My research examines the correlations between intracommunal conflict and the dominant refusal to recognize Black humanity. My book, *Imagining Racial Community in the Post-Civil Rights Era: Reading Black Intimacies in Contemporary African American Literature* investigates contemporary literary depictions of intraracial relations. Rather than focus centrally on interracial antagonism at the color line, the project argues that intracommunal intimacies and desires often become the site where the realities of racist exclusion and subordination are negotiated, arbitrated, inculcated, and resisted. I demonstrate how trenchant, intraracial conflicts often emerge from a structure of gendered and racial inequality. Accordingly, my project traverses genres privileged at the height of and after public mobilizations for power during the Civil Rights and various nationalist movements. I closely analyze novels including Gayle Jones’ neo-slave narrative *Corregidora*, John Edgar Wideman’s *Philadelphia Fire*, Trey Ellis’ *Platitudes*, and Toni Morrison’s jazz novel *Jazz*. These distinct texts and genres share an emphasis on intracommunal conflict and possible cohesion for re-defining justice in the post-civil rights era.

Throughout my work I remain attentive to the intricate relationship between literature and its historical contexts. More specifically, my project emphasizes how the economic, political, and social transformations associated with the post-civil rights era are reflected in Black fiction. The presumption of “colorblindness” and the celebration of multiculturalism occur alongside the feminization of poverty, the increase in incarceration, and the continued segregation of racialized populations in the U.S. The material dispossession and sanctioned violence that these historically aggrieved communities continue to endure have raised questions about the political edge of contemporary African American literature as well. Previous generations’ ideological investment in literary humanism and print capital gives way to postmodern concerns about the political and cultural possibilities for representing a cohesive Black community in the present. My critical approach to reading re-imagines the social force of fiction by bringing together interrogations of justice and literature, structural oppression and intraracial politics.

My book project focuses more centrally on developing critical perspectives about Black gender and sexual politics in contemporary literary texts. The project argues that increased anxieties about intraracial gendered and sexual tensions constitute a vital dimension of Black-on-Black discourse. Such discourse shifts discussions about racial inequality from an investigation of the cumulative effects and persistence of discrimination, to a renewed interest in Black people’s putatively violent and sexually
promiscuous behavior. Moreover, these dominant discourses of internal pathology naturalize derogatory perceptions of Black culture collectively. The project analyzes the ways contemporary Black writers negotiate the expectations that surround Black gendered and sexual identities.

Key areas my current project investigates are: 1) how Black success in winning new citizenship rights and an augmented sense of social membership nonetheless provokes moral panic about presumed Black deviance 2) how the entrenched images of black sexual excess contribute to intraracial, gender conflict and 3) the particular role of literature in signaling unresolved intimate and social problems, and Black negotiation of racist subordination.

Key texts for my work include: