Stanford



Joel Cabrita

Donald J. McLachlan Professor of History and Professor of African and African American Studies

Bio

BIO

Joel Cabrita is a historian of modern Southern Africa who focuses on Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and South Africa. She examines the transnational networks of the Southern African region including those which connect Southern Africans to the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans. Her most recent book (The People's Zion: Southern Africa, the United States and a Transatlantic Faith-Healing Movement, Harvard University Press, 2018) investigates the convergence of evangelical piety, transnational networks and the rise of industrialized societies in both Southern Africa and North America. The People's Zion was awarded the American Society of Church History's Albert C Outler Prize for 2019 https://churchhistory.org/grants-and-awards/ She is also the co-editor of a volume examining the global dimensions of Christian practice, advocating for a shift away from Western Christianity to the lateral connections connecting southern hemisphere religious practitioners (Relocating World Christianity, Brill, 2017).

Cabrita has a long-standing interest in how Southern Africans used and transformed a range of old and new media forms. Her first book (Text and Authority in the South African Nazaretha Church, Cambridge University Press, 2014) investigates the print culture of a large South African religious organization, while her edited collection (Religion, Media and Marginality in Africa, Ohio University Press, 2018) focuses on the intersection of media, Islam, Christianity and political expression in modern Africa.

Her current project (under contract with Ohio University Press) is the biography of a pioneering African feminist, Christian Pentecostal pioneer and liberation leader, Regina Gelana Twala (1908 – 1968), who co-founded Swaziland's first political party in 1960 and introduced the Assemblies of God denomination to the region. Celebrated during her lifetime, Twala's remarkable story is today largely forgotten, in part a consequence of her untimely death in 1968, one month before Swaziland's independence. Cabrita's project considers the radically new perspective a figure such as Twala affords on the contribution of women to Africa's anti-colonial liberation movements and to evangelical history. The book will probe the politics of memory whereby certain African nationalist and religious icons have been erased from the historical record.

Cabrita did her PhD at the University of Cambridge and was subsequently a Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge. Before moving to Stanford, she held permanent posts at SOAS (University of London) and the University of Cambridge. Her research has been recognized by two major early-career research prizes, the British Arts and Humanities Early Career Research Fellowship (2015) and the Philip Leverhulme Prize (2017).

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, History
- Professor, African and African American Studies

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D, University of Cambridge

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Black Marxism: Race, Class, and Liberation: AFRICAAM 270, AMSTUD 170, ANTHRO 170X, CSRE 272, HISTORY 245B, SOC 181 (Win)
- Colonial Africa and the Making of the Modern World: AFRICAAM 249X, HISTORY 249C, HISTORY 349C (Aut)
- Foundations of African Studies: AFRICAAM 145B, HISTORY 145B (Aut)
- Humanities Research Intensive: ENGLISH 9R (Win)

2025-26

- Citizenship in the 21st Century: COLLEGE 102 (Win)
- Foundations of African Studies I: AFRICAAM 145B, HISTORY 145B (Aut)
- Mapping Apartheid: Data, the Regina Twala Archive, and the Global Legacy of Racial Segregation: AFRICAAM 47N, FEMGEN 47N, HISTORY 47N (Aut)
- The Cultural Cold War: The CIA, the Arts, and Global Cultural Networks: MLA 396 (Sum)

2023-24

- Citizenship in the 21st Century: COLLEGE 102 (Win)
- Curating the Image: African Photography and the Politics of Exhibitions: HISTORY 248C, HISTORY 348C (Aut)
- Introduction to African Studies II: Who Owns the Past? African Museum Collections in the Bay Area: AFRICAAM 246, HISTORY 245, HUMCORE 136 (Win)
- PRACTICAL TRAINING: INTNLREL 189 (Sum)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Karishma Bhagani, Gloria Chikaonda, Mpho Molefe, Geraldine Mukumbi, Ozgul Ozdemir

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Mathew Ayodele, Adele Stock

Orals Evaluator

Mathew Ayodele, Mahishan Gnanaseharan, Janice Ndegwa, Ozgul Ozdemir, Adele Stock

Doctoral Dissertation Co-Advisor (AC)

Janice Ndegwa

Doctoral (Program)

Mathew Ayodele, Selam Kidane, Janice Ndegwa, Adele Stock

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Writing Apartheid: Ethnographic Collaborators and the Politics of Knowledge Production in Twentieth- Century South Africa** *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*
  Cabrita, J.

2020; 125 (5): 1668–98

- **Faith, Power and Family: Christianity and Social Change in French Cameroon (Book Review)** *STUDIES IN WORLD CHRISTIANITY*
  Book Review Authored by: Cabrita, J.
  2020; 26 (2): 204–6