

## **Tejumola Olaniyan Reading Group Monthly Activity Report 2024-2025**

This document contains a cumulative report of the monthly programs and meetings held by the Tejumola Olaniyan Reading Group during the 2024-2025 tenure. Co-chairs Ayodeji Adegbite and Michael Oshindoro elected a two-pronged approach to the theme of the year—**Introspection and Mutual Aid**. *We wanted to continue the intellectual tradition of expanding the field of Global Black Studies while prioritizing community and peer support.* Due to the constantly changing internal dynamics within the group, with an increasing number of members transitioning from graduate students and PhD candidates to faculty, we believed it was important to create more opportunities for peer support, professional development, and group-level critical intellectual engagement within the program. The joint themes of Introspection and Mutual Aid allowed the reading group to engage with a broad range of literature by leading scholars in the field of Global Black Studies, while simultaneously looking inward to strengthen community, increase access, and interact with peers’ intellectual productions. As reflected in the attached agenda to this report, our monthly programs and events have been alternating between “Field” (reading and engaging with intellectual works) and “Mutual Aid” (programs dedicated to supporting specific groups of members).

### **Dates and Times of Meetings:**

1. October 6, 2024
2. October 26, 2024
3. November 30, 2024
4. January 25, 2025
5. February 22, 2025
6. March 29, 2025
7. April 26, 2025
8. July 26, 2025

## **Breakdown of Meetings and Programs:**

**October 6th, 2024** - This was our first meeting of the 2024/2025 tenure, where we set the agenda for the year. Continuing the tradition of fostering the field of global black cultural studies, the agenda reflected a commitment to reading and engagement with scholarship on Global Black Literature, History, and Cultural Studies. In addition, we introduced the notion of “Mutual Aid” as an organizing theme that would coordinate the group’s programs and events for the year. We welcomed two new members, Kehinde Oluwakayode and Oluwadamilola Ogunmuko, to the group.

**October 26th, 2024** - Building on the theme of mutual aid, which emphasizes collective support, we capitalized on the internal dynamics of the group to arrange a Job Market Workshop. The session focused on group members who were advanced PhD candidates on the job market. The workshop was facilitated by the assistant professors in the group, including Dr. Chinaza Okoli, Dr. Tolulope Akinwale, Dr. Utitofon Inyang, and Dr. Kayode Odumboni.

**November 30th, 2024** - This month saw a *return* to the Field. The group read Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* and Brent Edwards’ “The Uses of Diaspora.” In bringing a classic work in the field in conversation with a more recent scholarship, group members were able to appreciate and join ongoing debates in the disciplines. The discussion was enriched by the insights that individual members brought from their disciplinary areas and specialties.

**January 25th, 2025** - In 2024, the Journal of African Literature Association (JALA) published a special issue titled “Critical Legacies: Tejumola Olaniyan.” The issue featured various academic essays, including peer-reviewed articles and shorter pieces categorized as “Notes from the Field.” Five members of the Tejumola Olaniyan Reading Group contributed to this issue. Here are the members: Utitofong Inyang, Tolulope Akinwale, Theophilus Okunlola, Michael Oshindoro. Another member of the group, Chijioke Onah, published an article in a separate journal. In total, we read five articles for the January meeting.

**February 22nd, 2025** - The group gathered to discuss Yogita Goyal’s *Runaway Genres: The Global Afterlives of Slavery*. This book connects to the classics we read in November.

**March 29th, 2025** - We used this meeting to deliberate on the forthcoming April meeting, which coincides with the Tejumola Olaniyan Memorial Lecture and the Gap as Venue event facilitated

by Professor Catherine Cole of the University of Washington. We hosted Catherine, Kwame Braun, and Sikose Mjali. We discussed issues of ethics, ownership, access, and hosting of recorded interviews for the Gap as Venue Podcast.

**April 26, 2015** - The group gathered in person for the first time, holding a three-day meeting in at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The activities included the Tejumola Olaniyan Memorial Lecture and the Gap as Venue project sponsored by Professor Catherine Cole. Dr. Dotun Oyebade gave the Olaniyan Memorial Lecture at Africa at Noon. After the lecture, members were given a tour of the university, which included visits to places such as the Chazen Museum. The following day, members hosted Dr. Ayobade at the Ecolodge for further conversation on his book and professional development. Other events included Alt-Ac Careers with Dr. Oladipo Oyeleye. Ayodeji Adegbite gave a talk on EB2/EB1 National Interest Waiver (NIW) applications. Then, we had an *Evening of Reflections*, which also served as a celebration of Professor Aliko Songolo. Dr. Utitofon Inyang gave a talk on dissertation writing, while Michael Oshindoro gave his talk on the Public Facing Scholarship Workshop. The following day, group members and the GAP as Venue Team made a trip to Professor Tejumola Olaniyan's gravesite. A recorded reflection of the visit followed this. The Gap as Venue event features a podcast roundtable and interviews with group members, conducted by Dr. Tolu Akinwole, Sikose Mjali, and Kwame Braun.

**July 26, 2025** - Discussion on group article on Mourning and preparing for Prelims.