

## Want to Learn More About the Program?

Contact us for any questions about joining the American Studies program at KSU:

**Program Director: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers**  
mspiers1@kennesaw.edu

**Program Coordinator: Daisha Huiel**  
dkuyken2@kennesaw.edu

**Kennesaw State University**  
Norman J. Radow College of Humanities  
and Social Sciences

**American Studies Program**  
Interdisciplinary Studies Department  
385 Cobb Avenue  
Suite LB401  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
470-578-2431



**KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
NORMAN J. RADOW COLLEGE OF  
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
*Interdisciplinary Studies Department*



Spring 2024

MASTER OF ARTS  
**AMERICAN  
STUDIES**  
NEWSLETTER

### **MAST Alum Breighlynn Polk Named Inaugural Fellow of the HBCU Radio Preservation Project**

The project, in partnership with Yellow Springs, Ohio-based radio station WYSO, was awarded a \$5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. The mission of the four-year initiative is to collaborate with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) to support radio stations at HBCUs in preserving their legacies and cultural heritage. As the first fellow, Breighlynn will participate in the educational development for the project, establishing models, resources, and training materials that will support advancing the preservation of African American stories through HBCU radio.



## ISD Valentine's Day Symposium



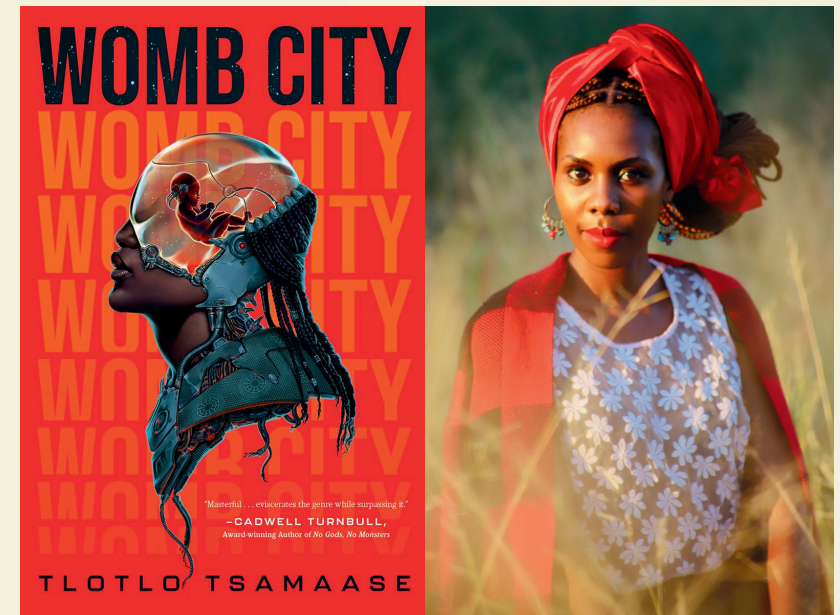
L-R: Dr. Roxanne Donovan, Dr. Neysa Figueroa, Jin Jo, Daisha Huiel, Dr. Seneca Vaught, Dr. Lydia Ferguson, Dr. Nichole Guillory, Jordan Jackson

ISD's "In Praise of Love" Valentine's Day Symposium explored the creative expressions of love through cultural connections. The event featured performances by KSU faculty and staff, including MAST alum Daisha Huiel, who performed a poem from her thesis titled "Labor: From Root to Tip" and MAST faculty affiliate Dr. Charles Parrott, who performed Craig Arnold's poem, "Bird-Understander."

## Womb City Book Club

MAST will host a summer reading series of the new novel *Womb City*.

Tlotlo Tsamaase's genre-bending Afrofuturist horror novel blends *The Handmaid's Tale* with *Get Out* in an adrenaline-packed, cyberpunk ghost story exploring motherhood, memory, and a woman's right to her own body. *Womb City* throws us into a near-future Botswana where "everyone lives forever" through technologies of body-hopping that allow souls to be reimplanted into bodies after death.



To participate in the book club discussion and receive a free copy of the novel, please RSVP to Daisha Huiel at [dkuyken2@kennesaw.edu](mailto:dkuyken2@kennesaw.edu)



## New Student Alert!

**Victoria Bell** is a native of Savannah, GA. She loves to read all things Black Feminism and shopping is her obsession. She looks forward to completing research for her Capstone with her committee members.

**Diana Baber** has returned to school after an absence of several decades. She currently serves as the chief operating officer of Murphy-Harpst Children's Center, a residential treatment program for children with behavioral problems in the custody of the state of Georgia. She is an avid knitter and reader and is devoted to her family.

## MAST End of Year Celebration

Please join us for the end-of-year celebration for MAST students and faculty. Dinner will be held on Thursday, May 9th at El Taco Azteca in the Kennesaw Square at 6pm. Partners and families are welcome. RSVP to Daisha Huiel no later than Friday, May 3rd to make sure you are included in our reservation.

## Successfully Defended!



*MAST Alumni Breighlynn Polk and Daisha Huiel*

**Daisha Huiel** successfully defended her capstone project, "Motherland Drip: Examining Performativity in Contemporary Southern Black Motherhood," in December 2023. Her thesis committee members were Drs. Griselda Thomas and Seneca Vaught.

# SASA 2023 Conference



L-R: Dr. Rudy Aguilar, Edwin Hernandez, Malika David, Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers, Daisha Huiel, Lauryl Jennings, Kaelyn Ireland



Dr. Rudy Aguilar

The 2023 Southeastern American Studies Association (SASA) conference took place in Atlanta in September. Dr. Maurice Hobson was the keynote speaker, and MAST faculty and students were heavily involved in the event. Our own Dr. Rebecca Hill serves as the SASA president, and five of our students presented their work. Kelly Hoomes (“Remembering When Gardens Unified: How Public Memory Influences 21st Century Victory Gardens”), Malika David (“Senegambia and the American South: Lost Cousins”), and Susan Ward (“Unification of Race Across Divisions: How Grady Memorial Hospital Became a Communal Space”) presented on the panel entitled, “Unexpected Unity: Exposing the Potential of Common Ground.”

Breighlynn Polk (“The Second Side: A Historic Retelling of African American Life in Iberia Parish”) presented on the panel entitled, “Personal Projects: Family History, Oral History and Autoethnography.”

Kaelyn Ireland (“The Student Committee for Travel to Cuba and the Right to Travel”) presented on the panel entitled, “Pedagogies of Social Change: From Reconstruction to the New Left.”

MAST’s own DJ, Dr. Rudy Aguilar, turned up the afterparty and kept the crowd on their feet!

Find out more here:  
[SASA 2023 Conference](#)