

Harmony O'Rourke

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Academic Positions

Pitzer College, Professor of History, 2021-present
Claremont Graduate University, Extended Faculty, 2016-present
Pitzer College, Associate Professor of History, 2016-2021
Pitzer College, Assistant Professor of History, 2009-2016

Education

Ph.D. Harvard University, History, May 2009

Qualifying Examination Fields: Early African History; Modern African History; Expansion of Europe; Anthropology of Africa

Dissertation: "Diaspora, Gender, and Identity: Remaining Hausa in the Cameroon Grassfields, from c.1890 to Recent Times" (under the direction of Emmanuel Akyeampong)

A.M. Harvard University, History, May 2005

B.A. Macalester College, History and International Studies, magna cum laude and History Honors, May 2001

Fellowships and Awards

JF Harmon Summer Research Assistantship Award, Pitzer College, 2021 & 2024
African Studies Association Women's Caucus Distinguished Service Award, 2023
Scholar In Residence Award, Pitzer College, 2022
Faculty Research Awards, Pitzer College, 2009-present
Davis Fellowship in the Humanities, Pitzer College, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023
Arnold L. Graves and Lois S. Graves Award in the Humanities, American Council of Learned Societies, 2016
Grapples and Oranges Featured Teacher Award for Dedication to Teaching Writing, Pitzer College, 2016
Fellowship, Digital Humanities at the Claremont Colleges, Summer Institute, 2015
Dean of Faculty Summer Research Assistantship Grant, Pitzer College, 2013
Summer Humanities Grant, Pitzer College, 2010-2012
Mellon Junior Faculty Research Grant, Pitzer College, 2010
Dissertation Finishing Fellowship, Harvard University, 2008-2009
Term Time Fellowship, Harvard University, 2007
Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, U.S. Dept. of Education, 2006
Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship, Harvard University, 2006
Jennifer Oppenheimer African Studies Research Grant, Harvard University, 2006

History Department Travel and Research Grant, Harvard University, 2005, 2007
Foreign Area Language Scholarship (Hausa Language Study), Boston University, 2004
Jeremy R. Knowles Graduate Student Fellowship, Harvard University, 2004-2005
Ernest R. Sandeen Memorial Prize for History, Macalester College, 2001

Research and Teaching Interests

Cultural History of Modern Africa, Environmental Humanities, Gender and Sexuality, Religion and Belief, West and Central Africa, Colonial and Post-Colonial Governance and Society, Oral History

Publications

Book

Hadija's Story: Diaspora, Gender, and Belonging in the Cameroon Grassfields, Indiana University Press (2017).

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

"Cameroon's Lake Explosions and the Levelling of Scientific, Spiritual, and Conspiratorial Knowledges," manuscript in progress.

"Religion and Belief: Binding Lives, Orienting Visions," with Beth Ann Williams, in *A Cultural History of Gender: The Contemporary World (1950 to the Future)*, ed. Adrian Bingham and Susan Broomhall. Bloomsbury Press, forthcoming.

"Centering Student Learning: An Experimental Journey through African Studies, Liberal Arts, and DH Pedagogies," with Ruti Talmor, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, forthcoming.

"Beyond the World of Commerce: Rethinking Hausa Diaspora History through Marriage, Distance, and Legal Testimony," *History in Africa: A Journal of Method*, 43 (June 2016), 141-167.

"The Life and Experiences of Saeed Ibn Hayatu, A Mahdist Leader: New Findings from the Buea Archive," with Mohammed Bashir Salau, *Journal of West African History*, 2, 2 (2016), pp. 51-78.

"Native Foreigners and the Ambiguity of Order and Identity: The Case of African Diasporas and Islamic Law in British Cameroon," *History in Africa: A Journal of Method*, 39 (2012), 97-122.

"I am not his slave': Contesting Marriage among the Hausa on a Cameroonian Frontier, c. 1920-1955," in *Gender, Sexuality, and Mothering in Africa*, ed. Toyin Falola and Bessie House-Soremekun. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011, 103-120.

Peer-Reviewed Reference Publications

"Women in Cameroon," *Oxford Encyclopedia of African Women's History*, ed. Dorothy Hodgson, Alicia Decker, Abosede George, Tabitha Kanogo, Kathleen Sheldon,

Fatima Sadiqi, and Pamela Scully. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

“Women in Cameroon,” *Oxford Reference Encyclopedia of African History*, <http://africanhistory.oxfordre.com>, ed. Thomas Spear. Oxford Research Encyclopedias. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.

“Foncha, John Ngu,” in *Dictionary of African Biography*, ed. Emmanuel K. Akyeampong and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Online Publications

“The Ongoing Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Gender and Equity in Academia: Statement by the Women's Caucus of the African Studies Association,” with Anita Plummer, Tshepo Masango Chéry, and Beth Ann Williams, African Studies Association Women's Caucus, July 2021: <https://www.asawomenscaucus.com/covid-statement>.

Book reviews

States of Marriage: Gender, Justice, and Rights in Colonial Mali. By Emily S. Burrill. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2015, *Journal of West African History*, 6:2 (2020), pp. 189-192.

“Stereotypes of Africa in the United States,” Review of *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. By Curtis Keim. Second Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009, *Journal of African History*, 50:3 (2009), 460-61.

Conference and Symposia Papers

“Latent Violence and Deciphering Meaning in Cameroon's Crater Lake Disasters,” Invited Talk for the *Journal of West African History* (JWAH): 10th Anniversary Conference: The State of the Field and New Directions, October 3-4, 2024.

“Centering Africa's Gendered Religious Knowledge and Practice: A Decolonial Approach,” *Decolonising Religion, Liberating Faith*, Wits Centre for Diversity Studies Symposium, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, May 22, 2024.

“Lake Explosions and the Levelling of Scientific, Spiritual, and Conspiratorial Knowledges in Cold War Cameroon,” Rocky Mountain Workshop on African History, Brigham Young University, Salt Lake City, April 12-13, 2024.

“Cameroon's Lake Explosions and the Levelling of Scientific, Spiritual, and Conspiratorial Knowledges,” *Spirits in Struggles for Environmental Conservation and Renewal* panel, African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 30 – December 2, 2023.

“Natural Disaster, Latent Violence, and Technopolitical Failure in Cameroon,” *Climate Change and Environmental Disasters: Governance and Politics* panel, African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 30 – December 2, 2023.

- “Science, Memory, and the Limits of Knowledge Production: Contrasting Narratives of Cameroon’s 1986 Lake Nyos Disaster,” African Studies Association Annual Meeting (Virtual), November 16-20, 2021.
- “Is Digital Humanities in the Classroom Just Code for Interdisciplinarity? Teaching Gender, Media, and History of Contemporary Africa,” Western Association of Women Historians Annual Meeting, Online, April 22-24, 2021.
- “Toxicity, Latent Violence, and the Constraints of Knowledge in a Postcolony: Historicizing Cameroon’s Lake Nyos Disaster of 1986,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, January 7-10, 2021. CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19.
- “Cameroon's Lake Nyos Disaster of 1986: Gender, Knowledge, Memory,” for the panel *Gender and the Human Elements of Natural Disasters*, Triennial Meeting of the Berkshire Conference of Women, Genders and Sexualities, Baltimore, MD, May 31, 2020. CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19.
- “Mobility Studies and the Problem of Road Deaths in Africa,” paper presented at the European Conference for African Studies, Edinburgh, U.K., June 12, 2019.
- “*Hadija’s Story* and the Method of Oral History,” Invited Talk, Baylor University, January 31, 2018.
- “The Ordeal of Mubahala: The Qur’an as Talisman in Mediating Disputes and Belonging among Grassfields’ Diasporic Muslims, 1947-1960,” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 2017.
- “The Strength of a Woman is in Her Talk”: Muslim Women’s Words and Reorienting Representations in West Africa,” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., December 1, 2016.
- “Female Enslavement, Marriage, and Muslim Trading Diaspora in West Africa: The Case of Hausa Settlement in Twentieth-Century Cameroon,” paper presented at the American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., January 3, 2014.
- “Slavery, Marriage, and Muslim Trading Diaspora in Trans-Saharan West Africa,” paper presented at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Collaborative Workshop, “Connected Histories of the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.” Pomona College, Claremont, CA, February 4, 2012.
- “The Life and Experiences of Sa’id Ibn Hayatu, A Mahdist Leader: New Findings from the Buea Archive,” paper presented at the Canadian Association of African Studies Annual Conference. With Mohammed Bashir Salau. Toronto, Canada, May 6, 2011.

“Establishing the Historicity of African Women and Politics in the Age of International Development,” paper presented at the Western Association of Women Historians Annual Conference. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, April 8, 2011.

“Slavery and Marriage in a Settler Society: Contesting narratives of belonging in the Hausa diaspora of Cameroon Grassfields, c.1915 to c.1955,” paper presented at the conference Searching for the African Voice: Studying Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa. University of Buea, Cameroon, December 15, 2010.

“British Indirect Rule and the Challenge of African Diasporas: Hausas, Fulanis, and Islamic Authority in Colonial Cameroon,” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA, November 19, 2010.

“Diaspora, Gender, and Identity: Contesting Marriage among the Hausa on a Cameroonian Frontier, c. 1920-1955,” paper presented at the 10th Annual Africa Conference. University of Texas at Austin, March 27, 2010.

“Slavery and Marriage in a Settler Society: Contesting narratives of belonging in the Hausa diaspora of Cameroon Grassfields, c.1915 to c.1955,” paper presented at the African Studies Association Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA, November 21, 2009.

“Distance, Dependence, and Authority: Contesting marriage and identity among the Muslim Hausa on a Cameroonian frontier, c.1930 to c.1955,” Harvard University Interdisciplinary Gender and Sexuality Workshop. Cambridge, MA, December 3, 2008.

“Appearance, Performance, and Colonial Transformations in the Cameroonian Grassfields, 1884-1950,” Boston University Graduate Conference in African Studies. Boston, MA, March 19, 2004.

Teaching Experience

Pitzer College, History Field Group, 2009-present

The World Since 1492 (History/Anthropology 11 with C. Johnson)

Colonialism in Africa (History 24A)

West African History through Novel and Film (History 45)

African History through Film (History 46)

Oral History: Methodology and Practice (History 66)

Natural Disaster and “Latent Violence” in Cold War Cameroon (History 68, Scholar in Residence Research Course)

Contemporary Africa: Digital Archives of Recent Past (History 140, with R. Talmor, cross-listed with Media Studies)

Death and Dying in African History (History 144, cross-listed with Anthropology, Environmental Analysis, and Human Biology)

Gender and Sexuality in Africa (History 148, cross-listed with Gender & Feminist Studies)

Gender and Sexuality in Post-Colonial Africa (History 148A, cross-listed with Gender & Feminist Studies)

Senior Seminar (History 197)
Women and Political Change in Africa (First-Year Seminar Program)

Senior Theses and Independent Studies

- 2022-23 – Senior honors thesis, The People Remembering JJ Rawlings: Honor, Memory, and Silences within the Third Republic of Ghana
- 2021-22 – Senior honors thesis, Is My Child Gay? Analyzing Expert, Feminist, and Parent Advice to Families about Homosexuality in the 1970s
- 2020-21 – Senior honors thesis, “It Would Have Been Enough”: An Oral History of Healthcare Providers During the AIDS Epidemic in Seattle
 - Senior honors thesis, Negotiating Transnational Media Networks in Senegal’s Film Industry
 - Senior honors thesis, Cancelling “Cancel Culture”: An Exploration of the Capitalist Justice System Popularized in the Wake of the #MeToo Movement
- 2019-20 – Oral History: Methodology and Practice
- 2018-19 – Senior honors thesis, La Vida es Sueño: Life, Death, and Remembrance through Plaza de la Raza
 - Senior honors thesis, Ghetto Presidency: Bobi Wine and the Role of Digital and Urban Spaces in Affecting Power
 - Senior honors thesis, “And now from Cellblock 9, the Prison Cable Network Presents”: Considering *In Living Color* through a Feminist, Queer, and Criminality Lens
 - Senior project, LOUD: Stories of Resilience by Women and Nonbinary People of Color at the Claremont Colleges
 - Senior project, Deconstructing *La Familia*: Queerness, Disidentifications, and (Re)constructions
 - Oral History: Methodology and Practice
 - Gender and Sexuality in African History
- 2017-18 – Senior honors thesis, Negotiating Consent in Hookup Culture: Centering the Experiences of Women-Identified Students on a Small College Campus
 - Senior project, Divorce in Israel: Women’s Rights, Conflict, and the Zionist Project
 - Oral History: Methodology and Practice
- 2017 – Senior honors thesis, *Hadithi Parivaar Yangu*, My Family’s Story: The Immigration of Indians to Kenya
 - Senior honors thesis, Recovering *Desaparecidos*: The Fight for Transitional Justice and Argentina’s Collective Memory of the Dirty War
 - Senior project, Narratives of Sexual Violence
 - HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 2016 – Senior honors thesis, Family Matters: Examining State Hegemony and an American Family in Crisis
 - Senior honors thesis, Constellations of Healing
- 2015 – Senior honors thesis, Gendered Discourse in Saturday Night Live’s Weekend Update in the 1970s
 - Senior project, The Origins of Public Housing in Hong Kong
 - Francophone West Africa: The Past of the Present
 - Assessing Community-Based Conservation Efforts in Kenya’s Samburu Regions

- 2013 – Senior honors thesis, DRUM Magazine and South African Masculinity during the Sophiatown Renaissance, co-directed with C. Johnson
- Senior honors thesis, Apprenticeship, Knowledge Transfer, and Sustainability: Comparing Southern California and Cape Three Points, Ghana, co-directed with R. Talmor and T. Berg
- Senior honors thesis, Perceptions and Potential of Children with Autism in Kisumu, Kenya
- 2012 – Senior honors thesis, The United Nations, Rwanda, and post-genocide jurisprudence
- Senior honors thesis, Development, Community Media, and Counter-discourse in Nepal and Kenya
- African Landscapes: A Historical Perspective
- Reconstructing Family History
- 2011 – Human Rights and Conflict Resolution

Claremont Graduate University, History Department, 2022

Introduction to Oral History: Methodology and Theory (Hist 304)

Harvard University, History Department, 2005-2006, 2007-2009

Africa and Africans: The Making of a Continent in the Modern World (teaching fellow)

Colonialism in African History (teaching fellow)

Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa and the Americas (head teaching fellow)

Senior Honors Thesis Adviser: Canton chiefs, contested authority, and rebellion in Colonial Upper Volta

Professional Service

Article reviewing for: *African Economic History*, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, *History in Africa: Journal of Method*, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*

Tenure file reviewing for York University, Canada

Panel Co-Chair and Discussant, "African Women's Life Stories and Narratives," Annual Meeting, Lagos Studies Association, June 21, 2024

Women's Caucus, African Studies Association

- Co-Convener, 2021-2022 (Lead Co-Convener 2022)

- Steering Committee Member, 2021-2023

- Panels Committee Chair, 2021

- Guest Speaker Committee, 2019-2021 (Chair 2021)

Panel Organizer, *Gender and the Human Elements of Natural Disasters*, Triennial Meeting of the Berkshire Conference of Women, Genders and Sexualities, Baltimore, MD, May 2020.

Panel Discussant, "Women and Trade: Female Entrepreneurs in the African Coast," African Studies Association Annual Conference. San Diego, CA, November 21, 2015.

Panel Chair, "The Impact of AIDS: Assisted Reproduction Issues in South Africa, Orphanhood in Botswana," *Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture Conference*, "Mapping Adoption: Histories, Geographies, Literatures, Politics." Scripps College, Claremont, CA, March 25, 2012.

- Guest Lecture, "Understanding the Political Economy of Contemporary Africa: Economic Performance and Structural Adjustment Programs," *West Africa since 1800*, History Department, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA, 2008.
- Guest Lecture, "Socio-Economic change and a new African political agenda: Peasants, Urban Workers, and Soldiers," *West Africa since 1800*, History Department, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA, 2008.
- Research Assistant, *Themes in West Africa's History*, edited by Emmanuel Akyeampong. Oxford: James Currey, 2006.

College, University, and Consortium Service

Pitzer College and Claremont Consortium Service

Pitzer Standing Committees

- Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee: 2017-19 (Chair 2018-19), 2024-2026
- Judicial Council, Spring 2023
- Academic Standards Committee: 2020-2022 (Chair Fall 2021)
- Diversity Committee: 2017-18
- Academic Planning Committee: 2014-15, 2015-16 (Secretary, WASC liaison)
- Teaching and Learning Committee: 2013-14
- Campus Aesthetics Committee: 2011-12
- Alumni Association: 2010-11

Pitzer Ad Hoc Committees

- Gender and Feminist Studies Search Committee Chair: 2024-25
- Study Abroad Faculty Liaison (Southern Africa Program): 2023-2024
- Covid-19 Task Force Subcommittee on Childcare: 2020
- U.S. and North America Environmental History Search Committee: 2019-2020
- Ad Hoc Benefits Committee: 2017
- Contract Renewal Ad Hoc Committee: 2016
- Title IX Coordinator Search Committee: 2015-16
- Aesthetics Committee for Scott Hall Renovations: 2012-13
- First-Year Seminar Task Force: 2011-12

Pitzer History Field Group

- Assessment Coordinator: 2010-11, 2011-12, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2018-19
- Convener: 2010-2011, 2011-12, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2020-21, 2024-2025
- Curriculum Liaison: 2013-14, 2018-19, Fall 2019, 2021-23

Pitzer Gender and Feminist Studies Field Group

- Personnel Liaison: 2021-present
- Curriculum Liaison: 2018-19
- Liaison to Intercollegiate Feminist Center: Fall 2019, Fall 2024

Pitzer, Other Service

- Co-Coordinator with Dr. Shelva Paulese, Faculty Summer Writing Group: 2018, 2019
- Co-Coordinator, Glass Humanities Lecture: 2019
- Editor, Pitzer College WASC Report: 2018
- Faculty mentor, Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program: 2017-19

Mentor for new Junior Faculty: 2017-2019
Glass Humanities Lecture Selection Committee: 2016-17
Faculty & Staff Gift Campaign Committee: 2013-14, 2014-15
Family Weekend Lectures: "State, Society, and Health in West Africa: A Historical Perspective" (2015) and "The Legacy of Decolonization in Africa" (2014)
Student Advising: 2010-present (general, History majors and minors, Gender/Feminist Studies majors, first-year program)
Special Major Advising: 2010-2016 (Comparative Design Studies, International Education Studies, Critical Development Studies)

Claremont Consortium Service

Second Reader, Scripps College Environmental Analysis and French Departments, senior honors thesis, Mapping Development in Cameroon: Challenging Dominant Narratives, 2018-2019
Co-Coordinator, African Studies Working Group, 2015-17
Advisory Board for Library Planning, Spring 2017 (Pitzer Representative)
Second Reader, Environmental Analysis/International & Intercultural Studies, senior honors thesis, Collaborative Commons? A Critical Analysis of Community-Based Conservation in Kenya and Madagascar, 2016-2017
Second Reader, Pomona College Department of Environmental Analysis, senior honors thesis, The Power of the Tower: Contesting History at Bear Lodge/Devils Tower National Monument, 2015-2016
Second Reader, Pomona College Politics Department, senior honors thesis, Youth and Voluntourism in Africa, 2014-15
Second Reader, Claremont Graduate University Cultural Studies, Doctoral Dissertation, "Creation and Maintenance of a Culture of Violence in Eastern Congo," 2010-2014
Second Reader, Pomona College History Department, senior honors thesis, Italians in Mexico during World War II, 2013-2014
Panel Discussant, Perspectives on Oral History: Oral History at the Claremont Colleges, Pitzer College, November 2011

Harvard University

Freshman Yard History Adviser, 2008-2009
Freshman Proctor, 2007-2009
Freshman Academic Adviser, 2007-2009
African Studies Workshop Coordinator, 2005-2006

Scholarly Community Service

Research Mentor, Marlborough School, An Independent Day School for Girls, Los Angeles, CA, 2014-2016
Public lecture, "State, Society, and Health in West Africa: A Historical Perspective," Claremont Democracy Club (November 2014) and the Association for University Professors, Claremont (May 2015)

Related Professional Experience

Chemonics International, Inc., Africa Division, Washington, DC, 2001-2003

Project Coordinator, USAID-funded projects on private sector development, trade promotion, and food security in East and Southern Africa

Evaluator, Cotton Sector Enterprise-Linked Extension Program, Uganda Support for Private Enterprise and Expansion Development (SPEED), USAID/Uganda, March 2003

Field Project Administrator, Eritrea Private Sector Development and Food Security Assessment, USAID/Eritrea, August 2002

Women in International Security (WIIS), Georgetown University, 2001

Intern, edited occasional papers and organized conferences and lecture series

Professional Organizations

African Studies Association, including coordinate organizations: ASA Women's Caucus; North American Scholars on Cameroon Association; Health, Science, Medicine, & Technology

African Feminist Initiative

American Historical Association

Berkshire Conference of Women Historians

Coordinating Council of Women Historians

Western Association of Women Historians

Research Languages

French (intermediate speaking and reading)

Hausa (limited speaking and reading)

German (limited reading)