

# Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship Candidates - 2008

## Mathematics Department Candidate

### Christina Eubanks-Turner

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### Education:

Xavier University of Louisiana, Mathematics. undergraduate. BS, 2002

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Mathematics. graduate. PhD, 2008

### Dissertation:

Prime ideals in Birational Extensions of Power Series rings

*Information from candidate taken from Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship application.*

**How would you contribute to the diversity of a liberal arts college?** - One of my ultimate goals as a mathematics educator is to diminish negative attitudes toward math in younger and older generations, especially in minorities. At a liberal arts college, I would be in the position to do so by contributing to the diversity of the faculty and also enhancing minority student interest in math. The teaching preparation I have had at UNL has given me a wide variety of experiences that has allowed me interactions with many diverse groups of people. With each, I have tried to stress the importance of mathematics and the advantages of mathematical knowledge. My belief is that it is imperative to have diverse perspectives and views in any area of study, and as a mathematics educator I strive to achieve this.

**Teaching Interests:** While I am interested in teaching all courses, I have a stronger interest in teaching abstract algebra, linear algebra and number theory. I would also like to develop or teach a course for undergraduate math education majors, that helps build stronger mathematics content knowledge and also develop proof-writing skills.

**Teaching Highlights:** I have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of fellowships. Currently, I am a graduate trainee in the UNL Math department's Mentoring through Critical Transition Points (MCTP) program. This unique program has allowed me to mentor students that are starting graduate school and has also given me the opportunity to be mentored by math professors in the early stages of their careers. Project-Fulcrum, a fellowship which allows graduate students in the fields of math and science to spend weeks in the classrooms of the Lincoln Public Schools, has made me very eager to become a math professor.

I have also taught several sections of Calculus I, II recitation and have been sole instructor of College and Intermediate Algebra. As evidence of my effective teaching, I received an award from the UNL Teaching Council and Parent's Association.

**Research/Creative Interests:** I would like to continue examining prime ideals and other ring theoretic problems. I am also interested in module theory and the decomposition of modules.

## Education Program Candidate

### **Jaskiran Kaur Dhillon**

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### **Education:**

University of Saskatchewan, Sociology. undergraduate. BA, 1996

York University, Sociology. graduate. MA, 1998

University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education. graduate. PhD, 2008

### **Dissertation:**

Shifting Terrains of State Governance: Indigenous Educational Development in Canada

*Information from candidate taken from Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship application.*

**How would you contribute to the diversity of a liberal arts college?** - The focus on my work inside and outside the walls of the academy has primarily centered on critical investigations into issues of power, marginalization, and representation across various mediums of social difference (race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, etc.) and inequality. Issues of diversity, exclusion, and inclusion, are, of course, at the heart of many of these debates. Given my commitment to understanding social experience through this lens, I believe I am well positioned to use experiences of diversity across multiple fronts as a way to both broaden and enrich the education of students at a liberal arts college. Not only will they have the benefit of learning in a specific disciplinary tradition, but they will also gain insight into how issues of diversity have impacted many of our current social conditions. This is especially important in an era of globalization where the transfer of skills and knowledge crosses national boundaries with increasing ease.

My presence in a liberal arts college will increase ethnic and racial diversity in the faculty itself. Growing up as a first generation citizen with immigrant parents, I have acquired experiential as well as academic knowledge of many of these issues. My classes would also be a place for students to debate issues of minority rights and citizenship within a democratic context. I believe my professional history speaks to my dedication to support students from diverse backgrounds with a range of experiences both academically and personally. I am confident that if given the opportunity, I would make an excellent addition to the faculty at a liberal arts college.

**Teaching Interests:** I would be very interested in teaching courses in the following areas: Social Inequality in Education; Sociology of Education; School and Society; Ethnographic Methods

I would be very interested in developing courses in the following areas: Violence, Discipline, and the Criminalization of Youth; Democracy, Citizenship, and Education; Diversity and Justice in Teacher Education

**Teaching Highlights:** My concerns over the role and purpose of education in relation to questions of power, marginalization, and difference have greatly informed my teaching experience over the course of my graduate career. I have taught undergraduate and graduate level courses as an adjunct instructor at York University and the University of Pennsylvania in the fields of the sociology of education, school and society, academic writing, and urban education and was recently invited to teach a graduate course on school violence at Temple University. Over the course of the summer, I was hired to develop the syllabus for a master's level school and society course taught through the Teach for America program at Penn. This course stresses the importance of understanding the larger socio-political, cultural, and historical context of urban education and problematizes deficit orientations of 'educational failure' and 'disengagement' as they relate to under-resourced and marginalized communities. Given that the students participating in this class are first year educators in inner city schools, this course provides a unique opportunity to examine the relationship between urban schools and the communities in which they reside, as well as the potential role of education, from the varying perspectives of teachers, students, parents, and the broader community, in creating social transformation.

During my teaching over the past two years, I have experimented with the use of media in my classes with much success. Discovering ways to draw on visual texts to illuminate theoretical arguments has allowed me to explain to students more concretely how large-scale forces such as racism and sexism are not abstractions but have visceral effects in our daily lives. For example, to teach a class on school violence in my master's level school and society class I used the film 'Rabbit Proof Fence' to deconstruct notions of violence and safety and also to draw attention to the role social institutions can play in maintaining particular political ideologies. This is especially important when teaching a group of students with a range of experience around issues of social exclusion, diversity, and justice.

**Research/Creative Interests:** Building on the interdisciplinary character of my dissertation and other research projects, my research agenda during my fellowship year consists of two inter-related strands of inquiry. First, I intend to transfer the conceptual framework from my dissertation to a US based study of community educational programming for marginalized youth. This research will seek to interrogate the concept of 'education' as it is being used in the context of community development initiatives targeted at creating change in the life trajectories of disenfranchised youth. I will examine constructions of education that inform the ideologies, strategies, and policies of community agencies engaged in delivering educational programs to youth who are marginalized through intersecting experiences of racialization, poverty, and criminalization. What concept of education is being engendered in this transformative discourse? In this regard, this work is an inquiry into the educational discourses of organizations formally positioned as non-governmental and the ways in which the educational needs of underserved youth and young adult populations are negotiated and articulated within communities marked by racial and class diversity.

Foregrounding the importance of generating a deeper and more expansive dialogue around the politics of community-based educational programming to include an analysis of youth experience, my second strand of inquiry will specifically focus on revealing how these programs are experienced and understood by the marginalized youth for whom they are created. In particular, this research will explicate a narrative of how marginality is governed through the creation of these programs and how marginalized youth come to make sense of hegemonic struggles over the meanings of social cohesion and exclusion within the context of competing constructions of education across particular discursive formations (educational policy, juvenile justice, child welfare etc.). Expanding my research in this direction will not only lend insight into the possibilities and limitations of these programs to serve as counter-hegemonic strategies for social, political, and economic change, but also make critical

contributions to the fields of youth culture, urban studies, and sociology of education where narratives of youth experience as they relate to the formation of marginalized subjectivities, are often underrepresented. This also lends insight to the complexity and contradictions of inhabiting places that send conflicting messages about what it means to be 'different' or 'other' within formal and informal discourses of nationhood and speaks to the range of cultural communities through youth will make sense of their experiences within these educational spaces.

## French and Francophone Studies Department Candidate

### Aya Tanaka

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### Education:

Mount Holyoke College, French/ International Relations. undergraduate. BA, 1994

American University, School of International Service. graduate. MA, 1996

Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs. graduate. MA, 1997

Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France, Literatures. graduate. No Degree, 2004

Williams College, Bolin Fellow in Romance Languages. professional. No Degree, 2008

Rutgers University, French. graduate. PhD, 2008

### Dissertation:

Travel Literature and the Development of the Novel in Eighteenth-Century France

*Information from candidate taken from Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Postdoctoral Fellowship application.*

**How would you contribute to the diversity of a liberal arts college?** - I am a Portuguese-speaking Latina of Asian origin, married to a Mexican-American, and a U.S. citizen by choice. It was also my choice to leave a career in international finance to return to academia and obtain a PhD in French Literature. My multicultural background and multidisciplinary education alone would add to the diversity of faculty. However, my commitment to multicultural environments, particularly in a liberal arts college (of which I am a product, and where I would eventually like to work) is based on a commitment to intellectual freedom and inclusiveness. I would like to inspire all of my students to follow their chosen paths regardless of their race, ethnicity or class. I am also committed to a multidisciplinary approach to the study of literature, and I hope to develop literature courses that appeal not only to French majors but to other literature majors, as well as students of History, Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Science.

**Teaching Interests** - I envision my teaching portfolio reaching in two directions. The first direction is obviously French language and literature. In addition to language courses, I really enjoy teaching introduction to French literature courses. I think students' experience with literature at the introductory level is key to their subsequent pursuit of a French major or minor, and it is in such courses I feel that my enthusiasm and love of literature come through most explicitly. I also want to develop a number of ways to teach the eighteenth-century French novel, and possibly extend my expertise to the seventeenth century as well. I have already taught seminars on travel literature and novel from 1732 to 1788 (at Rutgers University and at Mount Holyoke College) and I am slated to teach a class on the memoir- and epistolary novels from 1669 to 1804 at Williams College in the spring of 2008. I would like my next course on the eighteenth-century novel to explore how novelists explore "illegitimate" characters as metaphors for their own sense of illegitimacy.

I foresee my teaching interests also moving toward interdepartmental seminars on travel literature of the New World before 1800, incorporating Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Dutch traditions. I envision this course attracting students not only from other language departments and English, but also from History, Sociology, and Anthropology.

**Teaching Highlights** - Thanks to Rutgers University's Dissertation Teaching Award, I developed and taught a class based on my dissertation in the spring of 2006 (repeated at Mount Holyoke College, 2007). Because this course requires a specific knowledge of French colonial history in the early eighteenth-century, I designed classes where students examine 18th-century original maps at the library, as well as in my own collection of map images. I think this was a very successful exercise that allowed the students to have a more concrete idea of what the new continents (Americas and Australia) looked like to European eyes in the eighteenth-century. Having them describe what they are seeing (maps full of lacunae) was also a good way of having them grasp the writing of history and of fiction at the time.

**Research/Creative Interests** - I hope to dedicate the few years immediately following my PhD to turning my dissertation into a book manuscript. At the same time, I am also eager to start new projects. As a result of my dissertation research, for example, I have become very interested in the concept of history and historiography in the early eighteenth century. My next project will be an expansion of my second dissertation chapter on the Abbé Prévost's doubling as a novelist and as a historian. In addition, I would like to study the impact of skepticism and science for definition of history in French literature after Descartes, with special emphasis on Pierre Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary.