



University of  
Pittsburgh

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## Don Holmes

Assistant Professor of English  
Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences  
Department of English

### EDUCATION

#### University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC)

2021

Doctor of Philosophy—English

Dissertation: “Black Diplomatic Rhetoric: Literacy, Personhood, and Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century Black America”

Advisers: Jordynn Jack, Professor; Candace Epps-Robertson, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. Committee: Dan Anderson, Professor; GerShun Avilez, Associate Professor (UM-College Park, English); Tanya Shields, Associate Professor (Women and Gender Studies, UNC)

#### University of Southern Mississippi (USM)

2014

Bachelors of Arts-*Magna Cum Laude*—English

Minors: Black Studies and American History

Honors Thesis: “‘My Freedom is a Privilege Which Nothing Else Can Equal’: The Life and Writings of Venture Smith and Phillis Wheatley, American Slaves”

Adviser: Sherita L. Johnson, Associate Professor/Center for Black Studies, Director

### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

#### University of Pittsburgh

2023-to present Assistant Professor of English/Rhetoric

Department of English

#### Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)

2021-2023 Lecturer of English, Writing and Communication Program

Department of English, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences

### RESEARCH AND TEACHING AREAS

African American Rhetoric, African American Literature, American Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, African American Cultural History,

### PUBLICATIONS

*Peer-Reviewed Writing*

- 2022 Holmes, Don. "Provocation: Diplomatic Negotiations in Phillis Wheatley's Ambassadorial "On Being Brought from Africa to America." *Early American Literature*, vol. 57 no. 3, 2022, p. 687-699. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/eal.2022.0064](https://doi.org/10.1353/eal.2022.0064).
- 2021 Holmes, Don. A "charitable institution": University of North Carolina in the Era of the Civil War" in *Persistence through Peril: Episodes of College Life and Academic Endurance in the Civil War South*. Ronald Eric Platt and Holly Foster, General Editors. University Press of Mississippi, Spring 2021

***Under review/In-progress Writing***

- 2025 Holmes, Don. "Phillis Wheatley Peters' Advocacy during the Age of Revolution" (In-progress; Book chapter, *Phillis Wheatley Peters in Context* (Cambridge University Press, editors Wendy Roberts and April Langley)
- 2024 Holmes, Don. "The Rhetorical Presence of Elizabeth Key Grinstead" (In-progress; received initial review from *Early American Literature*)
- 2024 Holmes, Don. "Reading Lunsford Lane's Constitutive Rhetoric and his Abolitionist Possibilities" (In-progress; received initial review from *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*)

**INVITED CONFERENCE PAPERS**

- 2025 Modern Language Association Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA Invited Roundtable on Teaching Wheatley, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 2025
- 2024 "The Winning Rhetoric of Elizabeth Key Grinstead," Modern Language Association Conference, Panel: Reading #BlackJoy Before 1800, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 2024
- 2023 "Diplomatic Negotiations in Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from AFRICA to AMERICA," Modern Language Association Conference, Roundtable on Phillis Wheatley-Peters, San Francisco, California January 2023
- 2023 "Decidedly Other": Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* and Benjamin Banneker's Constitutive Rhetoric in the Early Republic," Society for Early Americanist Conference, Milestones in Black Studies Panel Stream, Baltimore, Maryland, June 2023

**SUBMITTED CONFERENCE PAPERS**

- 2024 "Writing for the Black Collective as Rhetorical Practice in the January 1st "Thanksgiving Sermons," Modern Language Association, Panel: Reconceptualizing Religion in Early African American Literature, Presidential Theme: [Celebration: Joy and Sorrow](#), Panel Chair with Dr. Kevin Pyon (Pennsylvania State University), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 2024
- 2019 "Lyrical Autobiography in Phillis Wheatley's 'On Being Brought from Africa to America,'" Association for the Study of African American Life and History Annual Conference, Charleston, South Carolina, October 2019
- "Identity (in) Place: Defining Generations in the Morales' "Ending Poem," The UNC Latina/o Studies Program, Spring 2019 Graduate Symposium, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, April 2019

- 2018** “a clever fellow”: The Subversive Trickster in *The Narrative of Lunsford Lane* South Atlantic MLA Conference, *NCLR Presents African American Writers of North Carolina I, 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Birmingham, Alabama, November 2018  
 “Phillis Wheatley’s Black Religious Rhetoric through Discursive Spaces.” *International Festival of Authors*, Humber College’s School of Liberal Arts and Sciences of Toronto, Canada, October 2018
- 2017** “Becoming Dispossessed in Phillis Wheatley’s ‘On Being Brought From Africa to America.’” South Atlantic MLA Conference, *Re-Thinking Generic Boundaries in African American Literature*, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2017  
 “Exposing the Black Man’s Burden in Alice Walker’s *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.” Northeast MLA Conference, *New Directions in Trauma Studies (Seminar)*, John Hopkins University, March 2017
- 2016** “‘Somewhere Between Slavery and Freedom’: #Blacklivesmatter, George Moses Horton, Toni Morrison, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s Struggle for Racial Equity.” *Race in the Americas Conference*, The Pennsylvania State University, April 2016
- 2014** “‘My Freedom is a Privilege Which Nothing Else Can Equal:’ The Life and Writings of Venture Smith and Phillis Wheatley.” Undergraduate Symposium on Research and Creative Activity, The University of Southern Mississippi, April 2014
- Winner – Donald Drapeau Undergraduate Research Prize. First Place - Best Work on a Topic in Race/Ethnicity
- “Practical: Civic Engagement for High School and College Students.” *The Freedom Summer 1964 - 2014 Conference*, The University of Southern Mississippi, June 2014
- Panel member: Civic Engagement for High School and College Students
  - Other panelists: Kevin Greene, Assistant Professor and Dick Cornville, Professor

*Public Facing Writing*

- 2020** Holmes, Don. “[The Lasting Fruits of Randall Kenan’s South: A Memorial Reflection](#).” In “A Gathering of Friends” with Dr. Andrew Belton, James Cobb, Dr. Jameela F. Dallis, Dr. Gale Greenlee, and Dr. El-Tariq Roberson. *Southern Cultures*. November 12, 2020.  
 Holmes, Don. “[To Iraq and Back: A Veteran’s Writing Journey](#).” *How I Write and Learn Blog Series*. UNC Writing Center. August 20, 2020.  
 Holmes, Don. “[I Like to Hear My Own Work](#).” *How I Write and Learn Blog Series*. UNC Writing Center. April 14, 2020.
- 2019** Holmes, Don. “[What is Masculinity Without Senseless Domination?](#)” *The Commons Crit. Indy Week*. May 30, 2019.  
 Holmes, Don. “[Black Masculinity Reconsidered Through Movement in “Nu Mas\(k\)ulinites](#).” *The Commons Crit. Indy Week*. May 30, 2019.  
 Holmes, Don. “[A Ritual Deconstruction of Toxic Masculinity Takes Shape in Silence](#).” *The Commons Crit. Indy Week*, May 23, 2019.
- 2018** Holmes, Don. “[Silent Sam: Geographic Marker of Violence, Politics, and the Racialized](#).” *Lift Institute*, September 6, 2018.

*Book Reviews*

- 2019** Holmes, Don. Review of *Passing*, by Nella Larsen, Editor Daryl Pickney and Illustrations by Maggie Little, *Carolina Quarterly* <https://thecarolinaquarterly.com/2019/02/passing-a-review/>
- 2018** Holmes, Don. Review of *The Souls of Black Folks*, by W.E.B. Du Bois, Editors Vann R. Newkirk and Steve Prince, *Carolina Quarterly* <https://thecarolinaquarterly.com/2018/01/the-souls-of-black-folk-a-review/>

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

*University of Pittsburgh* (2023-to-present)

- English 2264: Black Rhetorical History: Graduate Seminar in Rhetoric (Fall 2024)
- English 1200: American Literature to 1860 (Fall 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024)
- English 0570: Topics in Black Rhetoric: “The Word at Work” (Spring 2024)

*Carnegie Mellon University* (2021-2023)

- English 76-101: Interpretations and Arguments: Black Social Justice Rhetoric (Fall 2021-Spring 2023)—nine sections taught
- English 76-270: Writing for the Professions (Fall 2021-Spring 2023)—two sections taught
- English 76-106: Writing for Literature: Imagining a Black Future (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)—four sections taught

*North Carolina Central University—Aspiring Eagles Academy* (2017-2023)

- English 1110: Composition I—(Summers 2017-2023)—18 sections taught

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

- English 105: Rhetoric and Composition (Spring 2015 to Spring 2021)—Eleven sections taught
- English 128: Major American Authors (American Women’s Literature and the Production of Knowledge (Spring 2019)—one sections taught
- English 248: Intersectionality: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Justice (Spring 2018)—Two sections as Teaching Assistant
- UNC Writing Center (2015-2016); UNC Writing Center (2019-2021)
- Project Uplift, English 105: Rhetoric and Composition (Summer 2020)

**RELATED TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**WRITING WORKSHOP FACILITATOR:** Carolina’s Veteran Writing Workshop (Spring 2019)

**ACADEMIC COORDINATOR:** Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) (Summer 2016)

**GRADUATE RESEARCH CONSULTANT:** Office of Undergraduate Research, UNC-CH with Dr. William Sturkey, Assistant Professor, History 089: Black Life in the Fifties (Fall 2015)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Duke University Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP) Choosing Sides: Debate and Speech (Summer 2015)

## UNDERGRADUATE MENTORSHIP AND SERVICE

- Fall 2024 Tessa Madonna, Undergraduate Teaching Assistant Program, University of Pittsburgh
- Summer 2023 Maximillian Luer, Research Apprenticeship, SURA Program, Carnegie Mellon University
- Fall 2022 Victoria Shats, Independent Study, Archival Research in Print Culture Databases, Carnegie Mellon University
- Fall 2022 James, Pascale; Jiaheng Han; Dana Lau; and Willy Yeh WOVEN Student Publication mentorship, Carnegie Mellon University
- Summer 2022 Victoria Shats, Research Assistantship, SURA Program, Carnegie Mellon University

## GRADUATE MENTORSHIP AND SERVICE

- Spring 2023 Trista Powers, Independent Study, Black Rhetorical Humanism, Carnegie Mellon University
- 2021-2023 Trista Powers, PhD Committee, Department of English, Carnegie Mellon University

## EXTERNAL RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

- May-June 2019 **Embedded Writer**, The Commons at Carolina Performing Arts, Commons Residency
- Summer 2019 **Archival Assistant**, Dr. Jennifer Ho, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC
- 2018-2019 **Research Assistant**, Dr. Meta Jones, National Humanities Center, Durham, NC
- 2018-2019 **Affiliated Scholar for the Poetry of Phillis Wheatley**, Recited Verse, San Francisco, CA
- Spring 2018 **Research Assistant**, Dr. Andrea N. Williams, National Humanities Center, Durham, NC

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Spring 2024 **Invited Judge**, Department of English, Graduate Composition Awards Committee (Pitt)
- 2023-2024 **Member**, Department of English, Undergraduate Composition Awards Committee (Pitt)
- 2022-2023 **Member**, Department of English, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (CMU)
- Spring 2021 **Co-Facilitator**, Writing Program Workshop on Teaching Social Justice in Composition (UNC)
- Spring 2020 **Co-Facilitator**, Writing Program Workshop on Teaching Race and Politics in Composition (UNC)
- Fall 2019 **Co-Facilitator**, Writing Program Workshop on Designing an Inclusive Course (UNC)
- 2019-2020 **Writing Program Liaison**, Department of English and Comparative Literature (UNC)
- 2019-2020 **Writing in the Disciplines Assistant**, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Writing Program (UNC)
- 2019-2020 **Member**, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Peer Mentoring Committee (UNC)
- Spring 2019 **Teaching Mentor**, Center for Faculty Excellence, New TA Institute (UNC)
- Spring 2019 **Member**, Department of English and Comparative Literature *Tarheel Writing Guide* Revision Team (UNC)
- Spring 2019 **Member**, Department of English and Comparative Literature Teaching Institute Planning Committee (UNC)
- 2017-2019 **Programming Coordinator**, Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (UNC)
- 2015-2016 **Deputy Attorney General for the Graduate School**, Graduate and Professional Honor Court System (UNC)
- 2015-2016 **Co-Social Chair**, CoLEAGS, Department of English and Comparative Literature Graduate Student Association (UNC)

2014-2015 **Attorney General's Staff Member**, Graduate and Professional Honor System, UNC Chapel Hill  
(UNC)

#### INVITED TALKS/DISCUSSIONS/PANELS/PODCASTS

- 2024** **Your Bookstore Besties Interview with Dr. Don Holmes**, Your Bookstore Besties, Season 2, Episode 17, Becky Wierschen (Host), February 2024
- 2023** **Streamlining Resources and Lessons Plans In First Year Writing**, The Teaching Table, Writing and Communication Program, Carnegie Mellon University, April 2023
- 2023** **Your Bookstore Besties Interview with Dr. Don Holmes**, Your Bookstore Besties, Season 1, Episode 17, Becky Wierschen (Host), February 2023
- 2023** **The Black Writing Record *In* the World: From Salem's Witches to Douglass's Daguerreotypes**, Guest Lecture for Dr. Ezelle Sanford III "Introduction to African American History: Black Americans and the World" Seminar, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, January 2023
- 2021** **America's Failed Promises and Hopes in the "first fruits of peace,"** Saints Memorial Community Church, Philadelphia, PA, February 2021
- 2020** **What Do Writers Get Wrong About Black Folks?** Scuppernon Independent Book Sellers with Dr. Gale Greenlee and Dr. Jameela Dallis, *Remote* in North Carolina, October 2020
- Loving the Black Mind: Black Thoughts on Scholarship, Literature, and Readings**, Saints Memorial Community Church, Philadelphia, PA, February 2020
- 2019** **Discussion about Veterans' Writing Groups and Statuses in American Life**, The Center for Human Science, UNC Chapel Hill, September 2019
- Bring Forth New Life with Don Holmes**, The First-Gen Lounge Podcast, Session 46, Dr. Evingerlean D.B. Hudson (Host), January 2019
- 2017** **Workshop on Confederate Symbols and Pedagogy Panel**, UNC Chapel Hill, Center for the Study of the American South, October 2017
- Passing the Torch Panel**, UNC Chapel Hill, Black Graduate and Professional Student Association, September 2017
- McNair Scholars Program Orientation Panel**, UNC Chapel Hill, September 2017
- The Realities of Graduate School: Selecting the Right Program & Preparing for the Experience**, Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program, UNC Chapel Hill, June 2017
- McNair Scholars Summer Collaborative Panel**, McNair Scholars Program, UNC Chapel Hill, June 2017
- 2016** **Effective Oral Communication Presentation**, Tar Heel Preview Day Academic Session UNC Chapel Hill, October 2016
- Writing and Speaking Strategies**, Medgar Evers College, CUNY, New York, New York Music History Class (Jerrick Matthews, Prof.), October 2016
- 2015** **Race and Identity in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man***  
Carteret County High School, Newport, North Carolina (via Google+ Hangout)  
AP Literature and Composition Class Students, April 2015
- "What is Evidence": From Wheatley to Trethewey, the Black Poets' Powerful Pen**  
Project Uplift at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Presented two sections during summer 2015

### **PUBLIC WRITE-UPS**

- 2022** Stacy Kish, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University, [Investigating the Life of America's First Black Poetess](#)
- 2022** Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University, [Faculty Spotlight](#)
- 2022** Emma Pabst, "[Don Holmes Teaches Students to Find Their Own Voice.](#)" Department of English, News and Events, Carnegie Mellon University

### **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

- 2016** Kennard-Washington Men of Distinction Awards Banquet (USM)  
Keynote Speaker, Hattiesburg, MS, March 2016
- 2014** Remember '64 Freedom Day Re-Enactment March  
Closing Address, Hattiesburg, MS, January 2014
- 2014** Afro American Student Organization, Celebration of Scholastic Excellence  
Keynote Speaker, Hattiesburg, MS, April 2014
- 2013** Pike County Mississippi Scholars Banquet  
Keynote Speaker, Summit, MS, April 2013

### **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

- 2022** Educator of the Year, Black Alumni Gala, USM (Nominated)
- 2021** Krista Turner Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching (\$100)
- 2021** ACLS Emerging Voices Fellowship, UNC Chapel Hill (Nominated)
- 2020** Krista Turner Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching (\$100)
- 2018** Initiative for Minority Excellence (UNC) Travel Grant (\$800)
- 2017** Center for Faculty Excellence Graduate Student Fellowship (\$5000)
- 2016** Ford Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship (Honorable Mention)
- 2014** Julius Sylvester Hanner Memorial Fund Fellowship (2014-2015)
- 2014** Alpha Phi Alpha Scholar Scholarship Award Winner (\$2000)
- 2014** The University of Southern Mississippi Student Hall of Fame
- 2009** United States Army Commendation Medal (Operation Iraqi Freedom 09-10)

### **FOUNDATIONS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Modern Language Association

Rhetoric Society of America

Society for Early Americanist

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Member (Pledged, Mu Xi Chapter, USM, Spring 2012)

### **ARMED SERVICE VETERAN STATUS**

- 2006-2012 United States Army, Mississippi Army National Guard, Military Police Officer  
Operation Iraqi Freedom, 09-10: Awarded Army Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service