



PRESS RELEASE

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Vaughn A. Booker receives the 2022 Arlt Award in the Humanities

Booker is recognized for his book *Lift Every Voice and Swing: Black Musicians and Religious Culture in the Jazz Century*.

Washington, DC – Today the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) presented the Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities to Vaughn A. Booker, Assistant Professor of Religion and African American Studies at Dartmouth College during an award ceremony held at the CGS 62nd Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The Arlt Award recognizes a young scholar-teacher who has written a book deemed to have made an outstanding contribution to scholarship in the humanities. Dr. Booker becomes the award's 52nd recipient for his book, *Lift Every Voice and Swing: Black Musicians and Religious Culture in the Jazz Century* (New York University Press, 2020). He received his PhD in Religion in America from Princeton University in 2016.

Lift Every Voice and Swing, a finalist for the 2021 Religion and the Arts Award given by the American Academy of Religion, is an innovative book about religion, race, and representation among African American jazz musicians. Focusing on a set of prominent figures that include Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, and Mary Lou Williams, Dr. Booker explores the complex landscape in which African American jazz musicians functioned as prominent figures representing “the race” to a broad American and international public and who also participated in shaping Black public culture and discourse about religion, racial identity, politics, and culture.

CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega said Dr. Booker's work makes an important contribution to the intersection of African American and religious scholarship.

“We are proud to honor Dr. Booker for his transformative scholarship in the humanities,” said Ortega. “This award is about supporting new leaders and celebrating early accomplishments, and I look forward to seeing all that Dr. Booker will accomplish as he continues his academic journey.”

Rod Priestley, Dean of Princeton's Graduate School, commented that he was glad that Dr. Booker's work is getting much due recognition.

“We are delighted that Dr. Vaughn Booker’s path-breaking project on religion, race, and representation among African American jazz musicians has been selected for the 2022 Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities. Vaughn’s dissertation adviser, Judith Weisenfeld, remarked that the ‘project opens up new contexts in which to explore creative expression in Black religious life and the influence of religion in Black public culture and makes a singular contribution to the study of African American religious history.’”

Created in 1971, the Arlt Award honors the first president of CGS, Gustave O. Arlt. The winner must have earned a doctorate within the past seven years, and currently be teaching at a North American university. Nominations are made by CGS member institutions and are reviewed by a panel of scholars in the field of competition, which rotates annually among seven disciplines within the humanities. This year’s field was religious studies. The winner receives a \$1,000 honorarium and travel to the awards ceremony.

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About CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization’s mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.