

**The Office of EDI at
Bishop's University presents**

SIMPLY NOIR

MARCH 19 & 20 - 2025

Simply Noir is a 2-day symposium dedicated
to amplifying Black and Afro heritage,
leadership, voices, and scholarship.

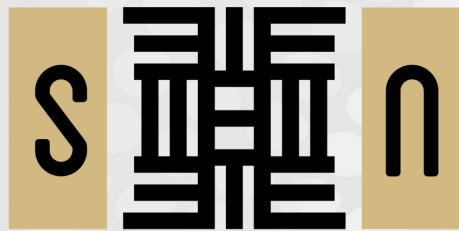
Dr. W. Andy Knight | Jasmine Lew | Taylor McNallie

Dr. Julie Mooney | Montreal Steppers

Maurice Nzoyamara | Aïssata Sako

Allison Saunders | Dr. Rekiyat (Gifty) Siyaka

The Ghetto Activist | Dr. Maroro Zinyemba



Schedule

March 19

March 20

9:30 - 11:30 a.m. **Dr. W. Andy Knight**

Documentary Screening and Report Discussion

Centennial Theatre

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **Taylor McNallie and
The Ghetto Activist**

Teatime Conversation
Mutual Aid, Grassroots Resistance, and
Community Building

Cleghorn Room

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. **Dr. Maroro Zinyemba**

Traditional Storytelling
Honouring Heritage: A Black woman's
leadership journey in postsecondary education

Cleghorn Room

4:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Career Networking Event
Centennial Lobby

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Montreal Steppers Workshop
Centennial Theatre

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **Maurice Nzoyamara**

Presentation on Holistic Wellbeing

LLC Agora

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. **Jasmine Lew**

Workshop on Leadership and Movement

LLC Agora

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **Dr. Rekiyat (Gifty)
Siyaka and
Dr. Julie Mooney**

Dialogue on Ethical and
Sustainable Allyship

LLC Agora

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. **Allison Saunders**

Storytelling

LLC Agora

4:30 - 5:30 p.m. **Aïssata Sako**

Dialogue and Reflections on the Intersections
of Colour, Cultures, Communities, and Class

LLC Agora



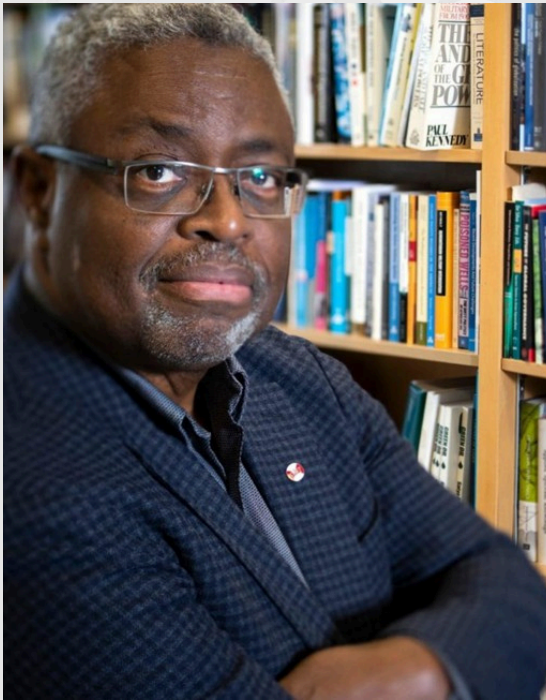
Simply Noir is a 2-day symposium dedicated to amplifying Black and Afro heritage, leadership, voices, and scholarship. The symposium celebrates achievements and opens space for meaningful connections, learning, and dialogue across academia, industry, and community leadership. This event brings together scholars, professionals, artists, and advocates for dynamic discussions, networking opportunities, and cultural celebrations.

Read on to learn more about some of our upcoming Simply Noir guests.



Dr. W. Andy Knight

March 19, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Centennial Theatre



Join Dr. W. Andy Knight for a documentary screening of “Trusted to Serve” and community presentation and discussion on his report, “Weeding out Xeno-Racism and White Supremacist Elements from the Canadian Armed Forces”.

Dr. W. Andy Knight is a University of Alberta Distinguished Professor, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a globally recognized expert in International Relations and global politics.

His contributions to scholarship, policy, and public service have been both prolific and far-reaching. Born in Barbados, he moved to Canada in 1977 to pursue his education. At McMaster University, where he earned a combined BA (Hons) in Fine Arts and Political Science, he made history as the first Black President of the McMaster Student Union.

He went on to complete an MA in Political Science at Dalhousie University and a PhD in International Relations at York University.

Today, he serves as the inaugural Provost Fellow in Black Excellence and Leadership at the University of Alberta. Andy began his teaching career at L’Université Bishop’s (1993-1998), but it was at the University of Alberta, starting in 1998, that his reputation as a dynamic teacher and innovative researcher truly flourished. His students were drawn to his work on child soldiers, the impact of war on children, female suicide bombers, homegrown extremism, United Nations reform, and human rights. His ability to inspire and mentor has guided many toward significant research in these areas.

Over the years, Andy has earned numerous accolades for his teaching and research, including the prestigious University of Alberta McCalla Professorship and the Delta Chi Fraternity Teaching Award. His commitment to student development goes beyond the classroom—he founded the University of Alberta’s Model UN Club, which has since inspired a high school Model UN program in Edmonton that attracts over 500 students annually.

His expertise has taken him around the world as a visiting professor at institutions such as Landegg University in Zurich, the University of the West Indies (UWI) in the Caribbean, and the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

While at UWI, he also served as Director of the Institute of International Relations, working with the Trinidadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to amplify the voices of small island states in global institutions. His leadership led to the creation of the Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean and the Caribbean Child Rights Observatory Network, in partnership with UNICEF.

Since returning to Canada, Andy has continued to excel in research, teaching, and leadership at the University of Alberta. He has secured over \$5 million in research funding from national and international agencies and has authored, co-authored, or edited 16 books, 80 book chapters, and more than 70 peer-reviewed journal articles. His impact extends beyond academia—he was the Editor of *Global Governance*, co-founded *The Caribbean Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy*, and served as co-Editor-in-Chief of *African Security*. A recognized public intellectual, Andy frequently appears in major media outlets and hosts the podcast *Blacktalk.ca*, where he explores the experiences of Black Canadians and global Black experts.

His leadership extends to public service—he has served on the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on the Welfare of Children, as Vice-Chair of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), and as Chair of the Organization for the Prevention of Violence, a community initiative addressing radicalization in Alberta. He has also served as an election monitor in Taiwan and Nigeria, reinforcing his commitment to democracy and governance.

Andy’s career reflects an extraordinary dedication to advancing knowledge in International Relations, mentoring future scholars, and serving both Canada and the global community. His impact has been recognized through numerous awards, including the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal, an Honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) from McMaster University, and the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award.



Aïssata Sako

March 20, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

LLC Agora



Aïssata Sako is an Ivorian national and Bishop's alumna thriving as a strategist in epidemiological research. Her experiences and identities are shaped by multiple cultures and realities.

She is passionate about creating this space for reflections on the plurality of being and living noire. At Simply Noir, Aïssata will engage the community in reflections on the intersections of colour, culture, community, and class.



Taylor McNallie

March 19, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Cleghorn Room



Taylor McNallie is a Mom, Community Builder, Educator and Creative located in Mohkinstsis on Treaty 7 Territory. Taylor's experience and background spans many lanes, including brand development, public speaking, music journalism, event and community organizing, content production, creative writing, and much more.

Since 2020, Taylor has helped to create multiple grassroots organizations that all aim to uplift and support marginalized peoples locally, nationally and abroad. Inclusive Canada, now Abolish Cops CA, is focused on providing education surrounding systemic oppression, and Taylor has expanded this work through creative writing that she shares on various social media platforms.

Walls Down Collective provides various forms of community care to those most impacted by systemic oppression. And, Mutual Aid Canada helps to promote the importance of wealth redistribution through online campaigning, with nearly \$150,000 redistributed in 2024 alone.

Taylor remains focused on her commitment to community organizing, and brings her knowledge, experience and passion for community building, public speaking and multimedia creation to all she does.

At Simply Noir, Taylor will engage us in discussions and reflections on mutual aid, grassroots resistance, and community building.



The Ghetto Activist

March 19, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Cleghorn Room



The Ghetto Activist is a dedicated Afrocentric scholar and activist committed to challenging historical misinformation and reclaiming the true narratives of Africa and its diaspora. Through his platform, The Ghetto Activist blog, he provides critical analysis, historical correction, and educational resources that counter Eurocentric distortions of African history and identity.

His work is rooted in decolonizing knowledge, uplifting Black consciousness, and fostering a deeper understanding of African heritage, culture, and resilience. By blending historical research with activism, he seeks to empower communities with the tools to recognize and dismantle systemic misinformation while fostering pride in African contributions to global civilization.

The Ghetto Activist engages with a broad audience, including students, educators, and activists, encouraging dialogue and education that challenge oppressive narratives. His platform serves as a digital hub for historical correction, research-based insights, and a call to action for those invested in truth and justice for the African diaspora.



Jasmine Lew

March 20, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
LLC Agora



Jasmine (she/they) is a PhD in Kinesiology student at the University of Toronto and a researcher at the IDEAS Research Lab. Jasmine's work explores the intersections of embodied learning and leadership within racialized and queer communities.

Through narrative and movement-based methods, Jasmine is committed to fostering relational practices that center authenticity, community, and well-being.

At Simply Noir, Jasmine will offer workshops on leadership and movement, focusing on embodied confidence and kinesthetic empathy.

Dr. Maroro Zinyemba

March 19, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Cleghorn Room



At Simply Noir, Dr. Maroro Zinyemba will engage in African storytelling to share and exchange knowledge on the crucial role that heritage plays in shaping her leadership identity and in navigating the complexities of leading the current post-secondary context as a Black woman in senior postsecondary leadership. Maroro currently serves as the dean of the Faculty of Skills and Foundational Learning (FSFL) at NorQuest College in Edmonton, Alberta.

Maroro has been with the college for 15 years, during which she has held various leadership roles. Prior to becoming the dean of FSFL, Maroro had served as the associate dean in the Faculty of Business, Environment, and Technology (FBET).

Maroro obtained a Bachelor of Arts in French Language and Literature, and a Master of Educational Psychology (TESL) from the University of Alberta. Maroro holds a Doctor of Education degree with a specialization in post-secondary leadership from the University of Calgary.

The Faculty of Skills and Foundational Learning, which Maroro currently leads, houses diverse programs that include Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), English as a Second Language Intensive Program (ESL), Settlement Studies Diploma Program, Academic Upgrading, and Inmate Education among more. Over five thousand adult learners are enrolled annually in programs offered in this faculty.

Maroro is a member of the National Language Advisory Board (NLAB), as well as the Colleges and Institutes Canada Newcomer Advisory Committee. She is Chair of the Alberta Deans of Foundational Learning.

Maroro has facilitated lectures and presentations on, and has conducted research in the areas of equity, diversity, inclusivity and anti-racism in post-secondary contexts. She is also author of the book “Postsecondary Leaders’ Thoughts on Diversity and Inclusion: Now what?” (2023 Peter Lang International Academic Publishers).



Maurice Nzoyamara

March 20, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
LLC Agora



Maurice is a board-certified Acupuncturist with the Newfoundland and Labrador Council of Health Professionals (NLCHP) and the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Newfoundland and Labrador (CTCMPANL).

With nearly a decade of experience practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador, he has provided care to diverse communities, including Triton, Springdale, Baie Verte, Deer Lake, Corner Brook, and the surrounding areas.

Originally from Burundi, Maurice immigrated to Canada in 2003, spending five years in Quebec City before moving to Edmonton, Alberta, in 2008 to study Oriental Medicine. In 2015, he relocated his practice to Newfoundland, where he continues to support the well-being of his patients through his expertise in acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

At Simply Noir, Maurice will share his passion for health and wellbeing, exploring concepts of health with a focus on gut harmony. Maurice will also sit on a panel discussing the experiences of being Black, living and working in a rural context.



Dr. Rekiyat (Gifty) Siyaka

March 20, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

LLC Agora



Dr. Siyaka joined SAIT as an instructor in 2015 and has since worked in various roles relating to training and curriculum design in the areas of inclusive teaching and second language instruction. Gifty holds a PhD in Curriculum and Education from the University of Alberta. Her PhD research focused on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in post-secondary curriculum

and instruction and her research interests are in the areas of intercultural communication, English as Second Language (ESL), African wisdom philosophies, anti-racist pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching.

Gifty is a Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional (CCIP) with over 15 years of experience in instruction, faculty development, curriculum development, and DEI training. She currently works as an educational developer and faculty at SAIT, where she supports faculty development.

At Simply Noir, Gifty will join Dr. Julie Mooney in dialogue and reflection on ethical, sustainable allyship.



Dr. Julie Mooney

March 20, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
LLC Agora



Dr. Julie A. Mooney is a settler-Canadian of Irish and Scottish ancestry, living and working in Moh'kinsstis (the Blackfoot word for the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers), on Treaty 7 territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

A full-time faculty member and educational developer in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), and the owner and senior consultant at In the Midst Educational Consulting, Julie has been serving in academic and leadership roles in Canadian higher education institutions for nearly two decades.

She is a member of the 3M National Teaching Fellowship and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Alberta, with a specialization in Adult, Community, and Higher Education. Her research interests in higher education include decolonizing and Indigenizing teaching and curricular practices; mentoring relationships; experiential and land-based/place-based learning; and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).



Allison Saunders

March 20, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
LLC Agora



Allison Saunders is a dedicated advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the education sector and her local community. As a Digital Content Strategist at Concordia University, she leverages her expertise to promote inclusive narratives and foster a welcoming environment for all.

In 2020, Allison was appointed as a co-opted commissioner at the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB), where she played a pivotal role

in developing and implementing the Equity, Diversity, Dignity, and Inclusion (EDDI) Policy, officially adopted in September 2024. She was elected Vice-Chair of the council of commissioners in November 2024.

Beyond her professional commitments, Allison serves on the Board of Directors for Overture with the Arts (OWTA), a non-profit organization that uses the arts as a vehicle for education and creative exploration, introducing students to elements of history, social, and cultural change. She also served on the Board of Directors for the Black Academic Scholarship fund from 2015 to December 2024. The BASF has been actively supporting students from the Black community with financial assistance, career and mentoring support.

Allison's unwavering commitment to building a more inclusive society is evident through her active participation in various initiatives and her dedication to creating environments where all individuals feel valued and respected.

Unapologetically Me: How I Claimed My Black Girl Magic

From childhood to now, my journey as a Black woman has been shaped by moments of joy, struggle, resilience, and discovery. In this talk, I reflect on the experiences that defined me—navigating education, professional spaces, my family and personal growth while claiming my power along the way. I will share lessons on identity, self-advocacy, and the magic that comes from embracing who we are. This is a celebration of strength, a reflection on change, and an invitation to honor our own stories.



Montreal Steppers

March 19, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Centennial Theatre



The Montreal Steppers are a performance collective and non-profit organization committed to the art form of step – a black diasporic dance that uses the body as an instrument to create rhythms and beats, through stomps, claps, and chants.

The collective's praxis centers the lives and aspirations of those most marginalized and to create space and initiatives and foster collaboration across communities to support each other and thrive together.

Founded in 2019, the collective has used stepping to influence dialogue around the importance of black art, black lives, and black history in Canada, by way of workshops and performances. Montreal Steppers have offered educational workshops to over eleven thousand students in over 40 schools across Montreal.