1st Annual Walter Rodney Speakers Series (2013)
The 1st Annual Walter Rodney Speaker’s Series January - May, 2013
Thursdays, 5-7pm at the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

OVERVIEW
Professor Jesse Benjamin, with generous base-support from a Georgia Humanities Council Grant, the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, the Walter Rodney Foundation, Kennesaw State University, and Clark Atlanta University, established a (now annual) public lecture series that explores the life and work of Dr. Walter Rodney and his core contributions to Pan-Africanism, development theory, emancipatory pedagogy, and theories of race and class in the Caribbean, Africa and the rest of the world. This project seeks to keep Dr. Rodney's scholarship, perspectives and memory alive; to introduce or re-introduce a cross-section of the Georgia public to this great man; and to explore how his legacy remains relevant to the issues, struggles, and theories of the present day.

The concept was respectfully and “flagrantly” copied from the innovative pedagogic example of the late Dr. Vincent Harding (a former comrade of Dr. Rodney), who conducted a groundbreaking public lecture series and associated Morehouse College class around the life and work of Martin Luther King in 2012. Like that inspirational series, also held at the AUC’s Robert W. Woodruff Library, the Walter Rodney Speakers Series combines a weekly public lecture or discussion panel with a cohort of Atlanta University Center and Kennesaw State University students who attend for college credit, do assigned readings, and stay for at least an extra hour of discussion and analysis. This emerging praxis seeks to emulate the models of Rodney and Harding in its delivery, while combining community members, high school students, college and graduate students, and senior scholars in complex dialogue about urgent contemporary social issues and theories.

READINGS
BOOKS:

ARTICLES:

STUDENT RESPONSE
“The experiences granted to me through this class were remarkable and have shaped my perspective as a student and now activist immensely. From the first day driving down to the Woodruff to getting to meet interesting people and professors from around the globe who were passionate about what they were sharing with us, the whole experience of this class was unforgettable.”

- Madyson Price, first year student at KSU
Dr. Akinyele Umoja, Georgia State University, presents “Groundings With My Brothers: 1968 and Black Power Worldwide” to a large audience of students and community members.

Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Clark Atlanta University, lectures on “Rodney’s History of the Upper Guinea Coast: Rewriting History and the World.”

The Clark Atlanta University and Kennesaw State University student participants of the class-based aspect of the Speakers’ Series pose with their professor, Dr. Jesse Benjamin.

Kennesaw State professors lead a roundtable on the African diaspora in Latin America (from L to R): Dr. Neysa Figueroa, Dr. Ernesto Silva, Dr. Seneca Vaught, and Dr. Gabriel Soldatenko.

Susan Ross, Dr. Derrick White, and Dr. Bill Strickland pose with Dr. Jesse Benjamin at the W.E.B. DuBois & the Wings of Atl. Conference (CAU) after a panel on Dr. Walter Rodney.

From L to R: Dr. Jesse Benjamin, Dr. Patricia Rodney, Dr. Mark Armstrong, community leader and State Representative “Able” Mable Thomas, and Dr. Nobel Maseru before Healthcare panel.

Dr. Beverley Guy-Sheftall delivers “Gender in Pan-African Theory and Practice.”
Post-Panel photo op (From L to R): Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Dr. Jesse Benjamin, Jesus “Chucho” Garcia, and Dr. Patricia Rodney.

Outspoken social commentator and rapper from Mexico City, BocaFloja, speaks to the “African Diaspora in Latin America: Hip-Hop as Social Movement.”

Dr. Patricia Rodney poses with Dr. Anani Dzidziienyo after his lecture on “The Significance of Walter Rodney for Continental and Diasporic Africans.”

The audience is engaged during Dr. Firoze Manji’s presentation on “The Relevance of Walter Rodney to the Uprisings on the African Continent Today: The Importance of Memory,” where, among other things, he explained that poverty is not a normal human condition, but instead we need to explain “processes of impoverishment.”

Babacar Mbow on “Reading Rodney Through the Lyrics of Fela Kuti.”

The panel on Global Health featured (from L to R) Dr. Mark Armstrong, Dr. Patricia Rodney, and Dr. Nobel Maseru.

Jesus “Chucho” Garcia with translator José G. Pérez during the former’s talk on current Venezuelan politics.