

Amy M. Cools

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Personal Profile

I am a historian, educator, researcher, and author. I specialize in the history of ideas, African American and United States history (especially antebellum), the study of civil rights movements, biographical explorations of extraordinary people, the history of philosophy, issues in ethics and law, and other topics in history, philosophy, and intellectual history. I have been focused on public impact in the world of ideas since 2013.

Current Academic Post

Research Fellow in English and Creative Writing at Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2023-present

Education and Honors

PhD in History, University of Edinburgh, 2021

MSc in Intellectual History with Distinction, University of Edinburgh, 2018

BA in Philosophy: Ethics, Politics and Law, Summa Cum Laude, California State University at Sacramento, 2013

Associate of Arts, Humanities, and Fine Arts, Distinction, Riverside City College, 1999

Certificates

Associate Fellow, Advance HE, 2021

Program Graduate - Women's Initiative for Self-Employment, Oakland, 2008

Additional

Studies in Political Theory, Philosophy, and Spanish, Peralta Colleges, 2011

Studies in Textiles, Fine Arts, and English Literature, San Francisco State University 2000-2001

Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, 2023-2026

Society of Civil War Historians Micro-Grant, 2020

McMillan Award, University of Edinburgh, 2019/20

Gilder Lehrman Institute for American Studies Scholarly Fellowship, 2019

European Association for American Studies Research Travel Grant, 2019

Teaching / Tutoring

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Glasgow: The Social and Cultural History of Europe, 1500-2000 (in-person, autumn 2021)

Tutorial instructor, University of Edinburgh, 2019-2021: History of the United States (online, spring 2021); Themes in Modern European History (hybrid, autumn 2020); Themes in Scottish

History Since 1560 (in-person, spring 2020); and Modern United States History (in-person, autumn 2019)

Writing Centre Tutor, Riverside City College, CA, USA, academic year 1998-99

Research Interests

Dr James McCune Smith and his nineteenth-century transatlantic world; history of ideas; history of abolitionist and human rights movements, especially late eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century; history of philosophy, especially early modern to modern; history of science and medicine; special topics in U.S. history. I have also made special studies of Frederick Douglass; Margaret Sanger; Thomas Paine; David Hume; and Joan of Arc, among others.

Ongoing Projects

- *Nothing Human is Alien to Me: The Life of James McCune Smith* – biography in progress, under contract with the University of Georgia Press. Its companion project is *The Transatlantic World of James McCune Smith*, a Substack newsletter which presents interesting discoveries and more about the life of McCune Smith. <https://jamesmccunesmith.substack.com/>

- *Ordinary Philosophy* – 2013-present – Website and podcast which publishes historical, philosophical, travel, and other essays; original scholarship and historical research; profiles of great thinkers and activists in history; reviews and recommendations; and discussions with scholars and specialists in history and the world of ideas www.ordinaryphilosophy.com

Writings

Articles

- 'Association of Ladies: Emeline Bastien, Fanny Tompkins, and Leadership in the African American Community of New York City, 1810–1885,' *New York History*, Volume 104, Number 2, Winter 2023-2024

- 'The Free-Thinker: James McCune Smith, M.D. (1813-1865),' *Journal of Free Black Thought*, 14 Feb. 2023

- 'James McCune Smith and Glasgow: A Scholar's Transatlantic Journey, 1821-1837,' Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies, University of Glasgow, 17 Oct. 2021

- 'Roots: Tracing the Family History of James McCune and Malvina Barnett Smith, 1783-1937,' Parts 1-3, *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society*, Vol. 37 (2020)

- 'James McCune Smith Predicted African American Preeminence in United States Art and Culture' in 'A New Dawn of Freedom' special issue for *Kalfou: A Journal of Comparative and Relational Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 1 (2020)

- 'Roots: Tracing the Family History of James McCune and Malvina Barnett Smith' (summary), *AAHGS News: The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Afro-American Historical & Genealogical*

Society, Sep./Oct. 2020

- '[Philosophy as Love of Wisdom and in the Public Sphere](#),' *Blog of the American Philosophical Association*, 22 Sep. 2016.

- '[Paine on Basic Income and Human Rights](#),' Thomas Paine National Historical Association website, 30 Mar. 2016

- '[Science & Philosophy: A Beautiful Friendship](#),' *Philosophy Now*, Issue 109, Aug./Sep. 2015

- [Ordinary Philosophy](#): Self-published historical, philosophical, and other essays, 2013-present
Book reviews

- "[The Failed Promise: Reconstruction, Frederick Douglass, and the Impeachment of Andrew Johnson](#), Robert S. Levine, W. W. Norton & Company, 2021," *Slavery & Abolition* (11 May 2023)

- '[Remaking the republic: black politics and the creation of American citizenship](#),' *Intellectual History Review* (24 Mar. 2022)

Unpublished

- "[The Life and Work of James McCune Smith \(1813-1865\)](#)," PhD thesis 2021

- "Frederick Douglass and His Scottish Influences" MSc thesis 2018

Media

- "[Tracing the Footsteps of a Medical Pioneer: James McCune Smith in Glasgow, 1832-1837](#)" (video presentation), Historic Environment Scotland, 10 Nov. 2022.

- "[James McCune Smith's matriculation at UoG and his medical activism](#)" (documentary), Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies, University of Glasgow, 19 Apr. 2022.

Conferences, Papers Delivered

- "'Drilled under the severe training of the University of Glasgow": New Discoveries Pertaining to Dr James McCune Smith's Experiences in Glasgow, 1832-1837,' Scottish Association for the Study of America 23rd Annual Conference, 5 Mar. 2022, University of Glasgow, UK

- "Association of Ladies': Emeline Bastien, Fanny Tompkins, and Leadership in the African American Community of New York City, 1810-1885,' British Association for American Studies, 8-10 Oct. 2021, Warwick, UK

- 'Genesis of a Medical Pioneer: James McCune Smith in Glasgow and Beyond, 1832-1837,' American Association for the History of Medicine Annual Meeting, 13-16 May 2021, Madison, WI, USA

- 'Invaders: Dr. James McCune Smith and the History of Anti-Immigration Rhetoric in the United States,' British American Nineteenth Century Historians, 11-13 Oct. 2019, Edinburgh, UK

- 'James McCune Smith and Tokenism in the Mainstream Abolitionist Movement,' British

Association for American Studies, 25–27 Apr. 2019, Brighton, UK

- 'James McCune Smith: African American Physician of Many Firsts,' First Year PhD in History conference, 11 Apr. 2019, University of Edinburgh, UK

- 'James McCune Smith and John Marshall on Form and Substance in U.S. Government,' Scottish Association for the Study of America, 2 Mar. 2019, Edinburgh, UK

- 'James McCune Smith Predicted African American Predominance in American Art and Culture,' Black Atlantic Authorship and Art (1818-2018) International Symposium, 16–17 Nov. 2018, Edinburgh, UK