

Meet the Teacher Scholars Cohort 2, 2024-2025



BRIAN MACHARG
Appalachian State
University

Brian MacHarg is the Director of Academic Civic Engagement at Appalachian State University. He works with App State faculty to support the integration of service-learning and other forms of experiential education into the curriculum. He teaches classes on service, civil discourse, and education, and has taught numerous courses abroad.

He is extensively involved in international efforts and served as the co-director of the Mandela Washington Fellowship at App State from 2016 to 2022. He regularly gives talks on service-learning, civic participation, and citizenship to international audiences as part of the U.S. Speakers Program of the U.S. Department of State.



DANIELLE HODGE
University of
Colorado Boulder

Danielle Hodge is an Assistant Professor of Communication with specialization in African American Studies, critical race theory, and critical hip hop studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. As a scholar-teacher, Dr. Hodge has always been concerned with how racism and its intersecting oppressions are embedded in our everyday talk, communicative practices, institutions, and overall society. Specifically, her research and teaching employ a critical race theoretical approach to identity, culture, and language, and examines how systems of oppression impact marginalized groups and are discursively reproduced, maintained, and resisted. Hodge is currently teaching university level courses on race, anti-black racism, and communication; race, hip hop, and communication; and critical race theory.

Relatedly, Dr. Hodge is a 2024-2025 Center for African and African American Studies (CAAAS) Faculty Fellow. In 2023, she was named the Inaugural Lecture Series Speaker for The Center for African and African American Studies.



DAVID HUBERT
Salt Lake Community
College

David Hubert serves as Associate Provost of Learning Advancement and Professor of Political Science at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), where he teaches for SLCC's prison education program. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Connecticut and is the author of *Attenuated Democracy: A Critical Introduction to U.S. Government and Politics*, which is an openly licensed textbook. As Associate Provost, his administrative responsibilities cover general education, ePortfolio, engaged-learning, prison education, open educational resources, learning outcomes assessment, and SLCC's honors program. He has taught for the American Association of Colleges and Universities' institutes on general education, ePortfolio, and high-impact practices.



FATIMA SATTAR
Governors State
University

Fatima Sattar is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the Anthropology and Sociology Program at Governors State University. Her teaching and research focus on immigration, refugee resettlement, welfare, belonging, race, class and gender inequalities, research methods, service-learning, experiential learning, civic engagement and diversity, equity and inclusion. Dr. Sattar has conducted research with immigrant- and refugee-serving nonprofit organizations in the Northeastern and Midwestern United States and provided students with service-learning opportunities in diverse community-based/social service organizations. She's presented or published her work at the American Sociological Association, Eastern Sociological Society, and Geographical Review. At Governors State University she is a member of the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition.

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FRAN BUNTMAN
George Washington
University

Fran Buntman views advancing democracy, human rights, and civic engagement as the connective tissue between her professional and personal *raison d'être*. She teaches Criminal Justice as well as Law and Society in George Washington University's Sociology Department, with most of her scholarship focusing on punishment, law, power, and resistance. Whether in the classroom or in her recent role as Director of Graduate Studies, she believes teaching should seek to empower students to recognize their agency, their potential, and their responsibilities, including as engaged citizens. Among her pedagogies are foci on current events and critically employing non-academic and pop-cultural resources along with academic texts.



FRANKIE NICOLE WEAVER
University of
Tennessee – Knoxville

Frankie Nicole Weaver is invested in innovative educational models connected to civic education, civil discourse, applied theatre, civil rights, and experiential learning. Weaver leads educational outreach programs for the Institute of American Civics housed in the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville. She developed the inaugural TN Civics Academy for K-12 educators—supporting social studies teachers and advancing civic education and engagement. This June the academy doubled its impact, serving 80+ educators and 20 student interns. She enjoys mentoring students and leads an academy internship program. Dr. Weaver appreciates working for Tennessee's flagship, land-grant university, and serving educators and youth across the state. Dr. Weaver is a passionate, creative teacher scholar and cultural historian who has a depth of experience. Her research explores how art, both its production and the artwork itself, fostered solidarity between transnational activist communities. She is experienced in public history, serving as the Curator of Collections for the National Historic Landmark Oneida Community Mansion House, managing oral history projects, and guest lecturing at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



JOHN SHEKITKA
Manhattanville
University

John Shekitka is an Assistant Professor of Secondary Education in the School of Education at Manhattanville University in Purchase, New York, where he has taught since 2018. As part of that work, he served as a professional development school liaison with a local school district. The past few years, he has also remotely taught courses as a part-time visiting professor with the Institute of Education at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



KARA DILLARD
James Madison
University

Kara Dillard is the interim Executive Director of the Madison Center for Civic Engagement and Assistant Professor in the School of Communication Studies at James Madison University (Harrisonburg, VA). She is also a co-director of the Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue at JMU and is the co-editor for *The Good Society*, a journal of civic studies.

At the Madison Center, Dr. Dillard leads a variety of dialogue and deliberation efforts, including the new Better Conversations Together project introducing dialogue skills and deliberation experience for all 6,500 incoming new and transfer students. She is also responsible for voter education and turnout for all 22,000 JMU students.

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LEILA RODRIGUEZ
University of
Puerto Rico

Leila Rodríguez is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Puerto Rico, and Visiting Scholar at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, where she previously worked for 15 years. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Costa Rica, and an MA and PhD in Anthropology and Demography from the Pennsylvania State University. She researches how local communities integrate migrants and refugees, and how judicial systems in the U.S. and Latin America use culture as evidence in legal conflicts involving minorities. She cares passionately about social justice, higher education, and the roles of universities in modeling better societies. Through her participation in the teacher-scholars program, she hopes to increase civic knowledge in and about Puerto Rico.



LISA BRATTON
Tuskegee
University

Lisa Bratton is an Associate Professor of History at Tuskegee University. Her primary research interest is Historic Brattonville, the South Carolina plantation on which her ancestors, Green and Malinda Bratton, were enslaved. Although enslaved for much of their lives, they went on to become the first Freedmen to purchase land in York County. In 2022, she learned that she is blood-related to the plantation owners and meets monthly with their descendants to discuss the difficult questions of their shared heritage and collaborate on a number of projects. Dr. Bratton is an avid traveler who has visited all 50 states and such interesting places as Pyongyang, North Korea, Cuba, and Swaziland.



MARY ANNE K. CLARKE
Bryant University

Mary Anne K. Clarke is a political science lecturer at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island. She has been teaching on the college level for thirty years. She teaches introductory political science courses in American Politics and Global Politics. She also developed courses on Democracy, Citizenship and the Media and Congress and the Policy Making Process. Mary Anne's experience on Capitol Hill as a US Senate Page provided her with a spark to spread civic awareness in the classroom and in the community. She incorporates civic education into her classes and believes in the value of a democratic classroom. Mary Anne hopes that by participating in the Teacher Scholars program she will be able to create instructional resources to help engage and inspire students to become more civic minded using their voices and actions to affect positive change.



MEGAN VANGORDER
Governors State
University

Megan VanGorder is Assistant Professor of History and Coordinator of the Secondary Social Studies Educator Program at Governors State University. She is the co-founder of a history initiative called the Southland History Collective, which seeks to preserve histories of traditionally excluded groups in the Chicago Southland region. Her research centers on the Civil War era and focuses on women's participation in the development of medical institutions during and after the war. As a former middle school teacher and teacher educator in Illinois, she writes on integrating local histories as a pedagogical method to catalyze and cultivate civic engagement.

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MICHAEL WILLIAMS, JR.
Southern Union State
Community College

Michael Williams, Jr is an instructor of government and theatre at Southern Union State Community College in Alabama. He has directed over forty productions and given numerous workshops and presentations at humanities and theatre conferences. He is the former chair of the Small Programs Committee for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. He is consistently the best juggler at academic conferences and the only attendee with a history of being paid by various circus programs. He has lived on both coasts and in Central Europe. He began teaching American Government after the COVID-19 pandemic subsided. He is a New Orleanian, book collector, woodturner, contact juggler, gamer, amateur linguist, copyright pedant, rockhound, consummate slow cooker dilettante, and an above average trivia player.



MOLLY SLAVIN
Clark Atlanta
University

Molly Slavin is an assistant professor of English at Clark Atlanta University, where she teaches courses ranging from introductory freshman composition to graduate courses on contemporary literatures. At all levels, she works to inculcate discussions of civic life and society into her courses, particularly how to navigate legacies of colonialism in public settings and rhetorics. She is looking forward to the Teacher Scholars program for the opportunity to create ways to move these types of classroom discussions from analysis to action. Her research interests are in contemporary British, Irish, and postcolonial literatures, and her first book (*Criminal Cities: The Postcolonial Novel and Cathartic Crime*) was recently published by the University of Virginia Press.



NATASCIA BOERI
Bloomfield College of
Montclair State University

Natascia Boeri is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Bloomfield College of Montclair State University in New Jersey. Her current research focuses on mothers who use opioids and the barriers they face in accessing health and social services. She is an active member of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) and has represented SWS as a delegate to the United Nations numerous times. Dr. Boeri's teaching style emphasizes experiential learning, and she is a strong supporter of undergraduate research. As a Teacher Scholar, she is looking forward to creating a course that will combine research and practical advocacy work.



PARAKH HOON
South Puget Sound
Community College

Parakh Hoon is a Professor of Political Science at South Puget Sound Community College, which is located on the ancestral lands of the Steh-Chass band of the Squaxin Island Tribe and the Nisqually Indian Tribe, now known as Olympia, the capital of Washington State. He integrates his extensive field research experience from Botswana, Southern Africa, and India into his teaching, applying examples of civic engagement. His pedagogical approach includes contemplative and reflective practices that enhance critical thinking and foster empathetic communication about political issues. At SPSCC, he has co-led initiatives like Mindful Mondays and organized a community of practice focused on Mindful Tech. As a participant in the Teacher Scholars program, he is deepening his curriculum by integrating Indigenous perspectives on governance and law, particularly in relation to the U.S. Constitution. He is also eager to connect with fellow Teacher Scholars who share an interest in the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and civic education. He is looking forward to his tenure as a Fulbright-Nehru Distinguished Scholar in 2024-25.

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SALAH HASSAN
Michigan State
University

Salah D. Hassan is a professor in the Department of English at Michigan State University and is currently the Director of the Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities Program. His research and teaching focus on anticolonialism, literatures of empire, and Arab diasporic and global Muslim cultures. Hassan's recent work addresses images of Arabs and Muslims in the media and projects of Muslim and Arab North American self-representation. He published a book titled *Portraits of Sam Hallick: Modern Arab Presence in 20th century North America* (Embassy Cultural House 2023). He is the founder of the Muslim Subjects website (2010-17), is the co-producer of a short documentary titled "Death of an Imam" (2010) that focuses on the 2008 FBI shooting of Imam Luqman Abdullah in a Detroit suburb. He is also the producer of the feature-length documentary film *Migrations of Islam: Migrations of Islam: Muslim American Voices in the 21st Century* (2015).



SARAH HAMBLIN
University of
Massachusetts Boston

Sarah Hamblin is Associate Professor of cinema studies and English at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research and teaching focus on global art cinema and graphic literatures, emphasizing the connections between aesthetics, affect, and radical politics. Her current research explores how finance capitalism, digital culture, and catastrophic climate change have transformed the radical imagination in contemporary world cinema.

Dr. Hamblin was part of the first cohort of Teacher Scholars, where she developed educational materials that examine the long history of the relationship between American voting rights and the comic form and the role that cartoons, comics, and graphic narratives have played in debates about voting rights and the nature and scope of American democracy. She also created assignments and activities grounded in deliberative dialogue and democratic pedagogy. Dr Hamblin is continuing this year as a facilitator for Cohort 2 Teacher Scholars.



SARAH RUDEWALKER
Spelman College

Sarah RudeWalker, an Associate Professor of English at Spelman College, is a scholar of the rhetoric and poetics of African American social movements. Her first book, *Revolutionary Poetics: The Rhetoric of the Black Arts Movement* (University of Georgia Press, 2023), is an account of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s that considers the strategic and passionate engagement of poets of the movement with rhetorical strategies and poetic forms particular to Black vernacular culture. Dr. RudeWalker is also a poet herself, and she reflects in her poetry on themes of race, violence, bodily trauma, motherhood, and American childhood. Her scholarly and creative work has been published in *Composition Studies*, *Callaloo*, the *Langston Hughes Review*, and *Pluck! The Journal of Affrilican Arts and Culture*. She teaches courses in the art of writing, the politics of Black poetry, composition, argumentation, Black language and literacies, African American literature, and creative production across the arts.



SCOTT HICKS
University of North Carolina,
Pembroke

Scott Hicks is professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke, North Carolina's historically American Indian university. He teaches African American literature, environmental literature, and first-year composition. His research centers on African American and environmental literatures, teaching and learning, and service-learning. Hicks is the co-editor, with Jane Haladay, of *Narratives of Educating for Sustainability in Unsustainable Environments* (Michigan State University Press, 2017). He participated in the MLA Institute on Reading & Writing at Access-oriented Institutions at George Mason University in 2023 and served as chair of UNCP's faculty senate from 2014 to 2016.

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SUZANNE SAVARIA
Portland State
University

Suzanne Savaria is co-director and founder of the Artist as Citizen Initiative at Portland State University. Interdisciplinary faculty in College of the Arts, School of Music and Theater, and University Studies, Suzanne has co-developed the new Social Justice and the Arts degree at PSU set to launch its first cohort in the fall of 2024. Creating and building curriculum and programming that develops agency in students, creativity in community and impact to society is the focus of Suzanne Savaria's work. A pianist, novice film-maker and overseas faculty in Spain every summer, her interests in arts, culture and community lead to a range of creative programming and civic engagement.



TANJA BACANI
Jefferson State
Community College

Tanja Bačani teaches History at Jefferson State Community College in Birmingham, Alabama, teaching survey courses including American History and Western Civilizations. Aside from traditional college students, she works with dual enrollment students - high school students who take college-level courses that count for both high school and college credit. This is also her third of teaching at the University of Montevallo's Gear-Up Summer Program which offers college courses and college-preparation activities for students from underserved communities. As a member of Teacher Scholars program, she looks forward to create and enhance classroom materials centered on the history of voting rights, voter suppression and the impact of everyday Americans on political outcomes. She is a first-generation college graduate and first-generation immigrant from Croatia.



TROY MARTIN
Virginia Commonwealth
University

Within the Department of Focused Inquiry at Virginia Commonwealth University, Troy teaches interdisciplinary courses to first and second year students. Designed as "foundations" in VCU's general education program, coursework highlights skills in communication, ethical reasoning, global & cultural responsiveness, problem solving and information literacy. Drawing from the social foundations of education and critical theory, Troy asks students to contextualize their own experiences of "schooling" while attending to and practicing these skills.

Troy's current research interests include posthumanist pedagogy, discourse analysis, ethnography, and critical animal theory. Earlier published scholarship examined ethics codes within the professionalization of education and social work and described lived experiences of ethical decision-making from teachers and social workers. Troy is a member of the American Educational Studies Association and the Animals and Society Institute.



WENDY WAGNER
George Washington
University

Wendy Wagner is the Director of Community Engaged Scholarship in the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service. Her masters and doctoral work were in college student learning and development, with a focus on learning experiences that facilitate civic mindedness and leadership development. In her role at GW, Wendy facilitates faculty development and support service-learning courses, supports community-based participatory research, and helps faculty build relationships with local community-serving organizations.

Dr. Wagner regularly teaches a "Leadership for Social Change" course, a Senior Capstone service-learning course in GW's School of Business. Her published work includes, Leadership for a Better World: Understanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (co-authored with Susan Komies, 2016) and a special issue of the New Directions for Student Leadership series, Leadership Development through Service-Learning (co-edited with Jennifer Pigza, 2016).