

DR. DONNA J. NICOL

AUTHOR | PROFESSOR | SPEAKER



Dr. Donna J. Nicol is the Associate Dean of Personnel and Curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts and a professor of history at California State University Long Beach.

She is the immediate past department chair and professor of Africana Studies at CSU Dominguez Hills, a post she held from 2017-2023. She earned her doctorate degree in Educational Studies (with a specialization in History and Philosophy of Higher Education and a graduate minor in African American and African Studies) from The Ohio State University in 2007.

Dr. Nicol's research focuses race, conservative philanthropy, and U.S. higher education, and the history of African American women's educational activism. Her work has been published in *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *The Feminist Teacher* (twice), *History of Philanthropy*, *Palimpsest: A Journal of Women, Gender and the Black International*, *The Encyclopedia of American Women's History*, *Encyclopedia of Multiracial America*, and *Habitus of the Hood*. In February 2021, Dr. Nicol was a featured guest expert for the Al Jazeera English documentary, *The Big Picture: A Race for America*. Dr. Nicol has also published opinion columns on racism in philanthropy for Al Jazeera Digital and has appeared on the Insufferable Academics podcast, the Fresh Off the Vote podcast, and the Peace and Justice Radio Show.

Prior to becoming an academic, Dr. Nicol spent three years teaching secondary language arts and social studies for Los Angeles Unified School District and seven years in various academic administrative roles at Mt. St. Mary's College and The Ohio State University. She serves on the board of directors for the Historical Society of Southern California, co-principal investigator for the State of Black Los Angeles County Report (2023) and is active in a number of professional academic and social service organizations.



Recent Works:

- **(Subject Matter Expert)** "Respect My Crown: The Rise of African American Women in California Politics" Documentary, October 2023.
- **(Engagement Work)** "State of Black Los Angeles County Report 2023, April 2023
- **(Publication)** "Chairing as Self-Care: Strategies for Combating the Cultural Identity Trap for Black Women Chairs, *Palimpsest: A Journal of Women, Gender, and the Black International*, November 2021
- **(Keynote Speaker)** "Valuing Black Women's Work" for the CSUF International Women's Day Conference March 2021
- **(Publication)** "Activism for Profit: America's Anti-Affirmative Action Industry, Al Jazeera, February 2021
- **(Publication)** "Reclaiming Our Time: Women of Color Faculty and Radical Self-Care" *Feminist Teacher*, 2017.

Suggested Speaking Subjects:

- **More than a Post-Script: Black Women's Post-Civil Rights Educational Activism:** Challenging the prevailing notion that Black civil rights activism ended with the 1960s, this talk examines the key role that Black women played as educational activists in the late 1970s and 1980s establishing alternative school models, filing lawsuits against school districts for racial discrimination, and organizing academic enrichment programs to support Black student learning and achievement.
- **Conservative Philanthropy and the Funding of 'Racial Dog Whistle' Politics:** Traces the history of conservative philanthropic activism since World War II that led to the Academic Culture Wars of the 1990's which gave rise to the racial dog whistle in U.S. media and culture. This talk links this earlier conservative philanthropy to the contemporary "anti-woke" movement which has worked to undo affirmative action and university DEI programs, eliminate critical race theory and African American studies, and bans on books focused on race, gender, and LGBTQIA equality.
- **Sly Civility and the Making of the 'Reasonable Revolutionary':** Reconsiders cultural theorist Homi Bhabha's articulation of 'sly civility' as both a resistance and leadership strategy that Black women educators and academic leaders have utilized to change predominantly white institutions from within.



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