

JESSICA CATHERINE REUTHER

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AREAS OF EXPERTISE

African history, West Africa and its diasporas in the Atlantic World, gender and sexuality in Africa, girlhood studies, colonial legal history, Afrocentric research methods and theories, human rights in modern world history, Francophone cultural studies

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2017- Assistant Professor, Ball State University, Department of History, Muncie, IN
Affiliated teaching faculty: African-American Studies Program
Affiliated faculty: Women's and Gender Studies Program
- 2016-2017 Visiting Assistant Professor, Ball State University, Department of History,
Muncie, IN

EDUCATION

- 2010-2016 Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
Doctor of Philosophy, Department of History
Dissertation: "Borrowed Children, Entrusted Girls: Legal Encounters with
Girlhood in French West Africa, c. 1900-1941"
Committee: Kristin Mann (advisor), Clifton Crais, and Pamela Scully
Exam Fields: African History, France and its Empire, Law and Colonialism in
the Atlantic World
- 2006-2008 University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
Master of Arts, Department of History
Thesis: "The Art of Abolition: Inscribing Legal and Political Borders in
19th Century North Africa"
Specialization: Modern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, Comparative
Imperialism
- 2000-2004 Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri
Bachelor of Arts, Majors in History, International Studies, and French
Summa cum laude

PUBLICATIONS

Book Manuscripts

Fostering Trust: A History of Girlhood in West Africa (completed manuscript under review with a university press)

Fetish Girls: Sexual Taboos, Indigenous Religions, and Colonial Laws in French West Africa (early research stages)

Articles (Under Review/ In Progress)

“Viol[ated]: Sexual Assaults of Girl Hawkers, Reactions of Market Women, and the Inactions of Colonial Tribunals, 1924-1940.” (Revised and resubmitted to *The Journal of African History* in August 2021)

“Secret Knowledge, the Supernatural, and Slavery” solicited article for the *Oxford Encyclopedia of African Slavery, Slave Trade, and the Diaspora*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (due to editors Martin Klein, Lorelle Semley, and Mariana Candido in January 2022)

Peer-reviewed articles

2019 “Women in Benin.” In *Oxford Encyclopedia of African Women’s History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

2018 “Irresponsible Boys, Promiscuous Girls: Maturity, Gender, and Rape Myths in the Criminal Tribunals of Colonial Dahomey, 1924-1940.” *La Revue d’histoire de l’enfance “irrégulière”* (numero 20) November 2018, 67-84.
<https://journals.openedition.org/rhei/4209>

AWARDS AND HONORS

2018 College of Science and Humanities Dean’s Award for International Travel Funding, Ball State University

2017-2018 ASPiRE Start-Up Grant Award, Ball State University

2015-2016 Robert W. Woodruff Library Fellowship in African Studies, Emory University

2013-2014 Joseph J. Mathews Prize for International Research, Department of History, Emory University

2013-2014 Fulbright IIE – Benin (alternate)

2013-2014 Professional Development Research Support Funds Competitive, Laney Graduate School

2010-2015 Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Emory University

2008 Richard A. Cosgrove Graduate Fund for Research, Department of History,
University of Arizona

2007-2008 Graduate Registration Scholarship, University of Arizona (declined)

2007 Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship – Intermediate Arabic

PRESENTATIONS

Conferences

- 2021 “New Directions in African Legal History,” roundtable participant at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 16-20. (virtual format)
- 2021 “Author meets critic panel on *The Persistence of Slavery: An Economic History of Child Trafficking in Nigeria* by Robin Chapdelaine,” Critic panelist at the Lagos Studies Association Annual Meeting, June 22-26. (virtual format)
- 2020 “Achake Selliatou Aibouko: Human Trafficker or Defamed Market Woman?” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 19-21. (virtual format)
- 2019 “Fostering Trust in Dahomean Girls’ Testimony: Applying Feminist Legal Theory to Colonial Records” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 21-23.
- 2019 “West African Sexuality and European Voyeurism in Dapper’s *Description of Africa* (1668)” paper presented at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, October 17-20.
- 2019 “An Abused Servant Girl or a Human Sacrifice Victim?: The Affaire Télé, Colonial Disorder, and Gendered Culpability” paper presented at the French Colonial History Society Annual Meeting, June 13-15.
- 2018 “Listening to Legal Narratives for New Insights on the History of Girlhood in Colonial Dahomey, 1930s” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 29- December 1.
- 2018 “‘It is a Fable that the Blacks Sell their Children’: Child Circulation and Parental Norms along the Slave Coast during the Early Modern Era” paper presented at the Beyond Truth: Fiction and (Dis)information in the Early Modern World Conference at the Centre for Early Modern Studies at Oxford, September 17-18.
- 2017 ‘Woman’ Marriage in Dahomey Revisited: The Marie Seblodé Affair, paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 16-18.

- 2016 Methodological and Ethical Concerns in the Research of Children in Africa, roundtable participant at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, December 1-3.
- 2016 “West African Imperial Borderlands: The Specter of French Mandated Togoland in Debates over Pawnship in Colonial Dahomey during the 1930s,” paper presented at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, January 7-10.
- 2015 “Embodied Evidence: The Gendered Recording of Disability in Sexual Assault Cases in French West Africa,” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, November 19-22.
- 2015 “Sex and Sequestration in *Vodun* Convents: Competing Claims on ‘Freedom’ in Colonial Dahomey,” paper presented at the Historians against Slavery Conference, September 24-26.
- 2015 “Street Hawking or Street Walking?: *Petites Vendeuses* and Sexual Assault in French West Africa,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, January 2-5.
- 2014 “The *Affaire Télé*: Rumored Violence in a Child Servant’s Life,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, November 20-23.
- 2014 “‘Sharing with the Ancestors:’ Understanding Human Sacrifice, the Nonlinearity of Time, and Documentary Censorship in West Africa” paper presented at the Graduate History Association Conference, Washington University, October 10-11.
- 2013 “*Viol[ated]*: Rape as a Disabling Crime Against Girls in Colonial Dahomey (1936-1938)” paper presented at the Critical Juncture Conference, Emory University, March 22-23.

Workshops, Symposiums, & Seminars

- 2021 “Female Wealth, Girl Pawns, and the Yoruba Diaspora during the Era of the Palm Export Trade, 1840s-1880s,” pre-circulated paper for ‘The Raw and the Refined: Commodities, Processing, and Power in Global Perspective’ at the Commodities of Empire International Workshop, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2-3 September 2021. (virtual format)
- 2019 “*Viol[ated]*: Sexual Assaults of Girl Hawkers and the Reactions of Market Women in Colonial Dahomey,” pre-circulated paper for the African Legal History Symposium at the African Studies Association and American Society for Legal History meetings, November 21, 2019.
- 2015 “Working Girls: Labor and Sexual Assault in Colonial Streets (1920s-1940s),” pre-circulated paper for the African Studies Seminar at the Institute for African Studies, Emory University, October 8.

- 2015 “‘Until I Bathed in the Light of Day:’ Sexual Assault of Girls as an Intergenerational Trauma in Colonial West Africa,” paper presented at Soul Wounds Colloquium on Trauma and Healing Across Generations, Stanford University, June 4-6.

Invited Public Talks

- 2018 “Un aperçu sur les méthodes des recherches sur l’histoire de l’enfance féminine à l’ancien Dahomey,” talk to first year students in history and archeology at the Université d’Abomey-Calavi, July 2.
- 2016 “The Invisible and the Absent: Perceiving the Unseen Social History of West African Ritual Objects in DOMA’s Collection,” David Owsley Museum of Art, talk to museum docents on African art in the permanent collection, November 3.
- 2013 “Age and Gender as Factors in African Debates on Female Genital Cutting as Presented in Ousmane Sembene’s *Moolaadé*,” History in Film Series, Department of History, Emory University, February 13.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses in development

Cultural Histories of West Africa and the Atlantic World (to be taught Spring 2022)
Early African History to 1800
Health and Healing in Africa

Ball State University

AFAM 200: African-American Studies Theory and Research Methods (Spring 2021)

HIST 441/541: Comparative Slavery (Spring 2019 & Fall 2020)
HIST 426/526: Topics in African History: Gender and Sexuality in African History (Spring 2018 & Spring 2020)
HIST 426: Topics in African History: Africans and Human Rights in Modern History (Spring 2017)
HIST 372: Africa since 1500 (Fall 2016, Fall 2018, Fall 2019, & Fall 2021)
HIST 198: Studies in Non-Western Civilizations (Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Fall 2020, & Fall 2021)
HIST 150: The West in the World (Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2020, & Spring 2021)

MA Thesis committee member

Abigail Wachs, “Hidden Behind the Colonizer Perspective: An Analysis of Miguel Cabrera’s 1763 Casta Portraits in Comparison to Mexico City Marriage Records,” (2019-2020)

Katy Evans, *Construyendo La Mujer Nueva: The Image and Reality of the Revolutionary “New Woman” in Mexico and Nicaragua During the Global Sixties* (Spring 2018)

MA Portfolio committee member

Annie Bedwell (2021)

Abigail Wachs (2020)

Supervision of undergraduate honors thesis and senior research project:

Kathryn Powell, “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *A Grain of Wheat: A Historical Meditation*” (Spring 2018)

Supervision of senior research project:

Alexander Reidy, “The Civilizing Mission in South Africa” (Fall 2018)

Emory University

Women, Children, and Human Rights in Modern Africa (Spring 2013)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Sites

Africa

2018, Archives Nationales du Bénin, Porto-Novo, Benin

2013-2014

2012

2014 Bibliothèque Nationale du Bénin, Porto-Novo, Benin

2013-2014 Oral interviews in Abomey, Cotonou, & Porto-Novo, Benin

2013 Archives du Sénégal, Dakar, Senegal

Europe

2019 Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France

2019 La Contemporaine, Paris, France

2014 & 2008 Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France

2014 International Labour Organization Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

2014 Save the Children International Union Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

2014 League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

North America

2018 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York City, United States

SERVICE

2020-2021 Muncie Community Schools/ Ball State University Initiative - Anti-Racist Social Studies Curricula for Civic Engagement

- 2020-2021 Department of History Representative to the College of Sciences and Humanities Inclusive Excellence Planning Task Force
- 2019-2022 Student History Conference Committee Member, Ball State University
2019 Secretary of Committee
- 2018-2021 Department of History Library Liaison, Ball State University
- 2019-2021 Prelinger Prize Committee Member, Coordinating Council for Women Historians
- 2021 Chair and discussant, “Empire and Identity,” Student History Conference, Ball State University
- 2020 Chair and discussant, “Expansion, Identity, & Inequality in Global Perspective” Student History Conference, Ball State University
- 2019 On-Site Events Committee of the Women’s Caucus of the African Studies Association Annual Meeting
- 2019 Chair, “Trust, Vulnerability, and Belonging,” African Studies Association Annual Meeting
- 2019 Discussant, “European Social Histories: Tales of Exclusion,” Student History Conference, Ball State University
- 2018 WGS Affiliate Research Panel, Women’s Week events, Ball State University
- 2018 Chair, “Purity and Panic: Historicizing Gendered Roles and their Subversion,” Student History Conference, Ball State University
- 2017 Journal Manuscript Reviewer, *Journal of West African History*
- 2016 Discussant, “Why is it Enlightenment?” paper presented by Bianca Premo, Department of History Seminar, Emory University
- 2016 Conference Panel Co-organizer with Idir Oahes, “Testing the Frontiers of Empire: League of Nations Mandates in Africa and the Middle East,” American Historical Association, Atlanta
- 2015 Conference Panel Organizer, “*In Loco Parentis*: Redefining Childhood through State-Sponsored Child Protection Initiatives in the Twentieth Century,” American Historical Association, New York City

