

**RENÉE ALEXANDER CRAFT**

Department of Communication | Curriculum in Global Studies  
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**EDUCATION:**

Ph.D.	Northwestern University Department of Performance Studies Dissertation: “Art as Survival: The Congo Tradition of Portobelo, Panama”	June 2005
M.A.	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of Communication Studies	June 1999
B.A.	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of English	May 1995

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:**

Acting Director, Southern Oral History Program University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Aug. 2015-
Associate Professor Department of Communication Studies and Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	July 2015-
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies and Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2015
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2005-2007
Instructor, Department of Performance Studies Northwestern University	Fall 2002
Research Fellow, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	1998-1999
Instructor, Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 1998

**HONORS:**

Inaugural Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship The Whiting Foundation	2016
Inaugural Digital Innovations Lab/ Institute for the Arts and Humanities Fellowship University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2013
Junior Faculty Development Award University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2009
Fulbright Fellowship Panama	2002-2003
University Fellowship	2000-2004
Ahijada Fellowship Spelman College Summer Art Colony	2000 and 2001
Order of the Golden Fleece University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's oldest and highest honor society	1995
Francis Phillips Travel Scholarship South Africa and Zimbabwe	1995

**BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTS OF SCHOLARSHIP:****Books & Chapters (Completed):**

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2015. *When the Devil Knocks: The Congo Tradition and the Politics of Blackness in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Panama*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press. (January 2015)

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2014. "How does it feel to be a problem?": Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe's *Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of Academic Clarity and Inclusion*" in *Solo/Black/Woman: Performing Global Traditions and Local Interventions*, edited by E. Patrick Johnson and Ramon H Rivera-Servera, 167-184. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press.

**Books & Chapters (In Process):**

Alexander Craft, Renée. *She Looks Like Us: A Novel*  
*She Looks Like Us* a patchwork quilt of two fictional middle-class Black Diaspora families—one situated in the southern US and the other located on the Caribbean coast of the Republic of Panama. It draws heavily on my ethnographic research with the Congo community of Portobelo, Panama as well as my experiences of growing up in a Black Southern "funeral home" family in Charlotte, NC.

### Refereed Articles:

Alexander Craft, Renée and Pam Lach. 2016. "Staging *Digital Portobelo*: Humanities Scholarship, Digital Tools, and Collaboration as Acts of Persistent Translation." *Public: A Journal of Imagining America* 3 (2).

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2008a. "'¡Los gringos vienen!' ('The Gringos Are Coming!'): Female Respectability and the Politics of Congo Tourist Presentations in Portobelo, Panama." *Transforming Anthropology: Journal of the Association of Black Anthropologists* 16 (1): 20–31.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2008b. "Una Raza, Dos Etnias': The Politics of Be(com)ing/Performing Afropanameño." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 3 (2): 123–26.

Alexander Craft, Renée, Meida McNeal, Mshai S. Mwangola, and Queen Meccasia E. Zabriskie. 2007. "The Quilt: Towards a Twenty-First Century Black Feminist Ethnography." *Performing Research* 12 (3): 55–73.

### Products of Interdisciplinary and Engaged Scholarship:

Digital Portobelo: Art + Scholarship + Cultural Preservation

<http://digitalportobelo.org/>

Initiated through an inaugural 2013-2014 UNC Digital Innovations Lab/Institute for the Arts and Humanities Fellowship, "Digital Portobelo: Art + Scholarship + Cultural Preservation" is a collaborative, interdisciplinary, digital humanities initiative that focuses on the Afro-Latin community of Portobelo, Panama. It represents the second phase of Alexander Craft's fourteen-year performance-centered critical ethnographic research that began in 2000.

### Products of creative activity: Selected performances

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|---|-------------|
| "El Museo Congo"<br>San Jeronimo Fort<br>Portobelo, Panama  | Summer 2003 |
| "Ferias de Portobelo XXI:<br>An Evening of Bilingual and Bicultural Poetry"<br>Spelman College Summer Art Colony<br>Casa Góngora<br>Panama City, Panama | Summer 2003 |
| "Mojonga: A Performative Altar to Former Congo Queens"<br>Spelman College Summer Art Colony<br>Taller Portobelo,<br>Portobelo, Panama                   | Summer 2003 |
| "Dancing with the devil at the crossroads:<br>La historia de los Congos de Portobelo"   | Spring 2002 |

Department of Performance Studies  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, IL

- “Making the Sign of the Cross” Taller Portobelo Summer 2001  
Portobelo, Panama in conjunction with Spelman College
- “La historia de los Congos de Portobelo:  
Translating History Through the Body” Spring 2001  
Department of Performance Studies  
Northwestern University

**Refereed Unpublished Oral Presentations and/or abstracts:**

- “Playing with the devil and *winning*: Carnival and the Alchemy of Transmuting  
Misery Into Hope Through Performative Resistance”  
American Studies Association Conference  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, October 8-11, 2015
- “The Devil is in the Details: Digital Humanities Scholarship, Cultural Preservation,  
and Radical Collaboration”  
HASTAC 2015: The Art and Science of Digital Humanities Conference  
Michigan State University, May 27-30, 2015
- “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: A “Sankofa” reflection on the  
Panama Canal’s relationship to 20<sup>th</sup> Century Race and Ethnicity in the Republic”  
Performance Studies (i)nternational: Interoceánico: Istmo | Zone | Canal  
Panama City, Panama, January 5-11, 2015
- “Digital Portobelo: On Critical/Performance Ethnography and a Decolonial Approach  
to the Digital Humanities”  
100<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Communication Association  
Chicago, IL, November 20-23, 2014
- “The Devil is in the Details:  
Engaged Qualitative Research and the Digital Humanities”  
Institute for the Arts and Humanities/Digital Innovations Lab  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Spring 2014
- “Collaboration at & beyond the Digital Innovation Lab”  
Presented with Stephanie Barnwell, Programs Coordinator, Carolina Digital  
Humanities Initiative and Sandra Davidson, MA Department of American Studies  
CHAT “Collaborations in Humanities, Arts, & Technology”  
North Carolina State University, Spring 2014

- “The Portobelo Digital Oral History Project: Resistance as Intervention, Collaboration, Friction, and Dynamism” 7th Biennial Conference Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) Conference, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, October 30-November 3, 2013
- “The Portobelo Digital Oral History Project: Critical Ethnography, New Media, and the Unfinished Business of Co-performative Witnessing” Department of Performance Studies Northwestern University, Spring 2013
- “Zora's Daughters: Quilting Toward Power, Possibility, and Community ” International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 16-19, 2012
- “Blessing the Devil: Dualism, Parody and Double-Consciousness in the Congo Tradition of Portobelo, Panama” Thirtieth International Congress of Latin American Studies, San Francisco, May 23-26, 2012
- “Remember Celedonio: El Diablo Mayor de Portobelo, Panama” Sixth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 26-29, 2010
- “Food for Thought’ A Legacy in Four Courses: Dwight Conquergood and the Politics of Radical Presence,” Fourth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 14-17, 2008
- “El Dia de la Etnia Negra: The Politics of Be(com)ing/Performing “Afropanameño,” Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD), The University of the West Indies, Barbados October 9-12, 2007
- “Adrian Piper: The Proper Etiquette of Black Rage and White Racism (A Survival Guide)” American Studies Association, Philadelphia October 11-14, 2007
- “The Quilt: Toward a Twenty-first Century Black Feminist Ethnography,” Collaboratively-presented with Meida McNeal, and Mshāi S. Mwangola, National Communication Association Conference, San Antonio, Texas November 15-19, 2006
- “Performing Race, Gender and Operation Just Cause in Portobelo, Panama,” Performance Studies International Conference, London, England June 15-18, 2006
- “When the Devil Rides the Bus: Toward a Black Diaspora Circum-Local Paradigm” Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Spring 2006

“Expressing black subjectivities: Mapping the politics of nation, culture and ethnic identity in Afro-diasporic performance practices,” Performance Studies International Conference, London, England June 15-18, 2006

“Between the Devil and the Deep Blues Sea: Twentieth Century Panamanian “Blackness,” Identity and Belonging,” Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico March 15-19, 2006

“¡Los gringos vienen! / ‘The gringos are coming!’: Female Respectability and the Politics of Congo Tourist Presentations in Portobelo, Panama,” Institute of Diaspora Studies Northwestern, University, Fall 2005

### Book Review

Alexander Craft, Renée. Review of *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, by Dwight Conquergood. Edited by E. Patrick Johnson. *TDR*. (Spring 2015).

### TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

Graduate Courses:

Critical/ Performance Ethnography

Bridge Undergraduate/Graduate Courses:

Black/African Diaspora and Performance  
Race, Ethnicity and Performance  
Field Methods Practicum

Upper-Division Undergraduate Courses:

Performance of Women of Color  
US Black Culture and Performance

Introductory Undergraduate Courses:

Introduction to the Performance Studies

First Year Seminar: Performance of African American Literature

### DIRECTED RESEARCH:

Graduate Theses and Dissertations:

Director

PhD Kashif Powell,

Defended Spring 2014

Title: *Specters And Spooks:*

*Developing A Hauntology Of The Black Body*

MA Ariel Gratch,

Defended Spring 2007

Title: *Haunting Stories of Abuse: Revealing Ghosts*

*Through Critical Performance Ethnography*

Director

PhD Sonny Kelly	Current
PhD Elizabeth Melton	Current
PhD Eric Sorensen	Current

Graduate Committee Member

PhD Chis Courtheyn	Defended Spr. 2016
PhD Deb Royals-Mizerk	Defended Spr. 2016
PhD Jade Davis	Defended Summer 2015
PhD Armond Towns	Defended Spr. 2015
PhD Alison Neff,	Defended Fall 2013
PhD Billye Rhodes,	Defended Spr. 2012
PhD Sam Szczur,	Defended Fall 2010
PhD Billie Murray,	Defended Spr. 2010
PhD Elizabeth Nelson,	Defended Fall 2009
MA Marjorie Hazeltine,	Defended Spr. 2010

Graduate Committee Member

PhD Shannon Wong Lerner (ABD)	Current
PhD Helen Orr (ABD)	Current
PhD Wayne Rysavy (ABD)	Current
PhD Pavithra Kathanadhi (ABD)	Current
PhD Marie Garlock (ABD)	Current
MA Jessica Klinke	On-Hold
PhD Annissa Clarke	On-Hold

Undergraduate Honors Theses

Director

Rashmi Iyer,	Defended Spr. 2013
Title: <i>Homeboy Industries: Breaking Down the Barriers to Reentry</i>	

Undergraduate Honors Theses Committee Member

Korde Tuttle	Defended Spr. 2013
Elizabeth Anderson	Defended Spr. 2010
Aja Barratto	Defended Spr. 2009
Marie Garlock	Defended Spr. 2007

**GRANTS:**

Whiting Public Engagement Grant	2016
Primary Researcher	
Total Direct Grant Amount: \$10,000	
*This project grant accompanied the Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship	

University Research Council Research Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Grant to pay for indexing of <i>When the Devil Knocks</i> Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,017, Percentage of Effort: 20	Fall 2014
Institute of African American Research Small Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$500, Percentage of Effort: 100	2014
Digital Innovations Lab/ Institute for the Arts and Humanities Project Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$15,000, Percentage of Effort: 65 *This project grant accompanied the DIL/IAH Fellowship	2013
University Research Council Research Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,500, Percentage of Effort: 100	Fall 2013
Ella Foundation Pratt Emerging Artists Grant Durham Arts Council, Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,500, Percentage of Effort: 70	2013

### **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:**

Reviewer, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2016
Dean's Faculty Diversity Advisory Group College of Arts and Sciences University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2016-
Chancellor's Task Force on the Arts University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2015
Selection Committee 2014-2015 Digital Innovation Lab/Institute for the Arts & Humanities Faculty Fellowship Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2014
Board of Trustees Member (elected) North Carolina Humanities Council Charlotte, NC	Fall 2013-



Season Grant Selection Committee Durham Arts Council Durham, NC	Spring 2013-
Faculty Steering Committee Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2013-
Search Committee Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative Programs Coordinator Sponsored by The Department of American Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2013
Search Committee Institute for African American Research, Director Search University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2012 -Spring 2013
Graduate Studies Committee Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2011-
Search Committee Department of Dramatic Arts University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2008
PhD Core Curriculum Committee (Ad-Hoc) Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2009
Process Series Selection Committee Department of Communication Studies and Institute of Arts and Humanities University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-
Undergraduate Studies Committee Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2008
UNC- liaison/Program Director Creative Currents: Art + Culture + Collaboration: Arts organization dedicated to creating mutually beneficial, transcultural collaborations among artists and scholars focused on Africa and the Black Diaspora (Formerly "Taller Portobelo Norte") Portobelo, Panama/Atlanta, Georgia	Fall 2005-

