

# "DAMN THAT JIM CROW": BLUES SONGS CONFRONT AMERICAN APARTHEID

PROF STEVEN C. TRACY

FUNG PING SHAN BUILDING,  
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

23 FEB [THU] 6:30PM



NORTH CAROLINA LAW.  
WHITE PATRONS PLEASE SEAT FROM FRONT  
COLORED PATRONS PLEASE SEAT FROM REAR

During the era of segregation, African Americans suffered being "jim-crowed" in every facet of their lives, primarily in the South, where the enmity between empowered whites and subjected blacks died an extremely slow and painful death after slavery and Reconstruction. But African Americans did not suffer in silence, or even just in private. A number of blues recordings from the 1920s to the 1940s discuss various issues, including the travel restrictions, providing keen insight into the inconvenience, insult and danger posed by these Jim Crow conditions. Whether recordings produced for African Americans in the so-called "Race" series of records, songs associated with the folk music movement in post-Depression America, or songs connected to contemporaneous literary figures, the condemnation of the Jim Crow system was clear and compelling.

This talk is part of a series of lectures organized by the American Studies Programme (SMLC) and inspired by the exhibition "Rising Above: The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection" which is on show at the University Museum and Art Gallery until February 26, 2017.

The exhibition is co-organized by the Faculty of Arts and the University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong in collaboration with KBK Enterprises, Inc. and the Bernard and Shirley Kinsey Foundation for Arts & Education. Goldman Sachs is a Silver Sponsor and American Airlines is the exhibition's Official Airline. Supporting organizations include the Consulate General of the United States of America in Hong Kong and Macau, the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Lan Kwai Fong Group, and the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. With special thanks to Caripelago Trading Limited.



Steven C. Tracy is Distinguished University Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. He served as Fulbright Senior Specialist at the University of Konstanz in Germany and also as ChuTian Scholar at Central China Normal University. He has authored, edited, coedited, or introduced nearly thirty books. A singer-harmonica player, he has opened for B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, and others.

All are welcome. No registration is required. For enquiries, please contact Dr. Tim Gruenewald at [tgruene@hku.hk](mailto:tgruene@hku.hk)

