

Morgan J. Robinson
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor, Mississippi State University, Fall 2018 – Present
Director, Institute for the Humanities, Mississippi State University, Fall 2024-Spring 2027

EDUCATION

Princeton University
PhD in History, May 2018
Dissertation: “An Uncommon Standard: A Social and Intellectual History of Swahili, 1864-1925”

Princeton University
MA in History, September 2013
Fields: Pre-Colonial Africa; Modern Africa; Islam and the Indian Ocean

Yale University
BA in History, May 2008

PUBLICATIONS

Book

A Language for the World: The Standardization of Swahili
(Ohio University Press “New African Histories” Series, November 2022)

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“When a Wonder is Not a Wonder: Swahili, Translation, and the Communication of Knowledge,”
Isis 114, no.2 (June 2023): 233-248).

“The Idea of the *Upelekwa*: Constructing a Transcontinental Community in Eastern Africa, 1888-1896,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 81, no.1 (January 2020): 85-106.

“La Belle Époque from Eastern Africa: An Individual Experience of the ‘Globalizing’ World, 1898-1918,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 13, no.4 (November 2019): 584-600.

“Cutting pice and running away: Discipline, education and choice at the UMCA Boys' Industrial House, Zanzibar, 1901-1905,” *Southern African Review of Education*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (December 2013): 9-24.

Encyclopedia and Book Chapters

“History of the Standard Swahili Language,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*. Published online 30 January 2024. (<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.1012>)

“Binding Words: Student Biographical Narratives and Religious Conversion,” in Klaas van Walraven (ed.), *The Individual in African History: The Importance of Biography in African Historical Studies* (Brill: Leiden and Boston, 2020).

Popular Writing

“Colonial Archives and Decolonizing Impulses: Überlegungen zur Praxis afrikanischer Geschichte,” published in the blog of the *Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen* (February 2024). (<https://blog.kulturwissenschaften.de/colonial-archives-and-decolonizing-impulses/>)

“Kiswahili: how a standard version of the east African language was formed—and spread across the world,” published in the online periodical “The Conversation” (July 2023). (<https://theconversation.com/kiswahili-how-a-standard-version-of-the-east-african-language-was-formed-and-spread-across-the-world-208251>)

Book Reviews

Labour and Christianity in the Mission: African Workers in Tanganyika and Zanzibar, 1864-1926, by Michelle Liebst (Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2021). Published in the *Journal of African History* (August 2022).

Sheng: Rise of a Kenyan Swahili Vernacular, by Chege Githiora (Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2018). Published in the *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (January 2020).

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Humboldt Foundation Renewed Research Stay
Professorship for Global History, Potsdam, Germany – April - May 2024

International Fellow at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut/Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities, Essen, Germany – October 2023 - June 2024

Humboldt Foundation Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Researchers
Institute of Asian and African Studies, Berlin, Germany – January 2021 - July 2022

Strategic Research Initiative Seed Funding,
Mississippi State University College of Arts & Sciences, 2019

Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant for Research in European, African, or Asian History
American Historical Association, 2019

Graduate Teaching Award, Princeton University, 2018

Quin Morton Teaching Fellowship, Princeton Writing Program, 2017-2018

Graduate Fellow, Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies
Dissertation writing grant, 2016-2017

Graduate Research Fellow, Princeton Center for the Study of Religion
Dissertation writing grant, 2016-2017

Research Grant
Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, May 2012

INVITED TALKS

Book Talk, “A Language for the World”
Lecture Series in African and Global History, Ghent University, February 2024

Book Talk, “A Language for the World”
Professorship of Global History, University of Potsdam, December 2023

“Cake Baking & Knowledge Making: Talking About Research in East Africa”
Kolloquium des Kulturwissenschaftlichen Instituts, Essen, Germany, November 2023

“Bureaucrats in Space: The Places and People of the Post in German East Africa”
History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Colloquium, University of Oklahoma,
September 2023

Keynote: “Cake Baking & Knowledge Making: Scholarship from Kiel to Kenya and Back Again”
*Internationales Kolloquium zur Gräzistik und Wissensforschung der Antike und ihrer
Rezeption*, Christian Albrechts Universität zu Kiel, July 2022

SELECT CONFERENCES AND OTHER PRESENTATIONS

“Conjunctions of Archives and Public Spheres,” Basel, Switzerland, October 2023
Conference co-hosted by the *Basler Afrika Bibliographien* and the Centre for African
Studies at the University of Basel
Paper: “*Um Lamu Herum*: Documenting Spaces of Knowledge Production”

African Studies Association, Philadelphia, PA, November 2022
Chair and discussant for panel: “Organizing One’s Thoughts: Creating Categories from the
Baraza to the OAU”

Vereinigung für Afrikawissenschaften in Deutschland
Albert Ludwig University, Freiburg, Germany, June 2022
Paper: “Cake Baking and Knowledge Making: The Exchange of Ideas During Food
Production”

African Studies Association, [Virtual] November 2020
Chair, “Language Policy in Kenya: Multilingualism as Both Problem and Solution”

- History of Science Society, [November 2020, Postponed]
Moderator and presenter for panel: “The Creativity of Clerkship”
- African Studies Association, Boston, MA, November 2019
Chair and paper: “Synchronicity and Divergence: Multiple Timelines of Standard Swahili”
- History of Science Society, Utrecht, Netherlands, July 2019
Moderator and paper: “Participation and Demand: Swahili and the Work of the Inter-Territorial Language Committee”
- 19th Annual Africa Conference at the University of Texas at Austin, March 2019
Panel: “Personal Narratives and Questions of Identity in Africa and its Diaspora”
- History and Politics of Belonging in African Indian Ocean Societies Workshop
Martin-Luther University, Halle, Germany, June 2018
Paper: “Belonging Nowhere and Everywhere at Once: Agnes Sapuli and the Cosmopolitanism of the Universities' Mission”
- African Studies Association, Chicago, IL, November 2017
Chair and paper: “The Story of Agnes Sapuli: Biography and African Intellectual History”
- African Literature Association, Yale University, June 2017
Paper: “In the Pages of *Msimulizi*: Tracing a Swahili Literary Magazine and Network of the Late-Nineteenth Century”
- African Studies Association, Washington, D.C., December 2016
Paper: “Enthusiasm Among Bibis: Gender, Religion, and Race in Nineteenth Century Zanzibar”
- African Studies Centre, Leiden University, September 2016
Paper: “Binding Words: Student Biographical Narratives and Religious Conversion”
- Yale University InterAsia Initiative, Yale University, February 2016
Paper: “Binding Words: Student Conversion Narratives and the Establishment of the Zanzibar Protectorate”
- African Studies Association, San Diego, CA, November 2015
Paper: “*Msimulizi* and the Everyday Narration of Community in East Africa, 1888-1896”
- African Studies Association, Indianapolis, IN, November 2014
Paper: “‘Am I Not Baptised?': Violence, Re-naming and the Students of the Universities' Mission in Nineteenth Century Zanzibar”

SELECT ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

East Africa

Zanzibar National Archives
Tanzania National Archives

United Kingdom

British National Archives,
SOAS Special Collections,
Oxford Bodleian Libraries, Commonwealth and African Collections

Germany and Switzerland

Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek
Staatsarchiv Hamburg
Humboldt Universitätsarchiv
Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz
Orientabteilung, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
Schriftarchiv der Vereinte Evangelische Mission
Iwalewahaus at Universität Bayreuth
Basler Afrika Bibliographien

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Swahili, German

SELECT COURSES TAUGHT

Modern Africa – undergraduate survey
African Civilizations – undergraduate survey
Justice After Empire – first-year undergraduate seminar
Imperialism and Colonialism in Africa – graduate seminar
Africa in the History of Science – graduate seminar
History of Science – graduate seminar
Global Colonialism and Imperialism – graduate seminar
Histories of Time – graduate seminar
Comparative Slavery – graduate seminar
Historiography – graduate seminar

SERVICE

History Representative to Arts & Sciences Faculty Senate, August 2022-December 2023

Member, Graduate Committee, Dept. of History, Mississippi State University, 2019-August 2024

Graduate Recruiting Coordinator, Dept. of History, Mississippi State University, 2019-Present

Comprehensive Exams Committee Member (Mississippi State University)

Olusegun Olatunji, PhD candidate, Spring 2025; Hubert Takyi, MA candidate, April 2024;

Kymara Sneed, Ph.D. candidate, October 2021; Michael Harris, M.A. degree awarded June 2020; Josh Bader, History Ph.D. candidate, October 2019; Jack Verhayden, Ph.D. candidate, October 2019; Khadim Doumouya, French M.A. degree awarded June 2019

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Member

Scott Wooley (successfully defended February 2023) and Ian Davis (successfully defended October 2021) (Mississippi State University); external reader for Florian Magogo, Department of History at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Article manuscript reviews for the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (April 2020) and the *Journal of African History* (August 2023)