

# Reginold Royston, Ph.D.

RROYSTON@WISC.EDU

WWW.RAROYSTON.COM

@RAROYSTON

## FACULTY

2016 to current

**University of Wisconsin, Madison**

iSchool – The School of Information & Library Sciences  
& the Department of African Cultural Studies  
*Assistant Professor, jointly appointed*

2015-2016

**University of Pittsburgh**, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Department of Africana Studies, *researcher, lecturer*

2014-2015

**Williams College**, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Global Studies, Africana Studies, Anthropology and Sociology  
*Mellon C3 Postdoctoral Fellow*

## EDUCATION

Ph.D.

University of California, Berkeley — 2014

African Diaspora Studies

*Designated Emphasis (D.E.) in New Media Studies*

Master's

University of California, Berkeley — 2009

African American Studies

Bachelor's

Howard University — 1998

Anthropology, *magna cum laude*

Philosophy, *magna cum laude*

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

**Re-Assembling Ghana: Diaspora, Innovation and the African Mediascape • 2009 to present**

I research the ways Ghanaian tech users in the homeland and diaspora deploy critical media practices to reconstruct the global imaginary of Ghana. Through notions of *mediascape* and other New Media theories, I examine experiences of Ghana's reterritorialization via digital culture. Methods consist of participant observation and interviews with hackers, archivists and librarians, online educators, bloggers, tech incubators, universities, and via big data-research. My central question asks, *How have the historic distinctions between diaspora and homeland been affected by information technology, mobility and globalization?* This research is the foundation for the book I am currently at work on.

**Aural Circuits of the Black Diaspora • 2015 to present** I am examining kinesthetic and technological forms produced through African diasporic music techniques and collaborations. At the core of this work is an ethnography of African emigre and African-American music producers and dancers, looking at tacit knowledge production and performance identities in Chicago, IL. My research focuses on informal technology pedagogy, piracy, and hacking practices among lower-income artists who use software packages developed in Europe and Japan for elite studio engineers. Working in the dance music genres of AfroBeats, Hip Life, and House/Footwork music, my work deploys perspectives on Sound Studies, Folklore, Performance Studies, New Media and Africana Studies.

**Internet Citizenship • 2011-2014** PI: Greg Niemeyer (Berkeley Center for New Media) One of UC Berkeley's first digital humanities course, I co-developed this Internet-based course, which uses community-art projects and peer-driven instruction around key principles in New Media. Research presented at Digital Media Learning conferences 2012 (MacArthur Foundation, HASTAC).

**Atomic Junction • 2010, 2013** UC Berkeley, PI: Abena Osseo-Asare (History of Science) Served as a research assistant/producer for this documentary film on the Ghanaian Atomic Energy Commission. Advised research staff on the tools and thematics of video-based ethnography, served as project editor.

**West African Immigrants and Technology Use • 2008-2009** (UC Berkeley) PI: Jenna Burrell (School of Information) Served as research assistant for this survey of mobile technology and social media use among migrants in the San Francisco Bay Area, examining immigrant narrative through oral history.

## **ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS**

Royston, R.A. and Strong, K. (in press 2018) "Re-Territorializing Twitter: African Moments 2010-2015." eds. Abigail De Kosnik & Keith Feldman, *#Identity: Twitter and the Politics of Representation*.

Royston, R.A. (March 2017) "At Home, Online: Affective-Exchange in Ghanaian Internet Video." (chapter) eds. Leigh Raiford and Raphael-Hernandez, H. *Migrating the Black Body: Visual Culture and Diaspora*, University of Washington Press.

Royston, R.A. (Spring 2016) "Muslims and New Media in West Africa," Review of *Muslims and New Media in West Africa: Pathways to God*, by Dorothea Schulz. *Journal of West African History*.

Royston, R.A. (in progress) "Pan Africanism or Afri-Capitalism? Africa's Hacker-Developer Ethos." *African Studies Review* (target)

Royston, R.A. (in progress) "Podcasts and the Aural Aesthetics of Africa's Tech Culture." *New Media & Society* (target)

Royston, R.A. (in progress) "Digital Embodiment and the Techne of Social Media Dance: Azonto & Footwork," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* or *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* (target)

## **NEW MEDIA PROJECTS**

Royston, R.A. & Faisal Abdul'Allah (2017- present) Black Arts + Data Futures Workshop. Borghesi-Mellon Interdisciplinary Humanities Workshop, Center for Humanities, University of Wisconsin, Madison. This funded working group and speaker series attempts to chart new lines of inquiry and academic partnerships across UW-Madison departments and programs focusing on the history and future of technology practices in Africa and its diasporas. Regular participants include faculty from the Information School and departments of Art, Art History, Communication Arts, African Cultural Studies, Dance, African American Studies, Computer Science, and the School of Education. Participants include full professors, tenure-track faculty, research faculty, academic staff, graduate students, undergraduates and student services staff.

*BlackTechne.Tumblr.com* (2016) Using the image blogging platform, coordinated the online discussion and production capacities for African Americans and the Mass Media (University of Pittsburgh). Posts included news items, podcasts and course-related discussions.

Royston, R.A. (2015) "Africana Apps: Building Tools for Nigeria's National Elections," [mobile app prototypes] accessible at raroyston.com.

Royston, R.A., Scott, J., Niemeyer, G. (2015) "Juneteenth: Diffusion and Resonance in the Emancipation of American Slaves," [multimedia lecture] accessible at raroyston.com.

Niemeyer, G., Royston, R.A., and Ferro-Murray, A. (2012-2015) "Internet Citizenship," [online course] screen shots accessible at raroyston.com.

Osseo-Asare, A., Royston, R.A., et al (2014) "Atomic Junction: Nuclear Science in an African Suburb," [short video documentary], accessible at raroyston.com.

## **BLOGS & GENERAL MEDIA PUBLICATIONS**

*Curator/Editor*

blacktechne.tumblr.com — A blog on technology and media culture in the African Diaspora.

twitter.com/raroyston — Academic medium for teaching, research, live blogging on New Media.

Royston, R.A. (Nov. 2011) "Tablets, Africa's Next Leap-Frog Technology." [blog post]. Berkeley Center for New Media, access at <http://bcnm.berkeley.edu/index.php/tablets-africas-next-leap-frog-technology>

Royston, R.A. (Nov. 2011) "Cyberculture and Access in Ghana." [blog post]. Berkeley Center for New Media, at <http://bcnm.berkeley.edu/index.php/in-accra-ghana-investigating-cyberculture-and-access/>

R.A. Royston (June 23, 2008) "Digging Deeper on the Brown-Black Divide with Iván Román, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Executive Director," Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, accessed at [http://mije.org/reggieroyston/ivan\\_roman](http://mije.org/reggieroyston/ivan_roman)

Royston, R.A. (Spring 2008) "Interview: Charles Henry Long Overdue: *The Politics of Racial Reparations*," *Diaspora: Newsletter of the Department of African American Studies*, University of California, Berkeley, accessed at <http://africam.berkeley.edu>

Royston, R.A. (Dec. 2007) "Into the Afrosphere: Black Bloggers and the Case of the Jena 6." Technical report based on (Jan. 22, 2008) "Black Blogosphere Proves Potent Force in Story of Race in the New South," Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, <http://mije.org/reggieroyston/blackbologsphere>

## **CONFERENCE PAPERS AND INVITED TALKS**

Royston, R.A. (June 2018) "Digital Embodiment and the Techne of Social Media Dance: Azonto & Footwork," Caribbean Philosophy Association, Dakar, Senegal.

Royston, R.A. (April 2018) "New Orality and the African Mediascape" Great Lakes Sound Studies Association, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Royston, R.A. (Nov 2017) "Podcasts, New Orality, and the Aesthetics of Creative Disruption," chair of panel, African Studies Association (USA) annual conference, Chicago, Illinois

Royston, R.A. (Nov 2017) "Juke/Footwork: Chicago's Tactical Music of Self-Possession," American Studies Association annual conference, Visual Cultures Symposium, Chicago, Illinois

Royston, R.A. (Nov 2017) "Beyond Race and Technology: Digital Diaspora Research," (invited keynote), Ronald E. McNair Annual Symposium, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater,

Royston, R.A. (Oct 2017) "Digital Aesthetics and Orality," The Africa Network annual conference, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

Royston, R.A. (Sept 2017) "The Emerging Digital Aesthetics of African Tech Innovation," (invited), Strategic Narratives of Technology in Africa conference, Madeira Interactive Tech Institute, Portugal

Royston, R.A. (Feb 2017) "Approaches to African Digital Diaspora Studies," Africa at Noon, African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Royston, R.A. and Strong, K.S. (April 2016) "Re-Territorializing Twitter: African Moments 2010-2015." Society of Cultural Anthropology Biennial Conference, Ithaca, NY

Royston, R.A. (organizer), Reid-Vasquez, M., Sherry-Torres, T. (April 2016) "Race in the Caribbean: An Exploration of Brown x Black Lives," symposium and research workshop  
Center for Latin America Studies, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Royston, R.A. (March 2016) "Azonto Bodies: Digital Embodiment in Ghanaian Pop Music Video," Contemporary African Music Symposium, Center for African Studies, University of Pittsburgh, PA

Royston, R.A. (March 2015) "Black or Afropolitan? Contemporary African Diaspora and Digital Media," Global Studies Colloquium, Williams College.

Royston, R.A. (Feb. 2015) "Parsing Big Data Ethnoscapes: Ghana, Twitter and the World Cup." Technology, Knowledge and Society annual conference, Berkeley, California.

Royston, R.A. (Sept. 2014) "Afropolitan Looks: Digital Presence in Ghana's Video Cyberculture." Migrating the Black Body, Migration and Blackness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover, Germany.

Royston, R.A. (Dec. 2014) "Diaspora as Network: Deterritorialization Reconsidered." American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Washington, D.C.

Royston, R.A. (Nov. 2014) "The New Media of Violence: Techne, Menace and Peace." Panel coordinator and discussant, African Studies Association annual conference, Indianapolis.

Royston, R.A. (May 2014) "Towards a Theory of Africanist Technoculture." CITRIS – Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society, UC Berkeley

Royston, R.A. (Nov. 2013) "Examining Networks of the Afropolitan in the Ghanaian Diaspora" *Future Publics and Current Engagements*: American Anthropological Association, Annual Conference. Chicago.

Royston, R.A. (Nov. 2013) "Hacking Development: Ghana's Digital Elites." *Mobility, Migration and Flows*: African Studies Association annual conference, Baltimore

Royston, R.A. (Feb. 2013) "Important Questions for Civic Apps Developers," Social Apps Lab, U.C. Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society, Berkeley.

Royston, R.A. (Feb, 2013) "A (Digital) African Election: Examining technology discourse and practice in 2012" *Media & Political Africa: Revolutionary Street Art & Digital Nationalism*, Berkeley Center for Race and Gender.

Royston, R. and Ferro-Murray, A. (March 2012) "Whose Achievement? A Model for Open Source, Peer-Led Online Classrooms" Digital Media and Learning Conference, San Francisco.

Royston, R. (Sept. 2011) "The Tethered Self: The Digital Anthropology of Turkle, Boellstorff, and Miller." New Media Working Group, Berkeley Center for New Media.

Royston, R.A. (paper accepted, Nov. 2011) "Social Network as Research Site: Ghana's Digital Diaspora." *Traces, Tidemarks and Legacies*: American Anthropological Association, 110<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Montreal, Canada.

Royston, R.A. (paper accepted 2009) "Akwaaba Online: (Re)Connections in the Digital Diaspora," 5th Biennial Conference of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, Rutgers University and the W.E.B. Du Bois Center, Accra, Ghana.

## TEACHING

- Spring 2018     **Sound & Afro-Modernity: Digitizing the Body and Soul of the Nation**  
*University of Wisconsin, Madison, Dept. of African Cultural Studies* — This course examines sound and technology as tools of cultural invention and identity in contemporary African life. How do music and its mediums construct national belonging in Africa and the diaspora? What are the embodied senses of these? Posthumanism, new media and globalization are examined against competing theories of modernity through the writings of Achille Mbembe, Yvonne Daniels, Alexander Weheliye and others. We also examine digital production and media distribution techniques for sound cultures including, pop music, podcasts, radio, and online mediums such as Spotify and YouTube. Literature primarily comes from African Studies, New Media Studies, technology and sound studies, with special attention to street dance cultures and 'neotraditional' dance practices in Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and USA (Chicago/NY/Atlanta/Bay Area). Students write papers and develop sound-based multimedia projects.
- Fall 2017  
to current     **Code & Power: An Intersectional Economy of the Internet**  
*University of Wisconsin, Madison - iSchool*  
In this course, students analyze and critique economic, social and cultural structural mechanisms related to racial and gender disparities in the computing industries, gaining practical and theoretical understanding of the means by which women and people of color negotiate conditions of exclusion or marginalization within computing. The course guides students in understanding their own attitudes and beliefs about themselves, others and computing, and empowers them to recognize and counter common and damaging attitudes and beliefs. As part of learning about the computing industries and exploring their self-identity in relation to computing, students design, develop, and discuss interactive websites that employ web scripting.
- Fall 2017     **Africa + the Internet: An Introduction to Digital Life on the Continent**  
*UW, Madison – Department of African Cultural Studies*  
This course examines globalization and IT from the perspective of the developing world, looking at the role of New Media in expressive culture and digital practices in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Guinea and other key locales in Africa. Project-based, blended, online/offline.
- Spr. 2016     **Black Media & Globalization** – *University of Pittsburgh* Course uses the historic issues of representation of African Americans in U.S. media cultures since the 1950s. Moves on to focus on contemporary digital content from Africa and its diasporas. Emphasis on cultural forms, styles of online writing, political hashtags, popular culture and artists as they interact with mass media and global networks.

- Fall 2014      **Digital Diaspora: Race, New Media and Black Cultural Production Online**  
*Williams College* - We examine black aesthetics in technology use (voice, mobile devices, Twitter), development of black virtual communities (Instagram, Black blogosphere), and digital crises and racial panics (Trayvon Martin, #BlackLivesMatter), primarily since the dawn of the Internet Age in the 1990s.
- AY 2011 to 2014      **Principles of Internet Citizenship, Instructor, course designer with Prof. Greg Niemeyer, MFA. University of California, Berkeley.** Served as lead instructor for undergraduate course exploring contemporary theories and practices of Internet culture. Initiated more than 40 community-based IT projects via the Social Apps Lab with students. Since 2012, this course has been completely online with asynchronous lectures, live video chat discussion, peer-badges, and an original learning management site designed for collaborative interactions.

## **HONORS AND AWARDS**

Educational Instruction Online Course Development Award, Division of Continuing Studies, UW L&S  
 Borghesi-Mellon Workshop Award, UW Center for Humanities Coordinator  
 Anna Julia Cooper Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Wisconsin, Madison 2016-2017  
 Mellon Foundation C3 Postdoctoral Fellowship, Williams College, 2014-2015  
 University of California Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2013-2014  
 Digital Humanities Workshop, Dan Cohen, Berkeley dLab, George Mason University, 2013  
 MacArthur Foundation and HASTAC, Digital Media Learning Research Grant, 2012  
 University of California Office of the President – Online Instruction Pilot Project, 2011-2012  
 Veve Clark Research Travel Award, Graduate Division (UC Berkeley), 2011  
 Alice Baker Research Award, African Diaspora Studies Program (UC Berkeley), 2011  
 Dean’s Normative Time Graduate Fellowship (UC Berkeley), 2011  
 University of California Multi-Campus Research Group on Africa Dissertation Seminar, 2011  
 FLAS-Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship (Dept. of Education) – Akan (Ghana), 2011  
 Social Science Research Council – “Virtual Worlds” Predissertation Fellowship, 2010  
 Graduate Research Fellowship, Berkeley Center for New Media, Summer 2010  
 Ford Foundation Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, Honorable Mention, 2010 & 2009  
 Mentored Research Fellowship, University of California-Berkeley, 2009-2010  
 Eugene Cota-Robles Graduate Student Fellowship, University of California, 2007-2011  
 California Newspaper Publishers Association, Best all-around design, 2006  
 Minnesota Society of Professional Journalists, Page One award, 2005

## **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

iSchool, University of Wisconsin, Madison — Ph.D. applicant committee  
 Department of African Cultural Studies, UW-Madison, Faculty Senate designee  
 Department of African Cultural Studies, UW-Madison, Community Relations Committee  
 Race and the Caribbean: BlackXLatin Lives, University of Pittsburgh, symposium convener, March 2016  
 Research Advisor 2015, Arielle Steele, American Studies, Class of ’57 Summer Research Grant  
 Thesis Advisor 2015, Medina Fitzmaurice, Africana Studies, “International Adoption and Race.”  
 “Designing for Intimacy in Online Courses,” faculty roundtable, Williams College 2014  
 “Making Sense of #Ferguson Forum,” panelist, Office of the President, Williams College, 2014  
 Dean’s Council on Digital Humanities, College of Arts and Letters, UC Berkeley 2013-2014  
 Graduate Liaison to the Faculty, Department of African American Studies 2013-2014  
 eduHack, College Readiness Hackathon, Berkeley Center for New Media, 2013 coordinator  
 LearningMode: Online Education conference, 2013, coordinator

## **AFFILIATIONS**

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of African American Studies,  
African Studies Association U.S.A., Ghana Studies Sub-Affiliate  
American Studies Association, Visual Studies Caucus  
American Association of Anthropology, Society for Visual Anthropology  
HASTAC – Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory  
Berkeley Center for New Media, UC, Berkeley  
AFRON — African Robotics Network, Ken Goldberg  
Technology, Knowledge and Society Conference and Online Community  
WorkHard PGH Community Tech Incubator  
North Adams Makers Space, North Adams, Massachusetts  
Color of New Media Working Group, UC Berkeley, Abigail de Kosnik  
eBlack Studies Initiative, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Abdul Alkalimat  
ICT4Development Working Group, Jenna Burrell, School of Information, UC Berkeley  
Fundação Internacional de Capoeira Angola