the Future: Afrofuturism*; *Ethnographic Writing*; *The Black Mystery Novel*; *Theorizing the Black Body*

Teaching and Research Interests

- 20th Century African American Literature
- Folklore and Folkloristics; African American Folklore
- African American Genre Fiction
- Ethnography
- The Black Arts Movement
- The Pimp Figure in Black Expressive Culture

Professional Positions

- Member Board of Directors, East Side Freedom Library (appointed July 2017)
- Advisory Committee, *Journal of Folklore and Education* (2017-2018)
- Corresponding Editor, *Journal of Folklore Research* (appointed October 2016)
- Local Planning Committee, American Folklore Society 2017 Annual Meeting
- American Folklore Society Cultural Diversity Committee Chair (appointed term 2013-2015)
- American Folklore Society Executive Board Member (elected term 2012-2015)
- American Folklore Society Publications Committee (replacement appointment term 2013-2014)
- Film and Video Review Editor, *Journal of American Folklore* (appointment 2007-Jan. 2010)
- Modern Language Association – Executive Committee Member, Folklore and Literature Discussion Group (2006-2009), Committee chair and session organizer for 2008.
- Associate Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*. September 2002 – Aug 2003
- Assistant Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*. August 2001 – September 2002

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

- University of St. Thomas Aquinas Scholars Professor of the Year, 2016.
- Curricular Innovation in Sustainability Award – UST Office of Sustainable Communities Partnerships, Spring 2016
- Selected Participant, Slave Narratives Seminar sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History – Yale University, Summer 2010
- Finalist, UST Professor of the Year Award 2008-2009 & 2010-2011
- UST Research Grant for Spring 2010
- UST International Education Faculty Seminar Travel Grant – Ghana, Summer 2007
- LuAnne Dummer Memorial English Department Course Release Spring 2006, Spring 2009, Fall 2014
- Thurgood Marshall Doctoral Fellowship, University of Missouri 1997-2001

Professional Memberships

- American Folklore Society
- College Language Association
- Modern Language Association
- The Southern Conference on African American Studies
- Association of African and African American Folklorists