



# In Recognition of Black History Month

The ICP Board is proud to present this comprehensive article for Black History Month as part of our mission to represent the entirety of the ICP student body. Black History Month allows us the opportunity to reflect on the history of the Black diaspora and acknowledge the discrimination and injustice that are still prevalent in our society today. While this is often done by looking in the past, at important events and leaders from different ages, we have chosen to highlight the work that is being done in the present, with contemporary leaders, ongoing movements, and current research being done by AUP Professor Franck Adranarivo Rakotobe.

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# Actors from Around the Globe



**Didier Awaldi**

The Dakar, Senegal-born rapper has led a groundbreaking career both in music and activism. A founding member of the group Positive Black Soul, his music has aimed to encourage the Senegalese youth to take an interest in politics and understand their histories. He also strives for honest cultural identity, frequently integrating the kora, a string instrument common to Western Africa, and Wolof, the Senegalese national language, into his music.

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**Vanessa Nakate**

After asking her uncle about what the climate was like before she was born, to which he responded that it was hotter now, Nakate has taken up a mostly solitary movement to strike against climate change in Uganda. With more support coming from the likes of Sweden, France and the US, her main mission is to educate Ugandan youth on the tolls that mass urbanisation and other ecological changes have on the region.

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**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Born in Enugu, Nigeria and educated at the university level in the United States, Adichie is an author and feminist. She brings a broader and balanced meaning to feminism, breaking down the idea of a singular feminist movement and that women empowerment needs to come with conscious education on equality for men. She positions strong female characters at the forefront of her books, tackling a range of topics from race and gender to colonialism and ethnicity.



**Assa Traore**

Following the death of her brother Adama in the custody of the Persan, France gendarmerie, Traoré has fought for the truth surrounding the circumstances of his death. Traoré's mission sparked stronger conversations of racism and brutality within the French police system, echoing the parallel movement in the United States following the death of George Floyd. The movement that she has led differs from others, intending to speak in the voice of black and Arab youth in France, not on their behalf, and by maintaining a distance from partisanship.



**Bryan Stevenson**

The founder and executive director of The Equal Justice Initiative, Stevenson has dedicated himself to ending mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and the racial disparities of the US criminal justice system. In addition, the Initiative has led the fight against capital punishment, and is dedicated to uncovering concealed instances of lynching.

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**Ciara Taylor**

Taylor was a founding member of the Dream Defenders, where she was the political director and director of political consciousness. She fights for social justice and broad changes to the status quo, aided by an in-depth knowledge of the structures that allow inequality to proliferate in the US. Her mission is to show people how they can make changes in their communities.

# Events Across the World



## Black Lives Matter

The well-known movement is dedicated to fighting racism, anti-Black violence, and police brutality. Formed in 2013 in the United States, the name itself is a condemnation of the killings of black people by police. As Black people are much more likely to be killed by police than white people, the movement demands the recognition of the lives and humanities of Black people on the same level as white people

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## Truth for Adama

Inspired by the acts of Assa Traoré to seek the truth over her brother, Adama's, death police custody in 2016, was a movement that, similarly to the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, exposes the dysfunction of the policing system in France. Following a demonstration in Beaumont-sur-Oise in July 2020, the movement broke away from its focus on Adama Traoré, incorporating the wider policing, racial, and economic injustices that French Black and Arab minorities face.

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## #ENDSARS

After beginning as a narrower call focusing on dismantling Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the movement has grown into protests mirroring those seen in the Black Lives Matter movement. The significance comes from its spread across the entire youth spectrum, garnering support from international celebrities and organisations alike. Solidarity for the movement was strengthened when security forces opened fire on protests in Lagos in October, 2020, killing a dozen people in the process.



## West African Coup d'Etats

The French campaign against Islamic extremism in the Sahel region of West Africa, where France has stationed more than 4,000 troops, has been called into question with the Malian junta ordering the removal of the French ambassador. This is part of a continuing trend against post-imperial control in West Africa, with seven coup attempts, with five, Burkina Faso; Guinea; Mali; and Sudan, successful, taking place; Niger and Guinea-Bissau experienced failed coups. These have accompanied a resurgence in the desire for self-determination and the desire of the people to control their own destiny.



## Climate Justice

Because of power imbalances, communities of colour have been constrained in their efforts to respond to climate change and aid in finding solutions. Industrialised countries, the most being from the global north, combine house 20% of the global population but emit 80% of produced emissions, while countries in the global south face the worst consequences of the climate crisis. This isn't to say that climate change solely affects Black people, just that the global south will bear the brunt of the effects of the changing climate.

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# Faculty Highlight:

## FRANCK ANDRIANARIVO RAKOTOBE



"I SEE MYSELF... AS AN AMBASSADOR... OF THESE CULTURES... THAT HAVE ALWAYS ALREADY BEEN LINKED TO FRANCE, BUT THAT WE JUST WE DON'T TEACH ENOUGH, WE DON'T TALK ABOUT ENOUGH, THAT ARE NEGLECTED AND PUT ON THE PERIPHERY OF A WESTERN AND NORTHERN KNOWLEDGE"

On February 18th, we sat down with Professor Franck Andrianarivo from the French department. A native of La Reunion, he has also lived in England; Tours, where he received his Master's in English literature; and in the US, where he taught Francophone studies at Harvard University and in Atlanta, where he received his PhD from Emory University in French literature.

His research is focused on literature from the francophone islands of the Indian Ocean, in particular narratives surrounding burial and reburial. He says that "cultural productions, whether it be novels or poems... become a sort of a sort of new grave for people that died anonymously without ritual and especially without a grave", revealing secrets that help us to better understand them.

His research is what brought him to Paris, a city which he finds as the gateway between Europe and Africa. It is the centre of the francophone art universe, something he called a "rendez-vous obligé" for artists when they want to present their work. This makes accessing them easy, either in person or their works through the Bibliotheque Nationale de France. The city works as a gateway not only for his personal research, but to the students that he teaches. It is a privileged platform, one that allows students to come in contact with them as well, transforming into a gateway not only between Europe and Africa, but between the rest of the world and Africa.

"I SEE PARIS AS A GATEWAY TO THE WORLD, BECAUSE YOU START WITH A CLASS ON PARIS AND THEN YOU SHOW THE CONNECTIONS THAT PARIS HAS WITH THESE DIFFERENT PLACES."

Paris is also a challenge for him, because of the stereotype that Parisian Culture is French culture. American students come to Paris and want to learn more about it, but often overlook the influence that islands such as Madagascar and La Reunion have on the city. His main motivation, and where he sees his biggest influence at AUP, is deconstructing this narrative of Paris. The cultures that he teaches about have been erased by colonization, leading students to be surprised to learn about them, not only at AUP but in the US as well. What AUP provides, then, is a platform with which the islands can be syncopated with the city of Paris.

He works the texts and the artists that he interacts with into the classes he teaches, from French 1100 to the Decolonial Narratives class. They play a pivotal role, he says, into the "toile" that is history. Without these stories, the history of metropolitan France is incomplete, as are the histories of many other parts of the world. Franck says for example the influence that Malagasy slaves have had in the creolisation of the world, influencing the Caribbean and the Americas alike. By looking at texts from peripheral areas, he is able to decentralise the francophone world and create an archipelagic history.

We thank Franck Andrianarivo Rakotobe for his time and his dedication to the AUP global community.