CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

University of Michigan

2025/26 Ph.D. in History
Graduate Certificate: Museum Studies Program (2025)
M.A. in History (2023)

University of the Western Cape

2017 M.A. in History (Museum and Heritage Studies)
PG. Dip. in Museum and Heritage Studies- Cum Laude (2015)

2010 **University of Malawi**
B.A. in Humanities

TEACHING EXPERIENCE & PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT

2025/6 **Texas State University, Assistant Professor**
HIST 2312-007 History of World Civilizations from the Early Modern Era to the Present
HIST 5375I- Heritage in Global Context
HIST 2312-259- History of World Civilization from the 17th Century
HIST 5372- The Practice of Museum Studies and Material Culture
HIST 6311- Heritage in Global Context

2019-2023 **University of Michigan, Graduate Student Instructor**
HIST 101- What is History?
HIST 247- Modern Africa
HIST 105- Introduction to Religion (Fall semester)
HIST 328: South Africa Under the Apartheid (Summer Semester)
HIST 244- History of the Arab-Israel Conflict (Winter semester)
HIST 347- History of Colonial Latin America

2017-2018 **Malawi University of Science and Technology, Lecturer**
IKSP 114-124- Concepts and Theories of Indigenous Knowledge I & II
IKSP 125- Indigenous Food
IKSP 113- Ceramics 1

2016 **University of the Western Cape, Teaching Assistant**
HIST 331- Africa: Colonial and Postcolonial

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

2024 Mtotha, Comfort Tamanda. "The 'Saint' of Livingstonia: Assembling, Memorializing, and Representation of Missionary Paraphernalia at the Stone House Museum." *Museum Anthropology* 47(2): 51–63. https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/muan.12299

Other Scholarly Publications

2017 Mtotha, Comfort. "The History and Heritage of Leprosy on Robben Island, 1846–2014." African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies Education Publication.

COMPETITIVE FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Major International and National Fellowships

2022-23 The Social Science Research Council (SSRC): International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF)
2015-16 Andrew W. Mellon Master's Fellowship through the Center for Humanities Research (CHR), University of the Western Cape, South Africa

University of Michigan: Distinguished Fellowships and Awards

2026 Nominee: The ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award, Rackham Graduate School
2026 Arthur Fondiler Dissertation Award, U-M Department of History
2026 Summer Research Grant, TXST Department of History
2025 Center for the Education of Women (CEW) Grant
2025 Institute for the Humanities Fellowship, UM-LSA
2024-25 Rackham Humanities Dissertation Fellowship (RHDF)
2024 History Summer Writing Institute (HSWI) Award
2024 Rackham Doctoral Intern Fellowship
2024 Orla B. Taylor Scholarship (Rackham Graduate School & History Dept)
2023 Fellowship for Doctoral Research in Museums (FDRM), Museum Studies Program, University of Michigan
2022 African Studies Center Lester P. Monts Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Research on Africa,
2022 Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies (WCED) Graduate Student Research
2022 Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant
2022 Orla B. Taylor Scholarship (Rackham and History)
2021 Rackham International Research Award (RIRA)
2020 International Institute Individual Fellowship (IIIF) Award
2020 South African Initiative Office Fellowship (SAIO) Summer Research Grant
2019-2020 African Studies Center (ASC) Research Support in Africa
2018-2019 J. Frederick Hoffman Award, U-M History

University of the Western Cape and Earlier Honors

2015	Dean's Merit List Award
2015	Golden Key International Honor Society Award
2014	African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies Fellowship, Robben Island Museum and the University of the Western Cape
2014	Dean's Merit List Award

EDITORIAL, PEER REVIEW, AND EXPERT EVALUATION SERVICE

2023	**Reviewer,** Endangered Material Knowledge Programme -The British Museum
2024	**Reviewer,** Journal of Environment and Development (peer-reviewed journal
2022	**Reviewer:** Advances in Sciences and Arts (peer-reviewed journal)

INVITED AND PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (select.)

2026	"Objects with Histories, Objects in Motion: Unsettling Histories through Object Biographies" at The Generosity of Debate: The Work and Legacy of Leslie Witz, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa. March 2026
2024	"From Household Objects to National Treasures" (Presenter) at the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) at Oxford Brookes University, UK
2024	"Forging a National Narrative" at the IAS Emerging Scholars Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
2023	"Politics of Repatriation: The Odyssey of Victor and Theodore Cox Collection" at the World is Ending Again: African Humanities in Times of Crisis – U-M African Studies Center and Wits Institute for Social Research, Maropeng, Johannesburg, South Africa. May 2023.
2012	"Living Heritage and a Legacy of Scottish Missionaries at the Blantyre Mission" (Presenter) at Who cares? The Material Heritage of British Missions in Africa and the Pacific and its Future Workshop in Edinburgh, Scotland.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CURATORIAL WORK

Blog and Public Writing (author)

2025	A Mother Carved in Wood: Nearly a Century Out of Africa *(A Yombe Phemba Figure at the Detroit Institute of Arts)* https://ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/museum-matters/comfort-mtotha-a-mother-carved-in-wood-nearly-a-century-out-of-africa-a-yombe-phemba-figure-at-the-detroit-institute-of-arts/

Curatorial Projects/ Leadership & Researcher Roles

2026 **Community Project Director/Graduate Student Supervisor:** Museum Label Project, Calaboose African American History Museum, San Marcos, Texas

2024 **Researcher**: *Contemporary African Art Exhibition* (forthcoming), Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), Detroit, Michigan

2017 **Curatorial Researcher/ Ethnographer**: *Proverbial Inspired Art Exhibition*, Chichiri Museum, Blantyre, Malawi

2014 **Curator:** *I want to go Home: Leprosy on Robben Island* Exhibition Robben Island Museum (RIM), Cape Town, South Africa

2013 **Curatorial Team Member** and Malawi Project Coordinator "*Dr. David Livingstone: The Man!"* Exhibition, Museums of Malawi

Consultant/ Project contributions

2020 **Consultant team**: Museum Studies Program Capstone *Map project* Exhibition, Arab American National Museum, Dearborn. https://ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/graduate-program/capstone-projects/

2019 **Research contributor**
Alusi Shrine Figure: *Wish You Were Here* Exhibition, University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA)
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/9935a5d108984cc39cda39752f868f97?item=4

Media & Applied Public History

2017 **Production team- Narrator** (UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage): Art of crafting and playing Mbira/Sansi, a finger-plucking traditional musical instrument in Malawi and Zimbabwe
https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-4751

2014 **Heritage Conservation Researcher and Plan Author**
Integrated Conservation Management Plan (ICMP), Leprosy Cemetery, Robben Island Museum (UNESCO World Heritage Site)

EMPLOYMENT

2025/6- **Assistant Professor (Tenure-Track),** History and Museum Studies Department of History, Texas State University

2024- **Museum Studies Graduate Intern**
Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), Detroit, Michigan

2017- **Lecturer, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP), Museums and Heritage,** Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST)

2011–2017	**Ethnographer,** Museums of Malawi, Department of Museums and Monuments
2019–2023	**Graduate Student Instructor** History Department, University of Michigan
2016	**Teaching Assistant/ Tutor, History Department** University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa
2013	**Intern, Management and Conservation of World Heritage Sites,** African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), South Africa

SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

2025-	**Committee Member:** Public History Steering Committee, Texas State University
2023-24	**Co-coordinator**, African History and Anthropology Workshop (AHAW), Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Michigan
2022	**Graduate Student Representative**, Museum Studies Program (MSP) Steering Committee, University of Michigan
2014	**Malawi Project Coordinator**: "Museums as Agents of Change" (Collaborative Project between Museums of Malawi and National Museums Scotland)
2013-Present	**Committee Member:** Society of Malawi (Historical and Scientific), Malawi

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

2024-Present	African Studies Association (ASA)
2020-Present	Michigan Museums Association (MMA)
2017-Present	Commonwealth Association of Museums
2013-Present	Society of Malawi (Historical and Scientific)

MENTORSHIP

Graduate Committees, Texas State University

2026	Committee Member, M.A. Comprehensive Examination Committee for Riley Apel, Title: "Community Museums in Africa:" Department of History
	Committee Member, M.A. Comprehensive Examination Committee for Nana Akosua Serwaa Boamah, Title: "Forts and Castles: Heritage and Memory in Africa" Department of History

Undergraduate Honors Thesis Supervision, Malawi University of Science and Technology

2022- 2026	Jonas Nyasulu, "Role of Traditional Dances in Maintaining Cultural Identity among inmates at Zomba and Chichiri Maximum Prison in Malawi"

Henock Liwela, "Engaging with the Past: Visitor Experience at Chongoni World Heritage Site"

Rachel Pondani, "An Examination of the Impact of *Umhlangano wa Maseko* in Preserving Cultural Heritage in Nkolimbo, Ntcheu" (Submitted 2025)

Taonga Simbota, "Assessing the Impact of Museums in Promoting Cultural Learning among School-going groups in Blantyre at Chichiri Museum" (Submitted 2024)

Innocent Kalamizu, "The Social Protection and Livelihoods Support for the Elderly Persons in Disaster Risk Situations- Case Study of Manje Township in Blantyre (Submitted 2024)

Taonga Mwale, "The Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events Shaping the Lhomwe Identity: A Study of Making and Remaking Processes in Gomani and Mnina Villages in Thyolo District," (Submitted 2024)

McCloud Chioza, "Assessing the Potential Roles of Cultural Heritage Sites for Community Development and their Challenges at the Chongoni Rock Art World Heritage Site" (Submitted 2024)

Taweni Thindwa, "Factors Affecting the Efficiency of the Cultural and Museum Centre Karonga" (Submitted 2023)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES (select.)

International and Applied Training

2017	First Aid to Cultural Heritage Resources Certificate (ICCROM, Smithsonian Institution, and the Department of Culture**),** Lilongwe, Malawi
2016	African World Heritage Regional Youth Forum (Robben Island World Heritage Site), Cape Town, South Africa
2014	Workshop on the Challenges of Managing Heritage Institutions: A Comparative Analysis: Robben Island Museum and other Heritage Institutions in Southern Africa (Robben Island Museum), Cape Town, South Africa
2013	Risk Preparedness Field Project – UNESCO Certificate, Le Morne World Heritage Site, Mauritius

Museum Practice and Conservation Training

2013	Exhibition Development and Public Engagement- Professional training, Edinburgh, Scotland- National Museum of Scotland (NMS)
2013	Collections care or Conservation of Ethnographic collections- Professional training, Edinburgh, Scotland- National Museum of Scotland (NMS)

2012 Project Management- Professional training, Edinburgh, Scotland- National Museum of Scotland (NMS)

Cross-Cultural and International Engagement

2012 Invited Participant, Seminar on Chinese Culture for Government Officials from Asian and African Countries, Beijing International Chinese College, China

Leadership and Community-Based Training

2012 Leadership Training Certificate, University of Malawi, Chancellor College-Zomba, Malawi

2012 Training the youths around Chongoni World Heritage Site on inventorying/ documenting the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) elements within their community.

LANGUAGES

English, Chichewa, and Nyanja