

# Research Seminar

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## *Black Skins, Red Masks: Jamaican Maroons, the Limits of Recognition, and the Potential of Ancestrality*

*Monday, April 24, 2023  
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM in 1022 HN*



Presented by  
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The Jamaica Maroons' emergence in the context of British colonial expansion in the Caribbean, and their successes against a well-armed adversary, have made them the subject of a considerable volume of scholarship. The grooves of analysis have taken two paths: one focused on the heroic and exemplary nature of Maroons as the quintessential freedom fighters and Black avengers of antiblack violence and enslavement; a second is concerned with the treachery of the Maroons, who accepted a freedom that demanded the enslavement of other Black persons. Over the past two decades, increased tension between the Jamaican government and a newly resurgent Maroon movement, has shown the analytical traps and limits of these discussion grooves. This calls for new approaches to Maroon studies. Here, I discuss the conceptualization of ancestrality as a framework through which maroons are increasingly articulating communality, territoriality, and identity. I also discuss how the Maroon political demands, when understood as an attempt to resolve belonging and autonomy through a politics of recognition, both shows that the hero-traitor binary is uninformative, but also how the politics of recognition is unable to produce freedom and sovereignty for the colonized. I consider the limits for radical environmental and social projects framed through demands for recognition and show how the emergent politics of ancestrality is a domain from which new Maroons studies can proceed.

