Feb. 4: Dr. Diana Martha Louis

“Oppression Makes a Wise Man Mad”: Slavery, Asylums and Psychiatric Discourses in Nineteenth-century America

This talk will consider how slave narrators such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass engaged broader national debates about slavery and in/sanity among blacks. Further, it will address how pro-slavery and psychiatric discourses about the “colored insane” illuminate the interplay between two of America’s prototypical institutions of confinement — slavery and asylums.

Feb. 25: Prof. Walton Muyumba

Afropolitanism, Shame, and Counter-Realism in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Americanah

This talk begins with an examination of Adichie’s use of silence in Americanah to represent shame’s incommensurable presence at the center of Nigerian immigrant experiences. It claims that Adichie’s silences in Americanah introduce readers to a new, fourth stage of African writing: the age of decolonized-Afropolitanism. Finally, this presentation will examine how Adichie’s decolonized-Afropolitanism is also a critique of our trained expectations and desires for Western realism, offering in its stead, a counter-realist style.

Apr. 1: Prof. Akwasi Owusu-Bempah

On the Policing of Black Males in Toronto, Canada

Canada prides itself as a multicultural nation that welcomes over 250,000 immigrants from around the world each year. Despite its own claims of tolerance and acceptance, Canada’s major social institutions have not been immune from allegations of racism and discrimination. This talk examines Black males perceptions of and experiences with the police in Toronto, presented in the context of current discussions about race and justice in North America and around the world.