

ELISE A. MITCHELL

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. History, New York University, 2021
Dissertation: “Smallpox and Slavery: Morbidity and Medicine in the Early Modern Black Atlantic”
Committee Members: Jennifer L. Morgan (Chair), Ada Ferrer, Rebecca Goetz, Julie Livingston, Pablo Gómez (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- M.Phil. History, New York University, 2017
- B.A. History, University of Pennsylvania, 2014
magna cum laude with honors in History
Honors Thesis: “Infectious Blackness: Slavery, Englishness, and Representations of the Body in the British West Indies (c. 1770-1807)”
Thesis Advisor: Kathleen Brown

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of History, Princeton University
2021-Present

Visiting Scholar, The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania
2020-2021

PUBLICATIONS

Book Manuscript

Morbid Geographies: Enslavement, Epidemics, and Embodiment in the Early Modern Atlantic World (in progress).

Articles

“Across the Atlantic: Traversing the Morbid Geographies of Enslavement and Public Health in the French Atlantic,” *Atlantic Studies* (Accepted).

“The “Practitioner of Physick and Surgery” and the Enslaved “Doctor”: Medicine, Slavery, and Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *The Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* (Accepted).

“Black and African American,” in “Critical Engagements: What’s in a Name?” *Journal of the Early Republic* 43, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 85-100.

““They had no choice but to obey”: On Slavery, Medicine, Speculation, and the Archive” in “Dilemmas of Archival Objectivity,” *Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences* 53, no. 1 (2023): 82–85.

“Morbid Crossings: Surviving Smallpox, Maritime Quarantine, and the Gendered Geography of the Early Eighteenth-Century Intra-Caribbean Slave Trade,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (2022): 177-210.

*Winner of the 2023 *WMQ* New Voices Prize

Book Chapters

“Disease and Healing in Intercultural Practice,” in *The Cambridge History of the Caribbean: Indigenous Displacement and the Formation of Colonial Slave Societies*, Volume 1 (Under Contract with Cambridge University Press).

“Everyday Histories of Medicine in Eighteenth-Century Caribbean Newspapers,” *Early Modern Medicine: A Source-Centered Introduction*, ed. Olivia Weisser (Forthcoming with Routledge).

“Unbelievable Suffering: Rethinking Feigned Illness in Slavery and the Slave Trade,” in *Medicine and Healing in the Age of Slavery*, eds. Sean Morey Smith and Christopher Willoughby (LSU Press, 2021).

Online Publications and Essays

“How Far Back Were Africans Inoculating Against Smallpox? Really Far Back.” *Slate* (September 4, 2023).

“Historians Disagree,” *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation’s History* (Forthcoming).

“The British Atlantic Slave Trade,” *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Under Contract).

“Public Healing and the Black Radical Tradition in the Americas,” *The Funambulist* (March 2023).

“Black Women’s Reproductive Health and Legacies of Distrust,” *Black Perspectives* (August 3, 2022).

“Apologies Alone Won’t Solve Structural Racism: We Need a Reckoning with the Racist Roots of U.S. Medicine,” *Medical Humanities: Blog* (March 5, 2021).

*Co-authored with Jacqueline Antonovich, Rana Hogarth, Graham Mooney, Ayah Nuriddin, Lauren MacIvor Thompson, Kylie Smith, Christopher Willoughby and Alexandre White

“West Africans and the history of smallpox inoculation: Q&A with Elise A. Mitchell,” *The Royal Society Blog* (October 20, 2020).

“A History of Anti-Black Racism in Medicine Syllabus,” *Black Perspectives* (August 12, 2020).

*Co-authored with Ayah Nuriddin and Antoine Johnson

“‘If bitterness were a whetstone’: On Grief, History, and COVID-19,” *Black Perspectives* (April 23, 2020).

“The Shortages May Be Worse Than the Disease,” *The Atlantic: Ideas* (March 11, 2020).

Book Reviews

“Making Race in British Colonial North America,” (Review of *Colonial Complexions* by Sharon Block), *Black Perspectives* (November 8, 2018).

Article Manuscripts in Progress

“Smallpox Inoculation in Slavery and Freedom during the Jamaican Smallpox Epidemic of 1768,” (In Progress).

“The Transformation of Smallpox Inoculation in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” for a proposed *Past and Present* supplement (In Progress).

DIGITAL PROJECTS

Primary Investigator, *Smallpox and Slavery in the Early Modern Atlantic World: A Digital History*.

Founder, Co-Editor, and Board Member, *Insurrect! Radical Thinking in Early American Studies*, insurrecthistory.org.

HONORS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2023 *WMQ* New Voices Prize
- 2023 The American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship
- 2022 Caribbean Digital Scholarship Collective Microgrant
- 2021 Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship, Princeton University
- 2021 Society of Fellows, Columbia University (Declined)
- 2020 Provost Global Research Initiative Fellowship, New York University (Berlin)
Canceled due to COVID-19
- 2019 Consortium Dissertation Writing Fellowship, McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania
- 2019 National Science Foundation Travel Grant, American Association for the History of Medicine
- 2019 American Historical Association Travel Grant, New York University
- 2019 Jerry Bentley World History Travel Grant, American Historical Association
- 2018 Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, Social Science Research Council
- 2018 Provost Global Research Initiative Fellowship, New York University (London)
- 2017 Center for Humanities Grant-in-Aid (Conference Funding), New York University
- 2017 Graduate School of Arts and Science Dean's Student Travel Grant, New York University
- 2017 Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, Social Science Research Council
- 2017 Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
- 2017 Evelyn S. Nation Short-Term Research Fellowship, The Huntington Library
- 2016 Pre-Dissertation Summer Research Grant, New York University
- 2015 Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant, Social Science Research Council
- 2015 History Department Travel Grant, New York University
- 2015 Phi Beta Kappa, Delta Chapter of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania
- 2014 Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship
- 2014 Henry M. MacCracken Fellowship, New York University
- 2014 Opportunity Fellowship, New York University
- 2014 Dean's Supplementary Fellowship Grant, New York University
- 2014 James V. Saporito Memorial Prize, University of Pennsylvania
- 2014 Sadie Tanner Alexander Prize, University of Pennsylvania

- 2014 The Center for Africana Studies Distinguished Student Prize, University of Pennsylvania
- 2014 Arthur Fauset Award, Makuu Black Cultural Center, University of Pennsylvania
- 2013 Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society, University of Pennsylvania
- 2012 University Scholar, University of Pennsylvania
- 2011 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND COLLOQUIA

- 2023 “Morbid Geographies: Quarantines and the Caribbean Slave Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (London, U.K.).
- 2023 “Smallpox Inoculation in Slavery and Freedom during the Jamaican Smallpox Epidemic of 1768,” History of Science Seminar, Department of History, Princeton University (Princeton, NJ).
- 2023 “Smallpox and Slavery: A Digital History,” Spatial Storytelling, Princeton-Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities, Princeton University (Princeton, NJ).
- 2023 “Morbid Geographies: Smallpox and Slavery in the Atlantic World,” Black Scholars on Black Lives, California State University Channel Islands (Camarillo, CA). *Virtual*.
- 2022 “Morbid Geographies,” Latin American History Speaker Series, Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies, Yale University (New Haven, CT).
- 2022 “The Transformation of Smallpox Inoculation in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” Seminar on Early American History and Culture, Columbia University (New York, NY).
- 2022 “Slavery and Smallpox Inoculation,” Lowell Lecture Series, Paul Revere Memorial Association and the Department of History, Suffolk University (Boston, MA).
- 2022 “Enduring Inoculation: Smallpox Inoculation and Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean,” Yesu Persaud Seminar Series, University of Warwick (Coventry, UK).
- 2021 “Medicine and Slavery in Early Caribbean Gazettes,” Social History of Race, Health, and Environment Working Group, Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2021 “Unbelievable Suffering,” *Medicine and Healing in the Age of Slavery* Book Launch, George and Ann Richards Civil War Center, Penn State. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2021 “Morbid Crossing,” Colonial and Revolutionary Americas Workshop, Department of History, Princeton University. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2021 “Smallpox Inoculation in Slavery and Freedom,” The Politics of Immunity Working Group, Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.

- 2021 “Morbid Crossings: Surviving Smallpox, Maritime Quarantine, and the Gendered Geography of the Early Eighteenth-Century Intra-Caribbean Slave Trade,” The Caribbean Initiative Workshop, New York University. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2021 “Smallpox and Enslavement: Morbidity, Medical Intervention, and Black Life in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” History of Science, Medicine, & Technology, Johns Hopkins University. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2021 “Infectious Ideologies,” The Atlantic World Workshop, New York University. *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2020 “Gendered Protest in the Creation of the Age of Revolutions” (Roundtable), Foundations of Independence, Institute for Thomas Paine Studies, Iona College (New Rochelle, NY). *Virtual due to COVID-19*.
- 2019 “Unbelievable Suffering: Gender, Slavery, and Feigned Illness in the Americas,” O.C. Tanner Talk Series: Race, Ethnicity, and Health: Historical and Contemporary Disparities, Utah State University (Logan, UT).
- 2019 “Morbid Cartographies: Smallpox, Quarantine, and the Slave Trade in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean,” International History Research Seminar, London School of Economics (London, England).
- 2018 “Morbid Voyages: Smallpox and the Slave Trade,” Scholarly Sustenance, Huntington Library Society of Fellows (Pasadena, CA).
- 2018 “Enduring Morbidity: The Histories of Ill Enslaved Women in Dr. Alexander Johnston’s Archive, 1765-1776,” Eighteenth-Century Research Seminar, University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, Scotland).

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Conferences Organized

- 2018 Conference Co-Chair, (En)gendering the Atlantic World, New York University (New York, NY).
- 2016 Organizing Committee Member, Experimentation and Expertise: Flows of Knowledge in the Atlantic World, New York University (New York, NY).
- 2014 Co-Organizer, Mellon Mays Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA).

Conference Panels Organized

- 2022 “Enslaved People and the State in the Colonial Caribbean,” American Historical Association (New Orleans, LA). *Virtual*.
- 2021 “Gendered Pursuits of Freedom,” American Historical Association (Seattle, WA). *Canceled due to COVID-19*.

2019 “Slavery, Mobility, and the Law in the Americas,” American Historical Association (Chicago, IL).

2015 “Three Centuries of Black Life in Slavery in the Caribbean and Latin America,” The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (Atlanta, GA).

Conference and Symposia Presentations

2024 “After Sale: Gender, Childhood, and Smallpox in the Slave Trade and Slavery,” American Historical Association (San Francisco, CA).

2023 “Epidemic Experiences: Smallpox, Quarantine, and the Slave Trade in the Caribbean,” Slave Trading in the Spanish and British Atlantic Worlds, The Huntington Library (Pasadena, CA).

2023 “‘the land will not expose their designs’: African Atlantic Ecologies, Geopolitics, and Responses to Epidemic Disease in the Sixteenth-Century Atlantic World,” Environmental Histories of the Black Atlantic World: Landscape Histories of the African Diaspora, Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Landscape Symposium, Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, D.C.).

2023 “Roundtable: A History of Anti-Black Racism in Medicine Syllabus,” Organization of American Historians (Los Angeles, CA).

2023 “Across the Atlantic: Morbidity, Geography, and the Eighteenth-Century French Atlantic Slave Trade,” Atlantic Studies Charting the Future Symposium, Saint Louis University (Madrid, Spain).

2022 “Judith Burt and Floramel Clark: Black Women Nurses Curing the Caribbean, 1750-1785,” Association of Black Women Historians (Los Angeles, CA).

2022 “How to Apply to Graduate School Strategically,” Mellon Mays Gap Graduate School Bootcamp, Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA).

2022 “Morbid Geographies: Epidemics and Enslavement in the Atlantic World,” The Climate Crisis: Early Americanists Respond, The McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA).

2022 “Slavery’s Scars,” Art Hx Symposium: Curative/Spaces, Princeton University (Princeton, NJ). *Virtual*.

2022 “Rethinking the Adoption of Smallpox Inoculation in the 18th-Century Caribbean,” American Historical Association (New Orleans, LA). *Virtual due to COVID-19*.

2021 “The ‘Doctor to the Plantation Negroes’ and the ‘Negro Doctor’: Slavery, Masculinity, and Medical Expertise in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” Colonial Connections: North East Scotland and Its Colonial Past, 1700-1840, The University of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, Scotland). *Virtual due to COVID-19*.

- 2021 “Care: A Roundtable on Concepts, Archives, and Practices,” Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. *Virtual due to COVID-19.*
- 2021 “Education and Outreach Workshop on Inclusive Citation Practices in the History of Medicine,” American Association for the History of Medicine. *Virtual due to COVID-19.*
- 2021 “Across the Atlantic: Traversing the Morbid Public Health Geographies of the Eighteenth-Century French Slave Trade to the Caribbean,” Subversion, Slavery, and the Work of Empire, Center for Slavery and Justice at Brown University (Providence, RI). *Virtual due to COVID-19.*
- 2021 “What’s in a Name?: Writing Identity in Early American History,” Organization of American Historians (Chicago, IL).
- 2021 “Freedom in the Flesh: Smallpox Inoculation and Embodied Kinship in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean,” American Historical Association (Seattle, WA). *Canceled due to COVID-19.*
- 2020 “Freedom in the Flesh: Smallpox Inoculation and Embodied Kinship in the Atlantic World,” Washington Early American Seminar Series, University of Maryland College Park. *Virtual due to COVID-19.*
- 2020 “The Morbid Lives and the Afterlives of the Elizabeth (1737) Reproduction, Data, and Enslaved People’s Lives in History of the Intra-American Slave Trade,” Evidence: The Use and Misuse of Data, American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, PA). *Virtual due to COVID-19.*
- 2020 “After Sale: Gender, Childhood, and Smallpox in the Slave Trade and Slavery,” Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders and Sexualities (Baltimore, MD). *Canceled due to COVID-19.*
- 2019 “Spaces of Suffering: Smallpox Quarantines in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,” World History Association (San Juan, Puerto Rico).
- 2019 “Slavery and Inoculation: Kinship, Childhood, and Smallpox Inoculation in the Atlantic World,” Omohundro Institute Annual Conference (Pittsburgh, PA).
- 2019 “Enduring Inoculation: Smallpox Inoculation, Slavery, and Kinship in the Greater Caribbean,” American Association for the History of Medicine (Columbus, OH).
- 2019 “Smallpox and Slavery: Morbidity, Medical Intervention, and Enslaved People’s Lives in the Greater Caribbean,” Organization of American Historians (Philadelphia, PA).
- 2019 “Morbid Geographies: Enduring Quarantine in the Eighteenth-Century Greater Caribbean,” American Historical Association (Chicago, IL).

- 2018 “After Sale: Newly Enslaved Africans, Smallpox Quarantine, and Re-Embarkation in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean,” Association of Caribbean Historians (Black Rock, Barbados).
- 2018 “Unbelievable Suffering: Gender, Slavery, and Malingering in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,” Medicine and Healing in the Age of Slavery, Rice University (Houston, TX).
- 2017 “Surviving Smallpox and Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Greater Caribbean,” The Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (Seville, Spain).
- 2016 “Slavery in Caribbean and Latin American History: The Future of the Field,” Latin American History 2025: A Changing Profession in a Changing World, Yale University (New Haven, CT).
- 2015 “‘Smallpox Negroes’: Smallpox Inoculation and the Enslaved Black Body in the British West Indies 1756-1800,” The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (Atlanta, GA).
- 2014 “Infectious Blackness: Slavery, Englishness, and Representations of the Body in the British West Indies (1770-1807),” Caribbean Studies Association Conference (Mérida, Mexico).

Comments

- 2024 “Contagion and Containment: Structures of Disease Outbreaks and Methods to Control Epidemics in the Early Atlantic World,” American Historical Association (San Francisco, CA).
- 2022 “The Revolutionary South and the Black Caribbean,” The Southern Historical Association (Baltimore, MD).
- 2021 Graduate Student Workshop, Program in Latin American Studies, Princeton University (Princeton, NJ).
- 2016 Closing Roundtable, Experimentation and Expertise: Flows of Knowledge in the Atlantic World, New York University (New York, NY).
- 2014 “The (Post)Colonial Experience,” Mellon Mays Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA).

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Spring 2023 Instructor of Record, HIS 415, “Healing in the Black Atlantic,” Department of History, Princeton University.
- Summer 2020 Facilitator, “Teaching the Middle East and Latin America in the Time of Covid-19” K-12 Summer Institute, Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies and Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, New York University.

- Summer 2020 Guest Lecturer, “A Transatlantic Crossing,” Duke University (Instructor of Record: Michael Becker).
- Fall 2019 Guest Lecturer, “Slavery and Smallpox Inoculation,” Simmons University (Instructor of Record: Jessica Parr).
- Summer 2019 Instructor of Record, “Black Life and Medicine: Race and the Social Life of Medical Treatment,” Department of History, New York University.
- Fall 2016 Assistant Instructor, “Historical Interpretation,” Department of History, New York University (Instructor of Record: Rebecca Goetz).
- Fall 2015 Course Assistant, “American Colonial History,” Department of History, New York University (Instructor of Record: Rebecca Goetz).

SERVICE

- 2023 Article manuscript reviewer for *Atlantic Studies*.
- 2023 Article manuscript reviewer for *The American Historical Review*.
- 2023 Reader Committee Member for The Harriet Tubman Book Prize, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.
- 2022 Visit to first-year history seminar (HIS 500), Princeton University.
- 2022 Article manuscript reviewer for *The William and Mary Quarterly*.
- 2022 Article manuscript reviewer for *The Bulletin of the History of Medicine*.
- 2022 Article manuscript reviewer for *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*.
- 2021 Statement co-author, “The American Association for the History of Medicine Calls for Properly Archiving JAMA’s Podcast on “Structural Racism for Doctors,” published March 30, 2021.
- 2020-Present Board Member, *Insurrect! Radical Thinking in Early American Studies*.
- 2020 Mentor, McNeil Center for Early American Studies Undergraduate Research Workshop.
- 2016-2019 Mentor, New York University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Mentorship Program.
- 2016-2017 Alumni Mentor, Makuu Black Cultural Center Undergraduate Mentorship Program (University of Pennsylvania).
- 2016 Panelist for the Qualifying Exam Preparation Panel held by the Graduate Student History Association New York University.

2015-2017 Network Editor, H-Slavery, H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

“Conversations with Scholars: Dr. Elise A. Mitchell,” *Community Now* (April 2023).

“Writing History for the Public,” *Insurrect! Radical Thinking in Early American Studies* (August 3, 2022).

“Episode 30: Smallpox, Slavery, and Vaccinations with Elise Mitchell,” *Infectious Historians* (October 4, 2020).

“Promises and Perils of a COVID-19 Vaccine,” Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies at Duke University (Live September 5, 2020 / Revaluing Care in the Times of Covid-19, September 15, 2020).

“Pandemics in Historical Perspective,” Institute for Humanities Research, University of Wyoming (Live May 7, 2020 / Aired on C-SPAN3 May 30, 2020).

“Episode 128: History of Pandemics” Season of the B Podcast (May 1, 2020).

“Episode 41: The Pandemic and Its Discontents,” Left POCKET Project Podcast (April 3, 2020).

“The Danger of Disbelief: How Medical Bias Can Complicate Patient Care,” Utah Public Radio (October 29, 2019).

LANGUAGES

Spanish, Portuguese, French (reading)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association of Caribbean Historians

Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora

Association of Black Women Historians

Black Women’s Studies Association

Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Genders, and Sexualities

The Omohundro Institute Early American History and Culture

American Association for the History of Medicine

Organization of American Historians

American Historical Association

The Latin American and Caribbean Section, The Southern Historical Association