Collaborative research has the potential to transform both the epistemologies, ethics, and material effects of scholarly practice in Africa. While scholars in some disciplines have long engaged in acknowledged and unacknowledged forms of collaboration in Africa, the various ethical and epistemological stakes of such engagements merit further reflection and clarification. For example, while collaborative partnerships involving African scholars, practitioners, and community members have the potential to reprioritize local concerns, concepts, and ways of knowing; they may also be fraught with complex power dynamics that need to be thoughtfully addressed.

This innovative workshop will bring together researchers, scholars, students, musicians, government workers, and development practitioners from Africa and the University of Virginia who are presently in the midst of long-term sustained collaborations with one another. Over the course of the workshop this diverse group will come together in a series of public conversations to discuss the state of collaborative research in Africa.

This workshop comes at a time when the language of “partnership” is becoming increasingly central to the institutional politics of American and African universities and development agencies alike. While such arrangements can replicate the extractive political-economy of the colonial period, this workshop will provide a space to engage in the historical, reflexive, and creative work necessary to consider how partnerships within and outside of university contexts might become spaces for new forms of scholarship which are both just and generative.
Conference Program

Wednesday April 18th

6pm – Welcome Dinner (Location TBD)

Thursday April 19th – Wilson Hall - Humanities Labs

The Thursday conversations will take place among invited conference participants, lab members, and others from the university community who have specifically asked to participate. If you are a member of the university community and you would like to attend one or more of these sessions, please email China Scherz in advance (crs4he@virginia.edu). This more intimate atmosphere will provide the space necessary to more openly explore the topics at hand. The insights gained during these conversations will provide the basis for the more public conversation to be held on April 20th.

8:30 – 9:00am  Coffee and Pastries
9:00 - 9:30am  Welcome and Introductions
9:30 – 10:45am  Topic #1: Trust and Time
10:45-11:00am  Break
11:00-12:15pm  Topic #2: Connections
12:15-1:30  Lunch and Walk
1:30-2:45  Topic #3: Material Conditions
2:45-3:00  Break
3:00-4:15  Topic #4: Authorship, Writing, and Dissemination
4:15-5:30  Wrap up and plan strategy for April 20th
5:30-7:00  Break
7:00  Group Dinner  (Location TBD)
**Friday April 20 – Brooks Hall Commons**

While not a series of formal talks, the Friday session will be a more public session open to the entire university community. Many of the people who have expressed interest in attending are themselves working to build more equitable collaborative partnerships with the aim of redressing inequalities. The precise format and content of the presentation will be determined during the last of the sessions on Thursday.

8:30 – 9:00am  Coffee and Pastries

9:00 - 9:30am  Welcome and Introductions

9:30-11:30  Collaborative Engagements: The Politics, Practicalities, and Promise of Collaborative Research in Africa’s Cities

This roundtable discussion will draw on the workshop participants’ experiences building collaborative research partnerships and on the insights distilled during the conversations on April 19th. Together we explore how the ideal of creating ethical collaborations has changed our research agendas, questions, and practices.

11:30-11:45  Break

11:45-1:00  Lunch (Location TBD, Please email China Scherz crs4he@virginia.edu if you would like to attend the lunch)

1:00-7:00  Free time for exploration

7:00  Closing Dinner (Location TBD, please email China Scherz crs4he@virginia.edu if you would like to attend the closing dinner)
Conference Participants

Steve Akoth is a Kenyan anthropologist, advisor and activist in the field of human rights and anthropology. He is currently the Executive Director of Pamoja Trust, a faculty member at Kenyatta University, and a member of the Social Science Research Council’s Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa advisory board. Drs. Tomas Asher and Akoth are currently beginning a collaborative research project on informal economies and development concepts in Kibera, an area of densely concentrated poverty in Nairobi.

Abdallah Ali Mr. Abdallah Ali is the Director of Antiquities in Zanzibar, Tanzania. He has held this position for a number of years following an earlier one as the Assistant Director, attained after he returned from his MA degree. Mr. Ali is not trained formally as an archaeologist, but rather in Political Science, by way of an MA degree from the former USSR. He brings to his position an acute sense of politics in the best possible way; he has a vision of the many relationships between and among local people, government actors, and nation states that has been enormously eye-opening to Prof. LaViolette during their many years of working together.

Thomas Asher is program director at the SSRC. He has led projects related to international education, including one exploring inclusive urbanism at the intersection of design and social sciences and another supporting the African social scientists working on peace, security, and development issues. He serves on global advisory boards for the African Centre for Cities (Cape Town) and the International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden), and chairs the board of the Reagent Project.

Francis Boakye is the Executive Director of Priorities on Rights and Sexual Health (PORSH) in Ghana. Mr. Boakye has also collaborated with Prof. Kwame Edwin Otu on Prof. Otu’s current book project and on other projects, ranging from LGBT human rights advocacy to the provision of improved access to healthcare to key populations, Men who have sex with Men, and PLHIVs in Ghana. Together, they have also worked with the Human Rights Advocacy Center and USAID SHARPER projects to examine the state of homophobia in healthcare provision.

David Edmunds is the track director for Global Development Studies at the University of Virginia. He is a human geographer who is interested in environmental issues as they interect with culture, social relations, politics and community development. He has a PhD from Clark University and received a Fulbright award for my fieldwork, in addition to a Rockefeller award for post-doctoral work at the Center for International Forestry Research. He has worked in various countries in Africa and Asia, as well as with Native American tribal nations in the United States. In addition to classroom teaching, he is also responsible for helping students arrange for out-of-the-university learning experiences with a variety of local, national and international partners.
Chris Colvin is a medical anthropologist living and working in Cape Town, South Africa. He has a PhD in socio-cultural anthropology from the University of Virginia and a Master’s in Public Health from the University of Cape Town (UCT) in epidemiology. He has lectured in anthropology, public health, epidemiology, African studies, and comparative literature at Columbia University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Virginia as well as the Universities of Cape Town, the Western Cape, and Stellenbosch in South Africa. He is currently an Associate Professor in UCT’s School of Public Health. He is also Head of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences. His research interests include HIV and masculinity; health activism and community health governance; trauma, subjectivity and narrative; and the interface between communities and health systems in the context of HIV/AIDS, TB and maternal and child health. He also has an interest in conducting and developing methodological approaches for systematic evidence synthesis of social science research in public health.

James Igoe is an environmental anthropologist and an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Virginia. Most of his field experience is in community-based development and participatory action research in Tanzania and South Dakota. Most of his work engages with struggles of indigenous communities to control and manage natural resources according to their own self-defined needs and values. He is currently in the preliminary stages of a new research trajectory around the cities of Moshi and Arusha in Northern Tanzania. Throughout his career Prof. Igoe has been deeply concerned with questions of engagement, development, and social justice. He has also be interested in developing long term ethical collaborations with community activists, artists, filmmakers, journalists and scholars.

Adria LaViolette is an archaeologist in the Anthropology Department, and has spent her career thus far studying aspects of sub-Saharan indigenous urbanism (first and second millennium CE). After her PhD I took a job teaching archaeology at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1989 and unintentionally but essentially switched her research focus to working on the Swahili coast, although indigenous urbanism and specialization have anchored me there as well. She is engaged in training Tanzanian archaeologists, collaborating with Tanzanian archaeologists and heritage managers, and finding new ways to build bridges between archeology and the public.

Noel Lobley is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music. He is an ethnomusicologist and sound curator who works across the disciplines of music, anthropology and sound studies to develop a series of international curatorial residencies. He is currently curating an ongoing series of touring sound installation and remix projects designed to link major ethnographic collections from across sub-Saharan Africa. This entails developing collaborations with local artists, communities and institutions, in order to implement mutually beneficial sustainable methods to curate recorded sonic heritage.
Edward Loure  Maasai community activist, Edward Loure has recently come to the forefront of a movement to create formal legal mechanisms to protect customary land tenure systems, specifically the titling of collective, as opposed to private, natural resource ownership, and community based natural resource management. Edward Loure was awarded a Goldman Environmental Leadership Prize, in 2016, for his initiative in this area. Mr. Loure is also one of the founding members of the Ujamaa Community Resource Team, an organization dedicated to the protection of land and natural resources by and for pastoralist and hunter gatherer peoples, and according to their community values and relationships. Mr. Loure is a long-time collaborator of Professor James Igoe.

Mandla Majola.  A longtime advocate for human rights, Mr. Majola grew up in the township of Guguletu, South Africa. At the age of 11, he joined the Young Romans Soccer Club where a good education, grounded in strong values and ethics, provided him with the foundation for the social justice worldview that would become his life’s work. Mr. Majola began volunteering with the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in 1999, and by 2000 was employed as a Community Organizer and tasked with creating TAC branches in South Africa’s provinces. Within two years, TAC had expanded from two regional branches to 15 national ones. In recognition of his talents and accomplishments, Mr. Majola was appointed the National Organizer for TAC, and was elected General Secretary of the National Congress of TAC in 2003. He remained in that position, managing TAC’s Khayelitsha branch, until 2011, when he became Campaign Coordinator for the Social Justice Coalition (SJC—an advocacy organization that campaigns for safe, healthy, and dignified communities in the informal settlements. Mr. Majola founded the Movement for Change and Social Justice in 2017. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human and Social Studies from the University of South Africa and is now working as the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Division of Social and Behavioural Sciences in the School of Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town.

George Mpanga has been working on research projects with anthropologists and historians since 2007 when he worked as a research assistant and translator on China Scherz’s dissertation research on sustainable development and orphan support programs. Since that time, Mr. Mpanga earned a BA in Social Work and Social Administration from Kampala International University and continued to work with other anthropologists and historians amassing significant research experience and expertise. He also helped to develop a study abroad program for undergraduate students from Centre College. Starting in 2015 Prof. Scherz and Mr. Mpanga embarked on a collaborative study of alcohol use and the plurality of approaches being used to address alcohol abuse in Uganda. As co-investigators, they have conducted ethnographic research, together and separately, and have jointly supervised and supported four UVa undergraduate students working as research assistants on the project. They plan to co-author a book and several additional articles in the coming years.
Kwame Edwin Otu is an anthropologist and an assistant professor in the department of African-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia. Prof. Otu’s research transects issues of sexual citizenship, gender, human rights NGOs, and neoliberal racial formations in postcolonial Africa, traversing the anthropology of Africa, race, gender and sexuality, queer of color theorizing, critical human rights studies, revolutionary forms of blackness and black aesthetics, and Afrofuturist practice. Otu is currently working on his book manuscript, which is an ethnographic investigation of how self-identified effeminate men (sassoi) navigate homophobia and the increased visibility of LGBT human rights politics in postcolonial Ghana, titled, *Amphibious Subjects: Sassoi and the Contested Politics of Queer Self-Making in Neoliberal Ghana*.

China Scherz is a medical anthropologist and an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Virginia. Her research is based in the central region of Uganda and revolves around questions of care, interdependence, ethics, agency, and health-seeking practices. She is currently working with her longtime collaborator George Mpanga on a NSF funded collaborative ethnographic study on the array of strategies Ugandans use to try to stop drinking. This project is focused on (1) tracking the introduction of the new biomedical category of addiction, (2) understanding contemporary practice of indigenous medical and spiritual practices suburban Kampala, and (3) modifying the theoretical frameworks being used in the anthropology of ethics to make them more attentive to the role of affect, embodied experience, and the actions of collectivities of human and supernatural actors.

Lee Watkins. After being introduced to Ethnomusicology at the UKZN in South Africa Lee Watkins obtained a PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Hong Kong. All of his theses and publications to date are related to the study of performing marginality in relation to guest-host relations, race, gender and class. In recent years these interests had been augmented by heritage studies, archiving and community development. Currently, Lee Watkins is the Director of the International Library of African Music (ILAM), which is affiliated with Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. ILAM was established in 1954 and at the time its founder, Hugh Tracey, could not have anticipated ILAM’s role as a catalyst for transformation in the academy of the twenty-first century. This is the reason why Lee Watkins is motivated by the possibilities which may emerge from this conference.