

W.E.B. Du Bois Speaker Series Presents:

Devyn Spence Benson Williams College

**“Race in Cuba:
Afro-Cubans, African Americans,
and the Politics of Revolution, 1959-1961”**



Dr. Spence Benson's project shows how the post-1959 Cuban revolutionary government highlighted racial conflicts to undermine counterrevolutionary movements and solicit support from Afro-Cubans. Using a variety of sources, including Cuban newspapers, government speeches, and photographs, her research reveals how the new leadership publicly discussed the problems facing people of color, an issue frequently silenced by Cuba's accepted ideology of racial democracy. As with any government sponsored project, however, many Afro-Cubans interpreted the new racialized discourse in ways that went beyond official pronouncements. Thus, she analyzes *testimonios* and oral histories from Afro-Cubans to uncover the ways people of color contributed to and challenged the new leadership's claims over racial politics.

Thursday, October 15, 2009

7:30 P.M.

Memorial Classroom Building

Room XXX

DEVYN SPENCE BENSON is an Assistant Professor of History and Africana Studies at Williams College in Massachusetts. Benson received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in the field of Latin American and Caribbean History, where her research focused on racial politics during the first three years of the Cuban revolution. Benson is currently working on her manuscript, "Not Blacks, but Citizens: Racial Politics in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1961." This project has led her to explore connections between Cubans of African descent and African Americans before and after the Cuban Revolution.

