Public lecture 1

Date: September 10, 2017, 3:00 p.m.

Lecturer: Dr. Beverly Bond

Title: OH, FREEDOM OVER ME! THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Abstract: In 1863, Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation “freeing” some of the four million people held in bondage in the United States. The Union Army’s victory in the Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution cemented this end to America’s “peculiar institution.” The Fourteenth Amendment extended all of the “rights and privileges” of citizenship to the formerly enslaved. The Fifteenth Amendment granted the right to vote to all Americans regardless of race, creed or previous condition of servitude. But one hundred years later, a quarter of a million Americans - black and white - marched on the nation’s capital demanding recognition of citizenship rights and privileges that had been dramatically restricted by nearly eight decades of legal and extralegal actions. This presentation will examine the historical context of the Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington. Who was “freed” by Lincoln’s proclamation? What did black freedom mean to the formerly enslaved and to those who had held them in bondage? How did legal and customary segregation and disenfranchisement become enshrined in American social, political and economic life? Finally, why the 1963 March on Washington?

Public Lecture 2

Date: October 7, 2:00 p.m.

Lecturer: Dr. Ladrica Menson-Furr

Title: THE BOOKENDS 1863-1963: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERARY RESPONSES TO A CENTURY OF FREEDOM AND PROMISE

Abstract: Frederick Douglass penned the prototypical and dominant African American literary genre in 1845 as he composed the seminal Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. While this genre both dominated the mid to late nineteenth century African American literary and, as literary and cultural historians agree, became the beginning of the African American novel tradition, African American authors continued to utilize literature as means to reflect upon and respond to changes occurring in America, particularly after the promise of freedom given by President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and in the decades leading up 1963, and the historic March on Washington. Hence, in this presentation, I will discuss the significance of at least one work composed during each decade between 1863 and 1963 and highlight how it reflects, responds, critiques, and anticipates the demand for complete freedom and equality that the Emancipation Proclamation offered and served as the foundation for the March on Washington.