AINSLEY LESURE

Africana Studies & Political Science | Brown University
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APPOINTMENT

Brown University
Richard and Edna Salomon Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Political Science, July 2025 – present
Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Political Science, July 2022 – June 2025
Assistant Professor of Africana Studies, July 2020 – June 2022

PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS

Occidental College
Assistant Professor of Politics, August 2016 – June 2020

University of Chicago
Harper-Schmidt Society Fellow, Collegiate Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences Division, July 2015 – July 2016

EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of Chicago, Department of Political Science, December 2015
Primary Field: Political Theory; Secondary Field: American Politics
Dissertation: "Making Racism Visible in the World: Achieving Racial Justice through Political Resistance"
Committee: Robert Gooding-Williams (Chair), Patchen Markell, and Linda Zerilli

M.A. University of Chicago, Department of Political Science, June 2007
Thesis: "Supplementing the Veil with the Sea: Du Bois' Attention to the Lived Experience of Individual Blacks in *Souls*"

B.A. Carleton College, Political Science, June 2005

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Critical theory of race and racism; phenomenology; democratic theory; black political thought; feminist theory; social justice

PUBLICATIONS

Book

Locating Racism in the World. New York: Oxford University Press, 2026. 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-783386-5 (cloth); 978-0-19-783382-7 (paper).

Refereed Journal Articles

"Chronicle of the Girls' Bureau for Freedom and Uplift" (with Jill Locke). *Political Theory* 51, no. 1 (2023): 146–161.

"The White Mob, (In)Equality Before the Law, and Racial Common Sense: A Critical Race Reading of the Negro Question in 'Reflections on Little Rock.'" *Political Theory* 49, no. 1 (2021): 3–27.

Book Reviews

Review of *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*, by Charles W. Mills. *Political Theory* 46, no. 5 (2018): 801–805.

Review of *Dark Ghettos: Injustice, Dissent, and Reform*, by Tommie Shelby. *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 1 (2019): 225–227.

Public Writing

"Why Biden shouldn't extend an olive branch to Republicans" (with Joshua Craze). *The Guardian*, November 26, 2020.

"The Significance of Overt Racism." *Amor Mundi*, Hannah Arendt Center, Bard College, November 2016.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Book Manuscript

The Tricky Business of the Human Question

This project explores the possibilities of universal humanism as a political and ethical aspiration disentangled from its assumed antiblackness.

Refereed Book Chapter

"The Black Speculative: A Desire and Contemplative Filled Oneness"

This chapter is under review at Cambridge University Press for the edited volume, *Political Theory and Speculative Literature*, edited by Duncan Bell and Eileen M. Hunt.

Article

"Universal Humanism as a Race Problem: Hannah Arendt & Sylvia Wynter"

This article disentangles a central pillar of Hannah Arendt's revision of universal humanism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the right to a place within the human artifice where one can express significant opinions and act effectively, by mobilizing Sylvia Wynter's project to provincialize Europe and democratize the human artifice in "On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Re-Imprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Désêtre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project".

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2025 Faculty Fellow, Cogut Institute for the Humanities, Brown University

2024 Brown's Internal Pick for The Andrew Carnegie Fellowship

2019 Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty

2019 Visiting Scholar in Race and Ethnicity in America, Brown University

2015 Harper-Schmidt Fellowship, University of Chicago

2012 Inaugural Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture / Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality Dissertation Fellow

INVITED LECTURES AND TALKS

Panelist, Public Online Forum discussing Shattered Dreams, Infinite Hope: A Tragic Vision of the Civil Rights Movement by Brandon M. Terry, Center for Transcultural Studies and Center for Global Culture and Communication, Northwestern University, June 5, 2026.

"The Tricky Business of the Human Question," The Cornell Political Theory Workshop, Cornell University, February 12, 2026

"The Tricky Business of the Human Question," Cogut Fellows Seminar, The Cogut Institute at Brown University, November 11, 2025

"Broaching the Relation between Black Speculative Fiction and Western Political Thought", Political Theory and Speculative Literature Workshop, University of Cambridge, August 29, 2025

"The Tricky Business of the Human Question," Center for Critical Thought, University of Colorado, Boulder, January 24, 2025

"Invited Guest for Public Discussion about Black Power in the Context of 1970s' Hawaii," University of California, San Diego, May, 24, 2023

"Reading *Black Power* Phenomenologically," Carleton College (Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship End of the Year Celebration Keynote Speaker), May 18, 2023

"Equality as a Practice of Checking Power (of Opinion)," Ethics Institute 4th Annual Moral and Political Philosophy Workshop, Dartmouth, April 14-15, 2023

"Equality as a Practice of Checking Power (of Opinion)," University of Florida (Political Theory Workshop), November 2022

"Assuming a World: A Phenomenology of Racism," Northeastern Illinois University (9th Annual Sarah Lucia Hoagland Lecture), March 2022

"Thoughts on the World, the Political, and the Black," University of Missouri–Columbia (Kinder Institute), March 2022

"Thoughts on the World, the Black and the Political," University of Connecticut (Political Theory Workshop), October 2021

"Thoughts on the World, the Black and the Political," University of Pennsylvania (Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Immigration), March 2021

"Another World is Possible: Reading Black Skin, White Masks Phenomenologically," Northwestern University (Graduate Student Political Theory Workshop), February 2021

"The White Mob, (In)Equality before the Law and Racial Common Sense," Interview, University of São Paulo, Brazil (Hannah Arendt Center), January 2021

"Reading Black Skin, White Masks Phenomenologically in Hot Pursuit of a White Supremacist World," Duke University (Political Theory Workshop), November 2020

"Reading *Black Skin, White Masks* Phenomenologically in Hot Pursuit of a White Supremacist World," Brown University (Political Theory Workshop), November 5, 2020

"White Minority Rule and The Black Vote," Brown University (CSREA: Where Do We Go from Here? Finding Anti-Racist Common Ground After 2020), November 2020

"Reading Black Skin, White Masks Phenomenologically in Hot Pursuit of a White Supremacist World," Brown University (Political Theory Workshop), November 2020

"Reading Black Power through the Prism of Practice," Invited Class Lecture, Bates College, March 2020

"In Defense of Democratic Equality for an Antiracist Political Theory," Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, Connecticut College, February 2020

"Theorizing Political Resistance to Racism: From Occasioning Sight to Constituting Power," Oxford Political Thought Seminar, Oxford University, January 2020

"Subverting the Rule of Race by Building the World," Philosophy Workshop, University College Dublin, January 2020

"Equality," Political Concepts Conference, Brown University, December 2019

"Theorizing Political Resistance to Racism," Public Talk, Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, November 2019

"Recovering the Worldliness of Structural Racism," Doing Democracy Differently, McMaster University, February 2019

"Thinking Racial Justice with Hannah Arendt," Seeing Beyond the Veil: Race-ing Key Concepts in Political Theory, Brown University, November 2018

Public Lecture, Race and Gender Studies Department, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, November 2017

Keynote Speaker, Midwest Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Conference, Carleton College, October 2017

"Recovering 'Institutional Racism' for Racial Justice," Political Science Workshop, William and Mary, November 2017

Organizer and Moderator, "Objectivity in Journalism" Panel, Hammer Museum Forum, UCLA, June 2017

"Making Sense of the Rise of Trump," Democratic Anxiety, Democratic Resilience Conference, Mainz, Germany, June 2017

"Recovering 'Institutional Racism' for Racial Justice," Political Theory Workshop, UCLA, May 2017

"The Rule of Race: Arendt's Account of Racism," Political Theory Workshop, University of Pennsylvania, April 2017

Discussant, Shatema Threadcraft, Intimate Justice, Feminist Political Theory Pre-conference, Western Political Science Association, April 2017

CONFERENCES AND WORKING GROUPS

Author Meets Critics Panel, *Locating Racism in the World* by Ainsley LeSure, 122nd Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association, September 4, 2026

Salon Noir Book Talk (Author Meets Critics), *Locating Racism in the World* by Ainsley LeSure, 56th Annual Conference of the Association of Black Sociologists, August 7, 2026

"The Tricky Business of the Human Question" at the Revolutionary Spirit: Hannah Arendt and Black Political Thought Conference, Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and the Humanities, Bard College, March 28, 2025

"Democratic Faith Working Group," Brown University (Political Theory), December 2022

"Equality as a Practice of Checking Power (of Opinion)," American Political Science Association, September 2022

"Chronicle of the Girls' Bureau for Freedom and Uplift," American Political Science Association, September 2022

"Black Studies and Religion Working Group," Columbia University (Center for African-American Religion, Sexual Politics and Social Justice), April 2021–May 2022

Organizer and Roundtable Participant, "Phenomenology as Critical Resources for the Study of Structural Domination," Western Political Science Association, April 2021

Presenter, Author Meets Critics: Keisha Lindsay, In a Classroom of Their Own, Western Political Science Association, April 2021

"Black Equality is Impossible? A Critical Engagement with Afro-pessimism," American Political Science Association, August 2019

Roundtable Participant, "The Price of the Ticket: Race, Difference and Democracy in Contemporary Politics," American Political Science Association, August 2019

Presenter, Author Meets Critics: Joseph Fischel, Screw Consent, American Political Science Association, August 2019

Presenter, Film Series: "What is Democracy?" American Political Science Association, August 2019

Organizer and Presenter, Author Meets Critics: Mark Golub, Is Racial Inequality Unconstitutional?, Western Political Science Association, April 2019

"The Rise of Identity Politics?" Western Political Science Association, April 2019

"Subverting 'The First': How Neoliberal Identity Politics Made Way for Trump," American Political Science Association, September 2017

"Reading Black Skin, White Masks Phenomenologically," American Political Science Association, September 2016

"A Critical Examination of Accounts of Internal Domination," American Political Science Association, September 2016

"Making Racism Visible," American Political Science Association, September 2015

"Reading Black Skin, White Masks Phenomenologically," Social Theory Workshop, University of Chicago, February 2015

"The Worldly Problem of Racism," Reproduction of Race and Racial Ideologies Workshop, University of Chicago, January 2014

"Pitching Institutional Racism as a Worldly Problem," American Political Science Association, August 2014

"Political Resistance to Racism," Reproduction of Race and Racial Ideologies Workshop, University of Chicago, May 2011

"From Inner/Outer toward a Worldly Account of Racism and Resistance," Political Theory Workshop, University of Chicago, March 2011

"Reading Souls," Social Science History Association, November 2010

"Supplementing the Veil with the Sea," Midwest Political Science Association, April 2009

TEACHING

Brown University

Undergraduate: Theorizing Racism; The Black Vote; Introduction to Africana Studies; Embodying Race and Gender; Systemic Racism and Resilience; Junior Seminar for Africana Studies

Graduate: Afro-Pessimism and Its Kin; Supposing Hannah Arendt is Antiblack, Then What?; What Hortense Spillers Said; Universal Humanism? (co-taught with Kevin Quashie)

Occidental College

Undergraduate: American Political Thought; Critical Fanonism; Introduction to Political Theory; No Justice, No Peace; Theoretical Accounts of Racism; Comprehensive Seminar

Student Supervision

Dissertation Committees

Justina Blanco, (Brown University, Africana studies, committee member)
Noah Campbell, (Brown University, political science, committee member)
Brianna Eaton, (Brown University, Africana studies, committee member)
Alberto Alcaraz Escarcega, (Brown University, political science, committee member)
Arlin Hill, (Brown University, Africana studies, committee member)

Brooke Johnson, (Brown University, Africana studies, committee member)
Justin Lang, (Brown University, Africana Studies, committee member), defended 2022, "On Withdrawal (into Darkness: Abolition Politics in the Wake of the George Floyd Uprising"
Carol Ze-Noah, Political Science (Brown University, political science, committee member)

Undergraduate Thesis Committee
Sadie May, (Brown University, political science, second reader), "Lost Legitimacy: A Theoretical Interrogation of the Supreme Court's Democratic Legitimacy through Procedures Sustaining Confirmation," received the Alan S. Zuckerman Award for Outstanding Political Science Thesis, May 2026

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Board Member, Foundations of Political Theory Section, American Political Science Association
Board Member, Executive Board, Western Political Science Association
Chair, Okin-Young Award Committee, American Political Science Association, 2019
Section Co-Chair, Critical and Normative Political Theory, Western Political Science Association, 2019
Section Chair, Gender, Race and Intersectionality, Western Political Science Association, 2018
Coordinator, Feminist Theory Pre-Conference, Western Political Science Association, 2018
Coordinator, Racial Justice Pedagogy Working Group, University of Chicago, 2015

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Brown University
- Member of Brown University Community Council (2022-2025)
  - Africana Studies
    - Director of Graduate Admissions (September 2020-August 2023)
  - Political Science
    - Preliminary Exam (2023,2024)

Occidental College
- Member of Black Studies Department Committee
- Affirmative Action Committee
- Co-Chair of Faculty Learning Community – Marginalization and Resistance in the Social Sciences and Humanities Curriculum

REFEREE SERVICE

Journals: American Journal of Political Science; American Political Science Review; Journal of Politics; Perspectives on Politics; Political Theory; Transactions of the American Philological Association

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association (APSA)
Association for Political Theory (APT)
Western Political Science Association (WPSA)
Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP)
The Association of Black Sociologists (ABS)