

Dr. Nora Lynn Gardner FRDG Proposal Summer 2026

“I knew that Spain once belonged to the Moors” – Afro-descendants in Langston Hughes’s Spanish Civil War Literary Canon and International Spanish Civil War Archives

1. Concise Description of Project

My research project consists of extensive summer archival research throughout Spain and in New York in order to complete the research necessary for the completion of my book manuscript, *Dear Folks at Home: Langston Hughes, Counter-Storytelling, Pan-Africanism, and the Spanish Civil War*. This manuscript is the first of its kind, giving in-depth historical and archival context to Hughes’s Spanish Civil War canon, especially as it relates to his portrayal of the individual Black American soldiers who volunteered to fight in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade on the side of the Spanish Republic and the mercenary Moroccan soldiers who fought against them on the side of Francisco Franco’s fascist army. This grant will allow me to spend this summer researching the abundant and vital archival material housed in three different locations: Spain’s Military Indigenous Troops Archive in Ceuta (Spain), the General Archive of the Spanish Civil War/Documentary Center for Historical Memory in Salamanca (Spain), and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in the Tamiment Library at New York University. The archives in Ceuta, for example, provide historical documentation of the thousands of Moroccan troops that Francisco Franco’s fascist army enlisted to fight against the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades’ volunteers. Similarly, the ALBA Collection in the Tamiment Library at NYU provides insight into the lives and contributions of the African American soldiers and civilian volunteers in the Lincoln Brigade.

While I just recently spent two weeks this summer at the Spanish Military’s Indigenous Troops Archive in Ceuta (Spanish Protectorate in Morocco), I managed only to identify and organize a fragment of the vast archive’s un-catalogued and never-before-researched content. In fact, I am one of only a few scholars to have ever visited this archive, and the commanding officers and state-employed personnel were grateful to have me there to start to “make sense” of their collection. A sustained period of time is needed for me to get a firm grasp on the archive’s holdings, and from there, for me to make sense of how it relates to Hughes’s portrayal of the Moroccan troops and how it will fit into my manuscript. The other two archives, in Salamanca (Spain), and New York will be much easier to manage but will still require a residency of at least month each in order to access all of the relevant holdings pertaining to international Black participation and solidarity during the armed conflict. As is the case with many of our faculty colleagues, I dedicate the majority of my time and efforts to teaching, advising, and service to the university. The summer research funded by this grant will provide me with the necessary time and support to complete my archival research so that I can begin to draft the final version of my manuscript in earnest.

2-3. Measurable Goals and Objectives according to summer research Workplan/Timeline

In order to get the sufficient archival documentation for my manuscript, my field research requires three separate residencies: Ceuta, Salamanca, and New York/Manhattan.

Archival Visit and Measureable Goal	When?	Modality
<i>Ceuta, Morocco</i> (Spanish protectorate) – Document evidence of lives, enlistment, compensation, and living conditions of Moroccan soldiers recruited in Franco’s fascist army, “Las tropas regulares indígenas” to give historical context to Hughes’s articles, poems,	May – Mid June 2026	Full-time – I will rent an apartment on site in Ceuta.

and autobiographical prose about their role in the SCW		
<i>Salamanca, Spain</i> – Investigate all holdings in the Spanish National Archive of the Civil War and Historic Memory as they pertain to the Abraham Lincoln Brigades and the 90 African American Volunteers	Mid June – Mid July 2026	Full-time – I will rent an apartment on site in Salamanca.
<i>New York, USA</i> – Investigate all of the holdings in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archive (ALBA) as they pertain to the the 90 African American Volunteers and begin to write manuscript.	Mid July -Mid August	Full-time – I will seek to rent-share on site at/near NYU upon return from Spain and will spend the rest of the summer drafting manuscript.

4. How the project will enhance teaching and research at LU

When it comes to teaching or researching, the life and works of James Mercer Langston Hughes (Lincoln University, Class of 1929) embody interdisciplinarity across the humanities and social sciences. Hughes was not only the poet par excellence of the Harlem Renaissance, but he was also a brilliant novelist, sociologist, journalist, historian, political scientist, and a Lincoln alum/HBCU grad! In this vein, my interdisciplinary project is the first of its kind to use historical military and state-run Black Archives in Spain and the United States in order to read, contextualize, and give depth and breadth to Langston Hughes' anti-fascist and anti-racist literary production written during the Spanish Civil War. At LU, my project has already found its way into a myriad of classrooms: I regularly teach stand-alone courses in Spanish and English on Hughes and the Spanish Civil War and Hughes and the Archives/Hughesiana Collection found in LU's Langston Hughes Memorial Library (i.e. SPN 3003 in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023 and ENG 4012 in 2023 and 2025); I have also collaborated with colleagues at LU to teach units in English, Spanish, Political Science, and History courses; additionally, I have shared unit lesson plans with colleagues at Morgan State and Lafayette Universities. Over the past seven years I have also mentored three students as undergraduate research assistants who worked with me in compiling archival data, translating/transcribing Hughes's reporter's notebooks found in the Langston Hughes Papers in Yale's Beinecke Library, and in making reading guides for future students. Lastly, this project is significant to the field of Black Studies. Hughes's literary production during the Spanish Civil War politicizes and promotes anti-fascism and anti-racism on a global scale. It also highlights the lives and legacies of the Afrodescendant men and women that he met while in Spain and thus constitutes an understudied yet vital part of the Pan-African Movement, and of Black History in the US and in Spain. Since starting at LU I have been consistent in presenting my work at numerous international and national conferences in my field annually (see CV) and I am currently in touch with representatives from two publishers I have published with before, Routledge and Taylor and Francis, in addition to Penn State University Press, regarding an eventual publication contract.

5-6 How the outcome of the project will be measured and sharing of project outcomes

The outcome of the project will be internally measured by my final grant report and participation in the spring 2027 Faculty Research and Development Symposium. Externally it will be immediately measured by my participation and reading of my paper titled, "Moors ETC" in the Congreso Internacional de Literaturas Hispánicas in Mallorca, June 10-12, 2026 (see CV for submit paper abstract). It will additionally be externally measured by my completed introductory chapter and book proposal for my manuscript submitted to an editorial by December, 2026.