

**BRETT WILLIAMS**  
**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**  
**February 2017**

**Education**

1969 BA in History, Tufts University, Magna cum Laude  
1975 Ph.D. in Anthropology, University of Illinois

**(Selected) Employment**

1969-1970 Tenant organizer in public housing for the Alliance of Settlement Houses, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
1976-2016 Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor, American Studies and Anthropology, American University. During this time I have served as Director of the Women's Studies Program, Director of the American Studies Program, and Chair of the Department of Anthropology.  
Spring 2002 Visiting Distinguished Professor, University of Louisville, Department of Liberal Studies.

**(Selected) Honors and Awards**

Seafarers' Yacht Club Commitment Award 2007  
Prize for Distinguished Achievement in the Critical Study of North America; Society for the Anthropology of North America, 2002  
American University Alumni Legacy Award, 2002  
John Henry Memorial Award, John Henry Memorial Foundation, 1997  
Praxis Award, Society for Applied Anthropology, 1989  
President, Gold Key Honor Society, Tufts University, 1969

**(Selected) Publications**

**Books:**

*Living at the Bottom of the Watershed: Ecologies of Injustice in Washington, D.C.* (Under contract and Submitted to NYU Press)  
*New Landscapes of Inequality*, co-edited with Jane Collins and Micaela di Leonardo), School of American Research Press, 2008  
*Debt For Sale*, University of Pennsylvania. 2004. Selected as one of the National Chamber Foundation's (NCF) *Books That Drive the Free Enterprise Debate*.  
*The Politics of Culture*. Smithsonian Press, 1991. Editor  
*Upscaling Downtown: Stalled Gentrification in Washington, DC*. Cornell University Press, 1988. 5<sup>th</sup> edition in print  
*John Henry*. Greenwood Press, 1983.  
*Exploring Total Institutions*. Stipes Publishing, 1977. Co-edited with Robert

Gordon

### **Research Reports (Selected)**

*Park Users and Neighbors: Civil War Defenses of Washington and Anacostia Park, District of Columbia.* Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1997. With Tanya Ramos, Jacqueline Brown, Ray Chesterfield, Melinda Crowley, Benjamin Daugherty, Robin Dean, Lisa Kinney, Sherri Lawson, Susie McFadden, Patrick Pierce, Kenneth Pitt, and Terik Washington

*Ellen Wilson Dwellings*, in Volume II Case Studies, and Journal of Research, for HOPE VI, Washington, D.C.: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996, and 1998. With Jenell Williams, Sherri Lawson, Jonathan Ortiz, Angelito Palma, Melinda Crowley, Marianna Blagburn, Katrina Green, and Sheila Wise

### **Book Chapters (Selected)**

Beyond Gentrification: Investment and Abandonment on the Waterfront. In Capital Dilemmas, edited by Derek Hyra and Sabiyha Prince. Routledge 2016. Pp. 227-228

Fragments of a Limited Mutuality. In Roger Sanjek, editor, Mutuality: Anthropology's Changing Terms of Engagement. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. Pp 238-248.

Race. In Donald Nonini, editor, A Companion Volume to Urban Anthropology. Wiley-Blackwell, 2014. Pp 210-221.

You may eat freely of every tree in the garden: On guilt and debt. In Pairi Daeza. Revisiting Paradise, Franciska Bark and Gunther Vogt, editors, Lars Muller Publishers, 2011

Life Inside a Watershed: The Political Ecology of the Anacostia River. In East of the River: Continuity and Change. Gail Lowe, editor. Smithsonian Institution Press, 2011.

Body and Soul: Profits from Poverty. In The Insecure American, edited by Catherine Besteman and Hugh Gusterson. University of California Press 2010.

John Henry. In Encyclopedia of African American History. Facts on File. In press.

Embodying Inequality: Race, Illness, and Poverty in Washington, D.C. Since the 1960s. In African-American Urban History Since World War II. Edited by Kenneth Kusmer and Joseph Trotter. University of Chicago Press, 2009. pp 142-160

The Precipice of Debt. In New Landscapes of Inequality. Edited by Jane Collins, Micaela di Leonardo, and Brett Williams. School of American Research. 2008.

John Henry. In West Virginia Encyclopedia. West Virginia Humanities Council: 2006.

Celebrating Kris Leman. John Gatewood, editor

Gentrification. In The Encyclopedia of Homelessness. Berkshire Publishing

Group 2004:

Environmental Justice. In The Encyclopedia of Community. Sage 2003: 458-462.

Environmental Justice. In Encyclopedia of World Environmental History. Volume II. Pp. 451-454 Ed by Shepard Krech III, J.R, McNeill, and Carolyn Merchant. Routledge: 2002.

Gentrification, Stalled. In The Encyclopedia of Community. Sage 2003: 547.  
Washington, District of Columbia. In The Encyclopedia of Cities. Grolier, 2002: 386-393.

What's Debt Got To Do With It? In The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Politics, Policy, and Impoverished People in the US, edited by Judith Goode and Jeff Maskovsky. NYU Press, 2001: 79-102. Reprinted in Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, Routledge Press, 2010.

A Man Ain't Nothin But a Man. In A Question of Manhood edited by Earnestine Jenkins and Darlene Clark Hine. Indiana University Press 2001: 371-386.

Research Practices. In Festival of American Folklife Program Book, Smithsonian Institution, 2000. With Marianna Blagburn.

Babies and Banks: 'The Reproductive Underclass' and the Raced, Gendered Masking of Debt. In Race, edited by Steven Gregory and Roger Sanjek. Rutgers University Press, 1998.

There Goes the Neighborhood: Gentrification, Displacement, and Homelessness in Washington, DC. In There's No Place Like Home: The Ethnography of Poverty and Homelessness and Public Policy in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, edited by Anna Lou DeHavenon. Bergin and Garvey, 1996.

### Articles (Selected):

Profits from Poverty. Inequality.org November 2014

Review of Richard Dienst, The Bonds of Debt: Borrowing Against the Common Good. **LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL** 2013: 321-323.

"Kim Hopper Regrets." **American Anthropologist**, Public Anthropology Review, March 2013.

The Paradox of Parks in Washington DC. Beijing, China: **Journal of Landscape Architecture**. Spring 2012.

Review of Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture. Lee D. Baker. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. **American Anthropologist**, Volume 114, Issue 2 (June 2012) Pages: 372-372

Review of Alisse Waterston, ed. An Anthropology of War. **North American Dialogue**, Autumn 2010.

"The Rebirth of the Anacostia River," in the **Newsletter for the American Association of Geographers**, December 2009.

"No Justice, No Peace?" **North American Dialogue** Volume 11, No. 2 October 2008. 1ff.

"The Paradox of Parks." **Identities** 13:1 (Spring 2006): 139-172

Review Essay, "American Pie." (The Fractious Nation?, Life in America, and

Beneath the Crust of Culture), **American Anthropologist**.

"Washington's 'People Without History,'" with Susie McFadden-Resper, **Transforming Anthropology** 13:1: 3-14. 2005

"Root Shock," **First of the Month**.

"Without Go-Go This Shit Ain't The Same Dog." (with John Henry Pitt). **City and Society** XIV: 1 (2002): 87-102.

Three Approaches to Community Sustainability. In **Sustainable Communities Review** (2003) Volume 6, nos. 1 & 2, pp. 55-59.

Review Essay, Experiencing Community in the United States, **Reviews in Anthropology** 31:2, 2002.

Introduction (pp. 1-5) and Gentrifying the Water and Selling Jim Crow (pp. 93-121) *In Urban Anthropology* 31:1 (Special issue on Urban Legends, which I edited with Sabiyha Prince. 2002.

"DC's Ghosts," **First of the Month**, July, pp. 11-15.

2001 A River Runs Through Us. **American Anthropologist** 103: 2 (June 2001): 409-431.

Poverty Among African Americans in the Urban United States, **Human Organization**, Summer 1992. Reprinted in Sociological Abstracts.

Owning Places and Buying Time: Class, Culture and Gentrification, **Journal of Urban Life**, 1985.

### **Symposia (Selected):**

Congressional Black Caucus, Pathways out of Poverty, September 15 2010.

Seminar "The Land, the City, the Economy," Society for the Anthropology of North America, April 2010. Denver

Discussant, The city in ruins? American Studies Association, November 6, 2009, Washington D.C.

Freshman Service Experience, Organizer and Moderator for panel on Gentrification in DC August 2009

Discussant for Session "Raising Contentious Issues in Conservative Settings." Organized by Catherine Kingfisher. American Anthropological Association. November 21, 2008.

Walking Tour: The Environmental History of T Street NW. With George Middendorf and Charles Nilon. Washington Historical Society. November 8, 2008

Racial Inequalities in Washington, D.C. (with Sabiyha Prince, Damien Thompson and Rachel Watkins), Washington Association of Practicing Anthropologists, May 2005.

Invited Session, The Force of a Thousand Nightmares, American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, 2002.

Organized Session (with Sabiyha Prince), Urban Legends, Montreal: American Ethnological Society, 2001.

Discussant, Sessions on Welfare Reform, The New Americanist Ethnography, and Studies of Whiteness, Chicago: American Anthropological Association, 2000.

Organized Session, "History, Inequality, and Place." Philadelphia: American

Anthropological Association, December 1998.

Discussant for Key Symposium, "African Americans in the South," Southern Anthropological Society, April 1990

**Lectures (Selected):**

On the Waterfront

Testimony, Barry Farm Tenants and Allies, Washington, D.C. Zoning Commission, July 2014

Testimony, Barry Farm Tenants and Allies, National Capital Planning Commission, October 2014

Towson University lecture, Revolutionary traditions in the United States, October 17, 2013

Georgetown University lecture, The Dialectic of Investment and Abandonment on the Anacostia Waterfront, October 30, 2013

Keynote Address, "Casino Capitalism and the Forgiveness of Debt." International Conference for the Alleviation of Poverty. Port of Spain, Trinidad, October 2011.

Environmental Justice along the Anacostia River. House of Sweden Science Café October 7, 2010.

Invited Alumni Speaker: Anthropology at the University of Illinois, American Anthropological Association, December 2009.

Walking Tour of Mount Pleasant. Eastern Mennonite University Washington Semester Program, February 3 2010.

A D.C. State of Mind. EnvironMentors Orientation. October 1, 2009, NCSE Bringing It Home, Greater Washington Allies in Reconciliation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Conference, July 18, 2009

Peoples Economic Forum, Washington DC, April 25 2009.

The Wrong Side of the River: Living Poor and Dying Young in Washington, D.C. University of Missouri School of Ecology. October 8, 2008.

What's the Next Move? Housing East of the River. Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum, May 13, 2008. .

No Justice, No Peace? Plenary Session on Race and Justice. Society for the Anthropology of North America, Wrightsville Beach, April 2008

Keynote address, Metropolitan Dilemmas and Solutions: A Focus on Housing in the Baltimore Region. Towson University March 5, 2008.

Keynote address, Earth, Wind, Flood, and Fire. Interrogating Diversity conference. American University March 22, 2008.

Hurricane Katrina. Focus the Nation conference. American University, February 2008.

"Body and Soul: Profits from Poverty." American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C. In Invited Session "The Insecure American. November 30, 2007.

"Embodying Inequality." Association for the Worldwide Study of the African Diaspora. Barbados, October 15, 2007.

"The Anacostia Watershed.: Washington, D.C.: EcoSense, October 24, 2007.  
Public Anthropology Day

"Doctor on a Boat? Addressing Racial Inequalities in Health in Washington, DC. Society for the Anthropology of North America April 2006.

"On the Waterfronts: The Struggle for Urban Rivers." University of Iowa April 2006.

Discussant for panel, "Locating Racial Formation: Urban, Regional and National Spaces in Portugal, Spain, and Cuba." American Anthropological Association December 2005.

"The Death and Rebirth of North Central Philadelphia," Temple University/Renaissance Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia, PA: October 1, 2004

"The Impact of Segregation on Culture" Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing Conference, Washington, DC, June 18, 2004.

Department of Housing and Urban Development, "A History of Segregation, Urban Renewal, and Housing in Washington, DC," March 1, 2004.

"A River Runs Through Us", Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, February 2002.

Plenary speaker, "Social Justice and Anthropology," Joint meeting of the Canadian Anthropological Society and the Society for the Anthropology of North America, Windsor May 2002.

"Without Go-Go..." *In Anthropology and Its Interlocutors.* Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association 2001.

Ethnographic Methods for Park Planners, National Park Service. New Orleans, 1999.

Anthropology's Ageless American Cities, American Anthropological Association, December 1998.

Keynote Speaker, John Henry Memorial Festival, Hinton, West Virginia, October 1997.

"Washington's People Without History," with Susie McFadden, IN "Back to Black - and the Future: African American Ethnicity on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century." American Anthropological Association, November, 1997

"Urban Renewal Revisited," with Jenell Williams, IN "Update on the War on the Poor," American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., November 1997

"Canary of Gentrification," University of North Carolina, Conference, "Toward a Public Anthropology: Strategies and Prospects," April 1997.

"Why is the Pawn Shop There?" Invited session on "Taking the Measure of Tally's Corner -30 Years Later," AAA Meetings, Washington D.C. November 1995.

Gentrification, Displacement and Homelessness. Ethnographic Research and Urban Policy Problems Conference. Howard University. December 1994.

"Ethnographic Contributions to Prevention Research." NIMH National Conference on Prevention. April 1993.

"The Carolina-Washington Connection," Fifteenth Annual Conference on Washington, DC Studies, Columbia Historical Society, February 1988.

Distinguished Faculty Lecture, "Failed Integration in Washington, DC," January

## **Productions (Selected)**

Interview for film on John Henry, July 2014  
Teach-in on the financial crisis, Philadelphia, December 3, 2010  
Appearance in film *Un-Natural State*, directed by Kirk Mangels. Premiered at Filmfest DC 2010  
Interviewed for *The Big DC Movie*, May 2009  
The Financial Crisis, interview for film produced by Anke Schwittka, University of California at Berkeley.  
"The Debt Trap." Canadian Global Television/Proximity Films. Directed by David Adkin. Premiered April 2, 2008  
Humanities Scholar/Consultant, "Working." Produced by Frank Hamilton, Funded by the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C., for NPR's *Metro Connection*.  
Consultant, "A Man Ain't Nothing But A Man," GreenHouse Pictures  
Consultant "Ready to Play," Humanities Council of Washington, DC  
Curator (with Marianna Blagburn), Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.: It's Our Home.  
Curator, "Soccer Medley," traveling exhibit on soccer in the new multicultural city, 1995.  
Steel-Drivin Man. Produced by Ginna Allison. 1995.  
Humanities Scholar/Consultant, "In Search of Common Ground video and museum exhibit (Anacostia Museum Winter 1994-95)  
Fishing in the City. Produced by Karen Brodtkin Sacks.  
The Carolina-Washington Connection, multimedia production including lectures, music, workshops on storytelling, cooking, and healing traditions, 1987. (With Carol Hausner)  
The Mount Pleasant Folk Arts Workshops (with Olivia Cadaval, Nancy Riker, and Leslie Prosterman), funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, 1985.  
Mount Pleasant Multicultural Festival (with John Henry Pitt), 1982, 1983.

## **Interviews (selected)**

Al Jazeera, Inside Story, on the student debt crisis July 2013  
Russia Today, on the US as crumbling empire, October 22, 2010  
Telesur, on student loan debt, April 20, 2010  
Author's Audio, Debt for Sale. June 17, 2008  
Chronicle of Higher Education, "Digging Deep for the Real 'John Henry.'" By Jennifer Howard. February 9, 2007.  
Washington Post. Live Online discussion. Perspective on D.C.'s Development Wednesday, October 4, 2006; 2:00 PM  
Philadelphia Inquirer. Young candidate has post position  
Frederick News. Local experts explain how gentrification may affect city. September 4, 2006.  
El Mercurio. Gentrification. August 17, 2006.

Newsweek.com. Debt. August 22, 2006.

Better Homes and Gardens, June 2006, James McCommons, "Take Charge Of Your Debt." Pp. 176, 179.

East of the River, August 11, 2004, Gabriel Pacyniak, "Preventing History from Repeating Itself Along the Anacostia: An Interview with Anacostia Waterfront Anthropologist Brett Williams"

Washington Informer, July 22-28, 2004, Khalilah Karim, "Historic Policies Fuel Legacy of Segregation and Pollution in Anacostia," p.4

### **(Selected) Professional Service:**

Training for *Environmentors*, Martin Luther King Library, September 25, 2008

Walking tour of Mount Pleasant for visiting class from Eastern Mennonite University, September 3, 2008, January 2010

Outside Reviewer for Tenure, Africana Studies and Women's Studies, University of Michigan

Reviewer for tenure, University of Colorado-Denver

Referee for University Distinguished Professor, CUNY; UCLA

Referee for Promotion to full Professor, University of Texas at Austin, Duke University, Western Michigan University, Western Michigan University

Board Member at-large, Society for the Anthropology of North America.

Manuscript review for University of California Press, University of Chicago Press, Cornell University Press, New York University Press, Routledge Press, University of Pennsylvania Press, Rutgers University Press, University of Arizona Press, and others

Article reviews for Journal of Latin American Anthropology, American Anthropologist, Identities, Social Science and Medicine, Human Organization, American Ethnologist, Cultural Anthropology, Journal of Urban Affairs, City and Society, Feminist Economics, and others.

Panel Member/Reviewer, Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, American Council of Learned Societies, Environmental Protection Agency, American Association of University Women, National Science Foundation, Russell Sage Foundation, and others.

Portfolio evaluation at Bell High School

### **Grants and Stipends (Recent)**

"New Landscapes of Inequality," (with Jane Collins and Micaela di Leonardo), School of American Research Seminar, March 2006.

"Anacostia Watershed Education" training course for teachers, July 2004.

### **Doctoral Dissertation Committees Chaired**

David Nkweti, The aged in Black middle class families: a study in intergenerational relations. 1982

Monica L. Heppel, Harvesting the crops of others: Migrant farm labor on the Eastern



Shore of Virginia. 1982.

Martha Daughdrill, Urban growth and family farmers: strategic responses. 1986

Paul Longo, National mathematics standards and communicative competence: a sociolinguistic analysis of institutionalized and emergent forms of classroom discourse / 1993

Abby Thomas, Involuntary compliance: cultural aspects of the American Income Tax Transaction. 1997

Jenell Paris, African-American women's activism and ghetto formation in a Washington, D.C. neighborhood / by Jenell Lora Williams Paris.1998

Audrey Brown, Imagining a nation: cultural politics and transformative social action among late-twentieth century African-American women / by Audrey Lawson Brown. 1999

Linda Kaljee, Golden Histories, Tarnished Cities: Contesting the Problems of Urban Poverty and Violence in African American Baltimore, 1996. .

Samuel Collins, Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: Power and Ideas of Information Society at the Library of Congress. 1998

Sheila Wise, In or out? The paradoxical positions of socially responsible black gay men in the black community, 2000.

Sherri Lawson Clark, Policy, perceptions, and place: an ethnography of the complexities of implementing a federal housing program. 2003

Sandra Joss, Beyond the dreamings: identity and representation in Australian Aboriginal urban art 2004

Heather Reisinger, "Young and Thuggin'": The Unresolved Life of a Young Hustler, 2004

Jonathan Ortiz, Almost home: the federal halfway house as a rite de passage and inmate as liminal personae / by Jonathan Anthony Ortiz. 2005.

Damien Thompson, Pictures on the Wall: Urban Restructuring, Gentrification, and the Struggle for Place in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Washington, D.C., 2006.

Christine Elwell, From Political Protest to Bureaucratic Service: The Transformation of Homeless Advocacy in the Nation's Capital and the Eclipse of Political Discourse, 2009

Kelly Feltault, The Taste of Tradition: Maryland Crabcakes from Thailand, 2009

Kelly Ernst, We are the Revolution we make: Freegans in New York City, 2010

Esther Holtermann, La Parada: Explaining Ixil Day Laborers in Northern Virginia Illegality Loss, Hope, and Community 2011

Jennie Simpson, Policing the new Downtown: the costs of community for homeless people and individuals with mental illness in Washington D.C. 2011

Ariana Curtis, "Becoming more and more Panamanian": Contemporary Constructions of West Indian Identity in Panama. 2012

Matthew Wickens, Survival strategies of homeless men: home, scavenging, work, and welfare in Tokyo, Japan, 2012

Dvera Saxton, Layered Disparities, Layered Vulnerabilities: Farmworker Health and Corporate Power On and Off the Farm, 2013

Mahri Irvine, "A lot of people are being locked up because a lot of people are numbing themselves: Rape Culture in the lives of formerly and currently incarcerated women in Washington, D.C., 2014

Julie Koppel Maldonado, Facing the Rising Tide: Co-occurring Disasters, Displacement, and Adaptation of Coastal Louisiana's Tribal Communities, 2014  
Topher Ericson, Hawaiian Resilience: Social Work, Social Movements, and the Nonprofit Industrial Complex, 2015  
Kallfani Ture, Development and Displacement in Barry Farms

### **Doctoral students/advisees preparing proposals**

Sara Artes, African Americans on the Texas-Mexico border

### **Masters Theses Advised**

Marni Finkelstein, Communication and Compromise: or, a tale of two communities.  
Emily K. Steinmetz, Access denied: the construction of criminality and the consequences of felon disenfranchisement.  
Katie McElhinney, Organic food accessibility  
Meredith Marchioni, Watermen on the Chesapeake Bay  
Emily Binder, Comparative democracies  
Ryan Scherzinger, Environmental History of Louisville, Kentucky  
Julie Koppel, Dams and Displacement  
Abby Weil, Torture and Community Therapy in Guatemala  
Erika Hill, Somos Mestizos? Race and Afro-Latinos in Mexico

### **Senior Theses Advised (selected)**

Shauna Ruda, How Jesus Became White  
Emily Thomas, SIS, Honors Capstone, Biofuels  
Lindsey Vierra: A Study of Black Leadership in Local Non-Profit Organizations in Washington, DC,  
Jen Turner: Neighborhood Public Art  
Aditi Fruitwalla, Honors Capstone on the Race Monologues  
Sarah Brennan, Honors Capstone on the Race Monologues

University service, 2014

Department Undergraduate Studies Committee  
Chair, Search Committee  
Chair, Rank and Tenure Committee  
University Honors Advisory Committee  
Advisor, Vegan Outreach Club, Advisor, OxFam student club