

**University of South Florida Humanities Institute  
Faculty Fellowship Program  
2021-2022 Cohort**

For several years, the Humanities Institute has been working towards the goal of establishing a faculty fellowship program to provide time and resources to USF faculty pursuing compelling scholarly or creative topics. Similar fellowships are offered by all of our aspirational peer institutions and establishing this program at HI is a major milestone.

For the pilot year, we received six outstanding applications—all worthy of funding and all demonstrating the exciting and innovative humanities research being done at USF. To encourage interdisciplinarity, three faculty members apply as a cohort and outline a central research question or topic they want to explore during the year. Each member of the cohort receives instructional release time, space in the HI suite, and other resources. In addition to working on their year-long project, fellows will conduct regular graduate student seminars, and assist with the annual Undergraduate Humanities Conference.

Special thanks to the CAS Dean's Office, the HI Faculty Advisory Board, and department chairs for their support and input in developing this new program.

Video: [“Meet the Fellows”](#) by Fall 2021 Intern, Erin Vogel



**McArthur Freeman II** | Associate Professor | School of Art and Art History

- *How long have you been a faculty member at USF?*  
I have been a faculty member for 9 years.
- *Book recommendation?*  
I recommend the book *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates.
- *What is one interesting fact about you?*  
I sang when I was younger and often had to make the decision between music and visual art. I even met my beautiful and brilliant wife Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman through singing. If you see me walking, you will probably at least catch me humming something.



**Tangela Serls** | Instructor I | Women's and Gender Studies

- *How long have you been a faculty member at USF?*  
I've been a faculty member at USF since 2018.
- *Book recommendation?*  
One book that I and everyone else should be reading is Moya Bailey's *Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women's Digital Resistance*.
- *What is one interesting fact about you?*  
One interesting fact about me is that if I had to do it all over again, I probably would have pursued a degree in Theology or Business.



**David Ponton III** | Assistant Professor | School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies -  
Africana Studies

- *How long have you been a faculty member at USF?*  
I've been a faculty member at USF for 4 years.
- *Book recommendation?*  
*Scenes of Subjection* by Saidiya Hartman and *Whither Fanon?* by David Marriott
- *What is one interesting fact about you?*  
I have been a comic book fan for a long time and during high school coded and operated the most-visited fansite on the internet for the X-Men character Storm.

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### **Research Theme:** Re-imagining Blackness: Storytelling the End of the (Racialized) World

The faculty fellows are studying the theoretical underpinnings and legacy of legal scholar Derrick Bell's provocative 1980s claim that racism is a permanent feature in American society and how that claim might inform USF's goal to "understand and address blackness and anti-black racism." Central to each faculty member's research is the role of storytelling in subverting stubborn tales of race, gender, class, etc. that uphold inequality, replacing them with imagined worlds that may not exist, but are deeply yearned for. We're delighted to create space for scholars from different schools and colleges to collaborate, discuss, create, and share their work with the larger USF community.

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### **Fall 2021 Seminar Recordings:**

October 1, 2021: ["Re-imagining Blackness: An Introduction to the Inaugural USF Humanities Institute Faculty Fellows"](#)

October 29, 2021: ["Re-imagining Blackness: A Discussion of Horror Noire"](#)

December 3, 2021: ["Re-Imagining Blackness: A Roundtable Discussion on Blackness and Black Storytelling"](#)

### **Spring 2022 Seminar Recordings:**

February 11, 2022: ["Black Love, \(Black\) Love, Black \(Love\)"](#)