PAUL CATO

Curriculum Vitae

(Updated November 2026)

EDUCATION

University of Chicago. Ph.D. in Social Thought. 2024.

> Dissertation: "More Like a Fire, Like the Wind": James Baldwin and the Political Philosophy of Active Love.
>
> Dissertation Committee: Joel Isaac (Co-Chair), Kenneth Warren (Co-Chair), Richard Rosengarten, Michael Thomas.

University of Chicago. M.A. in Social Thought. 2019.

Swarthmore College. B.A. in Religion, Minor in Black Studies. High Honors. 2014.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Providence College. 2024-Present.

> Assistant Professor. Black Studies Department. 2026-Present.
>
> Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow. Black Studies Department. 2024-2026.

University of Chicago. 2021-Present.

> Instructor. Graham School of Continuing Education. 2026-Present.
>
> Instructor. Basic Program of Liberal Education. 2021-2026.

Carleton College. Scholar-in-Residence Fellow. Religion and Africana Studies Departments. 2023-2024.

University of Notre Dame. Visiting Research Scholar. Program of Liberal Studies. 2022-2023.

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Black Religious Thought • Black Social & Political Theory • Black Feminist Thought • James Baldwin • Love Studies • African American Religion • African American Literature • Political Theology • Philosophy of Religion • Affect & Emotions • Religion, Arts, & Literature • Great Books • Authotheory

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapters

2026 Cato, Paul and Vincent Lloyd. "James Baldwin's Philosophy of the Emotions." *Routledge Companion to James Baldwin*, edited by Tyechia Thompson and Yasmin Y. DeGout. Abingdon: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/978100342744523.

2025 "Blues for Mamie Till: Re-Encountering the Emmett Till Exhibit at the National Museum of African American History and Culture." *Open Casket: Philosophical Meditations on the Lynching of Emmett Till*, edited by George Yancy and A. Todd Franklin. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Under Revision

2026 "'Love Takes Off the Masks': Prophecy, Love, and Post-Sentimentalism in James Baldwin's Civil Rights Era Testimonies." *Harvard Theological Review*. (Revise & Resubmit).

2026 "Contractual Execution: James Baldwin and Charles Mills on Nonwhite Internalization of White Supremacist Ideology." *Critical Philosophy of Race*. (Revise & Resubmit).

Manuscripts Under Review

2026 "Bearing Witness to Love: Mediating the (Post)racial Nature of James Baldwin's Philosophy of Love." *James Baldwin Review*. (Submitted for Review).

Non-Academic Publications

2020 "Across Borders: A Conversation with Ishion Hutchinson," with Danielle Charette, PhD. *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. January 1, 2020. https://www.lareviewofbooks.org/article/across-borders-a-conversation-with-ishion-hutchinson/.

2016 "Academic Freedom: A Conversation – Paul Cato & Theo Beers (Parts One, Two, Three)," with Anastasia Berg, PhD. *The Point Magazine*. October 26-November 1, 2016.

Manuscripts in Preparation

2026 *Witnessing the Sensual: James Baldwin, Black Intellectuals, and the Discourse on Active Love.* (Book Manuscript)

2026 From *Mania* to Ecstasy: Eros in Plato's *Phaedrus* and Gregory of Nyssa's *Commentary on the Canticles*. (Journal Article)

2026 "Seeming to Blaze with the Fierceness of Her Eye": Draupadi's Figural Navigation of the Dharmic Continuum." (Journal Article)

2026 "Sensual, Soulful, and Thick: Witnessing the Salvific Potential of Black Radical Love." (Journal Article)

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, & HONORS

National & Postdoctoral Fellowships

2024-2026 Postdoctoral Fellowship. Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges. Black Studies Department, Providence College.

2023-2024 Dissertation Fellowship. Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges. Religion and Africana Studies Departments, Carleton College.

2023-2024 Social Sciences Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship. John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought and the College. (Declined).

2022-2023 Visiting Research Fellowship. Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame.

2018 Ford Predoctoral Fellowship, Honorable Mention. Ford Foundation.

2013 Leadership Alliance Mellon Initiative. Andrew H. Mellon Foundation.

2012 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. Andrew H. Mellon Foundation.

Institutional Fellowships

2025-2026 Lacordaire Faculty Fellows Program. Providence College.

2022-2023 Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Center for Study of Gender and Sexuality. University of Chicago (Declined).

2021-2022 John U. Nef Dissertation Fellowship. University of Chicago

2021-2022 Joint Residential Fellowship. Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture and the Center for Study of Gender and Sexuality. University of Chicago

2020-2021 John U. Nef Dissertation Fellowship. University of Chicago

2020-2022 Fellow. Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning. University of Chicago

Short-Term Grants

2022 Creating Connections Consortium PAVE Grant.

2022 Ethics of Blackness Dissertation Grant. Africana Studies Program. Villanova University.

2022 Graduate and Travel Grant. Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, University of Chicago. Research Site: New York, NY.

2021 John U. Nef Research Grant. University of Chicago. Research Site: New York, NY.

2020 Predoctoral Research Development Grant. Social Science Research Council. Research Site: Washington, DC.

2019 Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant. Social Science Research Council. Research Site: Chicago, IL.

2018 Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant. Social Science Research Council. Research Site: Chicago, IL.

2017 Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant. Social Science Research Council. Research Site: Chicago, IL.

Awards & Honors

2024 Furthering Diversity Award. Division of the Social Sciences. University of Chicago.

2022 Francis X. Kinahan Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Advanced Academic Writing. University of Chicago.

2019 Inclusive Pedagogy Presentation Prize. University of Chicago.

INVITED TALKS & LECTURES

Invited Talks

2026 "The Time for a Black Religious Experiment: Love and Democracy in America's 250th Year." Religion and Public Life Program. Harvard Divinity School. Harvard University. February 20.

2024 "Expanding the Canon: Baldwin, Ellison, & Dostoevsky." Black Critical Thought Group. Harvard University. April 17.

2023 "'Whereas Active Love is Labor and Perseverance': Dostoevskian Love in James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison's Political Theology." Forum on Religious Thought and Contemporary Theory. Harvard University. December 4.

2023 "'Here You Were…. To Be Loved, Baby': James Baldwin's Testimonies on Love, Innocence, and Responsibility in *The Fire Next Time*." Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame. March 29.

2023 "Post-Sentimental Prophecy in James Baldwin's Philosophy of Love, 1957-1972." Religion Department, Carleton College. March 9.

2022 "Reconciling Yourself to Your Situation: James Baldwin's Moralistic Psychology and the Pursuit of Mental, Spiritual, and Sociopolitical Wellness." Jerry Jackson Lecture in the Humanities. Department of Philosophy & Religion, Brinson Honors College, Global Black Studies, Department of Anthropology & Sociology, College of Arts & Sciences. Western Carolina University. October 26.

2022 "Nobody Knows My Name: A Tribute to James Baldwin." English Department & African American Studies Program, Lake Forest College. April 13.

2021 "A Human Affair: James Baldwin's Philosophy of Optimism and Active Love." Swarthmore College. October 26.

2018 "James Baldwin: An Overview." Africana Studies Program, Susquehanna University. November 14.

2018 "Life on the Margins of Race & Ability at Elite Liberal Arts Schools." Susquehanna University. November 14.

Invited Panels & Roundtables

2022 Colored Convos Media [@coloredconvosmedia]. "On bell hooks' *All About Love*," with Andrea Y. Adomako, Ph.D., Chaz Antione Barracks, Ph.D., and Jenn Jackson, Ph.D. November 11.

2022 "What I Wish I'd Known About Graduate School." Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Williams College. May 17.

2018 "Being Black, Being American in the Essays of James Baldwin: A Dialogue with Dr. Michael Thomas, Ph.D." Philosophy Department, Susquehanna University. November 14.

Public Facing & Engaged Scholarship

2026 Black Studies Podcast. University of Maryland (Upcoming).

Public Talks

2025 "Making Justice for All of God's Children: Young People's Fight for Racial Justice." White Oak Missionary Baptist Church. Apex, NC. February 24.

2023 "The Line Between a Witness and an Actor: Reviving the Black Testimonial Tradition as a Way of Life." Liberal Arts Discussion. Kibbitznest Organization & University of Chicago. May 18.

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

Conference Panels Organized

2025 "Introducing: The Black Love Studies Institute," with Dr. Qrescent Mali Mason and Hanae Mason. National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference. November 13-16.

2025 "Comparative Emancipation and Collisions with Liberal Thought," with Dr. Christy Monet, Dr. Derefe Chevannes, and Dr. Rose Owen. Western Political Science Association Annual Conference. April 17-19.

2023 "Errant Femininities Across Four Photographic Archives: A Roundtable," with Summer Sloane-Britt, Courtney Lau, and Dahlia Li. ASAP14 Conference. The Association for the Study of Arts of the Present. October 4-7.

2022 "Undercutting Intergenerational Assumptions: Optimism and Hope in Twenty-First Century America," with Janelle Viera, Noel Quiñones, and Yena Purmasir. American Studies Association Annual Meeting. November 2-6.

2022 "Baldwin's Activist Aesthetic: Post-Racialism, Love, and Private Life" with Michael Thomas, Ph.D. and Ronnel Berry. Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin Conference. June 16-19.

2021 "On the Limits and Transcendence of Racial Assumptions: Envisioning New Worlds Through Phenomenologies of Hope, Love, Critique, and Sensuality," with Mat Messerschmidt, Kévin Irakóze, and Kirsten Collins. Embodiment and Race Philosophy Conference II. Clemson University. November 4-7.

2021 "Representing it in the Extreme: Blackness as a Testimonial Rhetoric in Twenty-First Century America," with Janelle Viera, Noel Quiñones, and Chelsea Osademe. American Studies Association Annual Meeting. October 7-10.

2020 "Witnesses to Exile: Blackness and Jewishness Between France and America," with Kirsten Collins and Joel Swanson. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. November 30 - December 10.

Conference Papers Presented

2025 "Witnessing Black Love: Testimony as a Method for Critical Love Studies." National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference. November 13-16.

2025 "James Baldwin's 1970s Discussions of Love: From Critiques of White Liberalism to Celebrations of Black Fraternity and Sorority." Western Political Science Association Annual Conference. April 17-19.

2023 "'I Listen and Something is Listening to Me': James Baldwin & His Creative Sisters." Association for the Study of Arts of the Present. October 6.

2022 "Rejoicing in the Force of Life: Reviving Baldwinian Witnessing in the Twenty-First Century." American Studies Association Annual Meeting. November 2-6.

2022 "'To Be Present in All That One Does': A Testimonial Analysis of Baldwinian Sensuality and Active Love." Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin Conference. June 16-19.

2021 "'Thou Knows Not His Wrassling': James Baldwin, Charles Mills, and Nonwhite Internalization of White Supremacy." Embodiment and Race Philosophy Conference II. Clemson University. November 4-7.

2021 "Baldwin's Progeny and the (Black) Discourse on Active Love: Jenkins, Ward, and Peck on Love." American Studies Association Annual Meeting. October 11-14.

2020 "Bearing Witness to the Act and Revelation of Love: James Baldwin & Emmanuel Levinas on Love, Transcendence and Human Sociality." American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. November 30 - December 10.

2019 "The American Soul of Black Radical Love: A Diachronic Analysis of Black American Love Testimonies." American Studies Association Annual Meeting. November 7-10.

2019 "Sites of Baldwinian Testimony: Kerry James Marshall's Elusive Archival Interventions," with Summer Sloane-Britt. Black Portraiture[s] V: Memory and The Archive, 1619-2019 Conference. Institute of African American Affairs. New York University. October 17-19.

2016 "James Baldwin and the Paradox of Identity: Baldwin's Intersectional Development in Paris, France." "A Language to Dwell In": James Baldwin, Paris, and International Visions Conference, American University of Paris. May 26-28.

2015 "Tracing Raskolnikov's *Angest*: A Kierkegaardian Reading of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*." The Redemption of Feeling: Religious Existentialists Conference, Queens College. December 3-4.

Refereed Talks & Workshops

2026 Presenter, "Black Studies, Pedagogy, and the Academy." Faculty of the Humanities, University of Amsterdam. October 26.

2026 Respondent, "Little Jimmy B, in Rehearsal: *The Magpie* and James Baldwin's Literary Coming Of Age" by Frank Leon Roberts. Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, Brown University. October 21.

2024 Respondent, "The Literatures of Black Liberation Theology" by Denson Staples. Forum on Religious Thought and Contemporary Theory. Harvard University. February 26.

2022 Presenter, "James Baldwin's Prophetic Witnessing in the Civil Rights Era." Ethics of Blackness Workshop. Africana Studies Program, Villanova University. April 29-30.

2022 Respondent, "Racism as an Explanatory Concept" by César Cabezas, Ph.D. Social Ontologies of Oppression, Solidarity, and Care Philosophy Workshop. Institute for the Humanities, University of Illinois at Chicago. February 19.

CAMPUS TALKS & WORKSHOPS

2027 ""The Spirit of 'Fifth Avenue, Uptown': A Testimony on James Baldwin's Harlem." First Friday Lecture. Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies. (Upcoming).

2025 "The Fire in Foster Hall: James Baldwin, the Committee on Social Thought, and the Politics of Active Love." April 21.

2024 "'But Then You Read [In Black]': Black Liberal Arts, the Western Canon, and the Fight Against Racism at Providence College." November 13.

2024 "Those Who *Have* Dared to Hymn Love's Praises: A Symposium on Black Philosophies of Love." First Friday Lecture. Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies. March 1.

2023 "'It Might Be Made to Bear the Burden of My Experience': A Testimonial Analysis of Black Existence & the Western Canon." First Friday Lecture. Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies. April 4.

2020 "Flipping the Script: Choosing Black Survival Over Black Death." Taking a Stand Against Racism: Our Shared Values and Responsibilities Panel. Office of the Provost. June 4.

2019 "Something More Like a Fire, Like the Wind: A Pedagogy of Active Love." Chicago Center for Teaching. February 22.

2019 "Second Sighted Intimacy: Double Consciousness in Black American Love Discourses." UChicago Grad Speakers Series. February 14.

2017 "*I Am Not Your Negro* – Post-Screening Panel Discussion." Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture. May 13.

2017 "'Liberation into the Glory & Suffering of the World': The Tradition of Black Radical Love." Committee on Social Thought Colloquium. February 27.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE & TRAINING

Courses Taught at Providence College

Instructor. Research Seminar: Black Radical Thought. Black Studies Department.
Fall 2026 [In-Person].

Instructor. Black Feminisms. Black Studies Department. Cross-Listed: Women and Gender Studies; Sociology; Public and Community Service Studies.
Fall 2026 [In-Person].

Instructor. Faith & Spirit in the Black Community. Black Studies Department. Cross-Listed: American Studies
Spring 2026 [In-Person]. Spring 2027 [In-Person]

Instructor. Introduction to Black Studies. Black Studies Department.
Fall 2024 [In-Person]. Spring 2025 [In-Person]. Spring 2026 [In-Person]. Fall 2026 [In-Person]. Spring 2027 [In-Person].

Courses Taught at University of Chicago

Instructor. August Wilson. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2026 [Remote].

Instructor. Black Epics. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2026 [Remote].

Instructor. African American Novel. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2025 [Remote].

Instructor. James Baldwin. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2024 [Remote].

Instructor. Freedom in Black and White: Black Philosophical Literature and the "Western" Canon. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2023 [Remote].

Instructor. Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Summer 2022 [Remote].

Instructor. Plato's *Phaedo*. Graham School of Continuing Education.
Spring 2022 [Remote].

Co-Instructor. Fundamentals of Teaching Undergraduates in the Social Sciences
Fall 2020 [Remote], Fall 2021 [Remote].

Co-Instructor. Foundations in Critical Social Theory.
Summer 2018 [In-Person].

Courses Taught at Carleton College

Instructor. Black Testimony. Religion Department. Cross-Listed: Africana Studies, American Studies, Political Science.
Spring 2024 [In-Person].

Instructor. Black Love: Religious, Political, and Cultural Conversations. Religion Department. Cross-Listed: Africana Studies, American Studies, Political Science.
Winter 2024 [In-Person].

Instructor. Black Religious Thought. Religion Department. Cross-Listed: Africana Studies, American Studies, Political Science.
Fall 2023 [In-Person].

Courses Taught at School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Instructor. Black Studies. Liberal Arts Department.
Fall 2021 [Remote].

Advising Experience

Senior Comprehensive Project. Carleton College. Gender, Women's & Sexuality Studies Program.
2023-2024

Ph.D. Admissions Advising. Institute for Citizens & Scholars. Mellon Mays Gap Assistance Program.
2019-2021.

Director. Graduate School Preparation Program. Summer Research Training Program.
2017-2018.

Ph.D. Admissions Advising. University of Chicago Summer Research Training Program Alumni.
2016-2021.

Teaching Certificates

2026 Certificate in Online Teaching. Providence College. Summer.

2024 Certificate in Writing Pedagogy. Writing Center. University of Chicago. Spring.

2023 College Teaching Certificate. Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning. University of Chicago. Fall.

2023 Certificate in the Craft of Teaching in the Academic Study of Religion. Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion. University of Chicago. Summer.

Pedagogy Courses, Training, & Working Groups

2025 Documenting the Impact of the Humanities in Higher Education. National Humanities Alliance. Spring.

2020 Course Design and College Teaching. University of Chicago. Winter.

2018 Critical Pedagogy in the University Classroom. University of Chicago. Fall.

2017 Principles of Teaching Writing. University of Chicago. Fall.

2017 Fundamentals of Teaching Undergraduates in the Humanities. Chicago Center for Teaching. University of Chicago. Fall.

2015-2016 Race and Pedagogy Working Group. Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture. University of Chicago.

Guest Lectures

2025 "Crossroads of Identity: A Testimonial Account." Course: Sociology of Intersectionality. Janelle Viera, Ph.D., Sociology. Colorado State University. February 25.

2024 "Disability & Accessibility: An Intersectional Perspective." Course: Sociology of Intersectionality. Janelle Viera, Ph.D., Sociology. Colorado State University. February 22.

2023 "'A Harsh and Dreadful Thing': Dostoevsky's Active Love in James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison." Course: From Underground Man to Invisible Man. Laura Goering, Ph.D., Russian Department. Carleton College. November 13.

2023 "'A Freedom that Was Close to Love': The Re-Invigoration of Black Christian Love in James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*." Course: Christianity and Colonialism. Kristin Bloomer, Ph.D., Department of Religion. Carleton College. November 9.

2023 "James Baldwin and the Religious Politics of Active Love." Course: Black Political Thought and the Spirit of Freedom. Terrence Johnson, Ph.D., Divinity School. Harvard University. April 4.

2022 "Religious Optimism Amidst Social Despair." Course: Self, Society, and The Good Life. Katharine Mershon Ph.D., Department of Philosophy and Religion. Western Carolina University. October.

2021 "Black Love." Course: Introduction to Critical Studies. Patricia Ventura Ph.D., Department of English. Spelman College. November 16.

2021 "Many Shades of White." Course: Sociology of Race and Ethnicity. Janelle Viera, Department of Sociology. University of North Carolina. November 16.

2018 "Being Black, Being American in the Essays of James Baldwin: A Dialogue with Dr. Michael Thomas, Ph.D." Philosophy Department, Susquehanna University. November 14.

SERVICE

Service to the Profession

2026 Peer Reviewer. *James Baldwin Review*. University of Manchester.

2026 Book Proposal Reviewer. Continental Philosophy. Bloomsbury Publishing.

2023 Peer Reviewer. *American Political Thought*. University of Chicago Press.

2022 Panel Moderator, "Spatialized Race." Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Midwest Regional Conference. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. October 21-22.

2022 Panel Moderator. Leadership Alliance National Symposium. July 27-31.

2022 Panel Moderator, "(Re)Configuring Identities." Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Midwest Regional Conference. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. April 8-10.

2022 Peer Reviewer. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. American Academy of Religion.

2021 Panel Moderator, "Heidegger and Race." Heidegger: Politics, History, Modernity Conference. University of Chicago. May 28-29.

2019 Panel Co-Moderator, "Mediating Identities," with Summer Sloane-Britt. Black Portraiture[s] V: Memory and The Archive, 1619-2019 Conference. New York University. October 17-19.

2016 Panel Moderator, "Baldwin and Paris (Part 3)." "A Language to Dwell In": James Baldwin, Paris, and International Visions Conference. American University of Paris. May 26-28.

Service to Institution: Carleton College

2024 Instructor. Carleton Liberal Arts Experience. Carleton College. Summer.

Service to Institution: University of Chicago

2021-2022 Member. Student Committee on Social Thought Department Hires. University of Chicago.

2021 Panelist. Graduate Mentorship Panel. First Year Scholars Program. University of Chicago. November 30.

2018-2020 Coordinator. Literature and Philosophy Workshop. University of Chicago. Council on Advanced Studies.

2020	Facilitator. Inclusive Pedagogy Workshop. Divinity School. University of Chicago. November.
2017	"Teach-In: James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*," with Kaushik Sunder Rajan. Pritzker Medical School. University of Chicago. January 6.
2016-2018	Graduate Assistant. Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. University of Chicago.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & OUTREACH

2024	Panelist. Mosaic Literary Conference: James Baldwin At 100. Literary Freedom Project. November 23.
2020	Moderator. "Chicago Stories: Our Struggles with Race & What Are We Going to Do About it *NOW*." Alumni Council, Swarthmore College. June 17.
2017	"Epilepsy's Inner Light: Building New Consciousness Through Blackness and Disability." *Epilepsy.com*. Epilepsy Foundation of America. February 6, 2017. https://www.epilepsy.com/article/2017/2/black-history-month-2017.
2014	Co-Founder. Twenty 20s International Epilepsy Awareness Group. Epilepsy Foundation & International Bureau for Epilepsy.
2014	Participant. North American Summit, International Bureau for Epilepsy & Epilepsy Foundation of America. July 25-27.

RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVITIES

Black Love Studies Institute. Co-Founder. 2024-Present

Love Research Network. 2022-Present

Emerging Scholars Network. Christian Poetics Initiative, Yale University. 2022-Present.

Political Theology Network. 2021-Present

Workgroup for Intersectional, Testimonial, and Ancestral Research. Co-Founder. 2021-Present.

Leadership Alliance. 2013-Present

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. 2012-Present.

LANGUAGES

Latin, Reading Proficiency.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

African American Intellectual History Society.

American Academy of Religion.

American Philosophical Association.

American Studies Association.

Association for the Study of Arts of the Present.

International Association for the Study of Popular Romance.

Modern Language Association.

National Council for Black Studies.

National Women's Studies Association.

Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy.