

BIOGRAPHY

Sheena Mason, Ph.D.

Dr. Sheena Mason earned her Ph.D. in English literature “with distinction” in May 2021 from Howard University. She will join the faculty at SUNY Oneonta in Oneonta, NY, in August 2021, as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in African American literature. She has taught at



the College of William and Mary, California Lutheran University, and Howard University. Her book titled *Theory of Racelessness: A Case For Antirace(ism)* has been accepted by Palgrave MacMillan and is anticipated to hit the press in early 2022. Additionally, she co-authored “Harlem Renaissance,” a chapter of the forthcoming Oxford Handbook of Ethics and Art examining what, if anything, is the proper role of race in the aesthetic productions of or about members of racialized populations. “‘A WHITE SLAVE:’ Albinism in Barbara Chase-Riboud’s Sally Hemings” from *Cosmopolitanisms, Race, and Ethnicity* (2019) analyzes how race functions as racism in Chase-Riboud’s Sally Hemings. Dr. Mason works actively to decolonize language and, therefore, our thoughts. In “No Malcolm X in My History Text” (2018), she examines the iterations of the folklore figure Staggerlee, the figure’s relation to the public sphere, and racism. Ultimately, she concludes that Staggerlee persists in the American imagination and is a simultaneously and paradoxically subversive and stereotypical figure, highlighting the pervasiveness of racism and society’s response to racism. In her scholarship, Dr. Mason consistently and unwaveringly works to promote anti-racism through her publications and teaching.

Her sustained interest in understanding systemic racism and, importantly, being a change agent for social justice resulted in her primary specialization in African American literature. Her secondary specializations are American and Caribbean literature. Through her research, teaching, and service, Dr. Mason inspires and informs organizations in every sector on anti-racism and revolutionary anti-racist initiatives and policy-changing efforts. She helps businesses and nonprofits turn the page in their DEI missions and visions, bringing anti-racism from a lofty idea to reality.

Dr. Mason is Freedom Summer Collegiate's first Program Manager. Freedom Summer Collegiate Institute is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide college-level courses for college credit to underserved high school students. Here, she combines her leadership experience, business acumen, teaching and research expertise, and unwavering passion for activism and advocacy in all aspects of her work.

Her unique areas of expertise (i.e., business/leadership, academia, and nonprofit) make her the ideal public speaker, workshop creator, and educator. In 2007, she was the chosen [student commencement](#) speaker for her undergraduate graduation where she experienced firsthand the power of both public speaking and education. Also, in 2007, Dr. Mason was featured in a local [newspaper](#) for overcoming extreme adversity to graduate from college with high honors and, ultimately, be the commencement speaker. These successes and highlights affirmed for Dr. Mason her life's purpose, which is to inform and inspire an equitable world of possibilities for underserved communities, for people who experience hardships similar to those she lived through and overcame. Additionally, Dr. Mason often presents papers, all centering her work in diversity, equity, and inclusion, at national and international conferences. In May 2021, she was interviewed by DEI expert Pamela McElvane on The Inclusive Voice Show with Pam McElvane, a [radio show](#), where she spoke candidly about how current "anti-racist" practices fall short of the liberation it promises. In July 2021, Dr. Mason will speak at Quartz Network's CONNECT HR SUMMIT.

Her [presentation](#) titled “Dismantling Raci(al/st) Ideology” illuminates her suggested approach to anti-racist discourse and how more people can find liberation for themselves. Additionally, in July 2021, Dr. Mason is scheduled to be part of an esteemed panel at the World Diversity in Leadership (WODIL), in Canada, which will tend to the topic of cultural diversity. She has participated in the following conferences and symposiums: “Anti-Conference: Resisting the Production of Privilege” at Johns Hopkins University, “Transformations: Gender and Engendering Change” at the University of Texas San Antonio, “Africans in the Americas and African Americans in Africa: The Shifting Boundaries of Citizenship in the 21st Century” at Pennsylvania State University, and twice at New York African Studies Association’s annual conference. In January 2021, she was an invited speaker at California Lutheran University’s “[Voices of the Nation](#)” where she presented an aspect of her anti-racist research.

Dr. Mason is so committed to creating social justice and equity that, in 2016, she created a [YouTube](#) channel to bring women together around topics like beauty, business, motherhood, and her Ph.D. journey. She was in the press again when she was chosen as Kanekolon’s “[Braid Boss](#),” which earned her a feature in the November 2016 issue of *Hype Hair* magazine. With just under 10,000 subscribers, she is refocusing her efforts on building her platform further, something she paused during her doctoral work, and rebranding content to center her activism more explicitly and share her knowledge.

Now, Dr. Sheena Mason is ready to share her wealth of knowledge and experience with you toward the goal of creating equity where it lacks and building communities resistant to the status quo.