



African languages and linguistic practices in the Afro diasporic religious domain in Brazil

GUEST LECTURE WITH ALEXANDER YAO COBINAH AND JOSÉ LUCAS CAMPOS ANTUNES DOS SANTOS

Time: 5 February 12:15-13:45

Venue: 1467-316 (Rainbow room)

African languages have had a centuries-old presence on the American continent, particularly in Brazil, since Africans were forcibly brought there as enslaved laborers. While these languages have not survived as spoken languages, they have left traces, notably in so-called cryptolects observed in various Black communities, some of which originate from maroon societies.

In contemporary Brazil and other parts of the Americas, African languages are also preserved as liturgical languages in Candomblé and related Afro-diasporic religions. Language use in these contexts is deeply intertwined with diasporic identities, which often influence ritualistic and cultic choices.

To this day, orally transmitted chants, prayers, and specialized terminology—such as titles, names for ritual objects, and descriptions of ceremonial activities—of clear African origin are actively employed in religious ceremonies and other communal practices.

This talk explores examples of such language use, with a particular focus on their communicative contexts and their role in sustaining cultural heritage and identity



Organized by Ana Paulla Braga Mattos