The Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University will hold its fourth biennial Africa and the Global Atlantic World Conference on April 12th and 13th, 2018. This year’s conference focuses on intersectionalities between approaches to resistance that various communities have historically deployed to confront systemic forms of dominance. At a time when wellness, health, clean environment, and sustainability are as threatened as economic and gender equality, disadvantaged communities of color find themselves uniquely periled by detrimental public policies and social attitudes. In such perilous moments, it becomes imperative to examine the ways in which freedom struggles in the Pan-African world are intersectional with other liberation struggles in which similar and different strategies and legacies of resistance exist. Knowing that resistance and survival often require broad coalitions of experiences among diverse groups, this conference wants to draw on the creative ways in which such approaches have or have not been successful in addressing the predicament of people of African descent. Relying on the insights of both activists and scholars, this conference hopes to encourage crucial exchanges on how various communities choose to resist oppression. In honoring creative approaches to survival and resistance this year’s conference will run concurrently with our annual Pan-African Festival, which will take place on April 12-14. The festival activities will include free health and wellness workshops, art exhibitions, live performances, a Black Playwrights Showcase and a Pan-African Vendors Marketplace.

This year’s Keynote Speaker will be Professor Linda James Myers, Director of the AAAS Community Extension Center, College of Arts and Sciences, and Faculty of the Department of African American and African Studies at Ohio State University. Professor Myers specializes in psychology and culture; moral and spiritual identity development; healing practices and psychotherapeutic processes; and, intersections of race, gender and class. Internationally known for her work in the development of a theory of Optimal Psychology, Dr. Myers has conducted lectures and trainings in England, South Africa, Ghana and Jamaica. She is the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and five books, including: Understanding an Afrocentric World View: Introduction to a Optimal Psychology; and, most recently, co-editor of Recentering Culture and Knowledge in Conflict Resolution Practice. Dr. Myers’ oneness model of human functioning offers a transdisciplinary focus that builds on insights from the wisdom tradition of African deep thought, and converges with modern physics and Eastern philosophies.

Topics and themes of papers/artistic work will include:

- Legacies of resistance and survival
- Environmental racism
- The Detroit water issue
- Health and wellness
- Food deserts
- Barack Obama’s presidency and legacy
- Donald Trump’s presidency
- Public policy and black communities
- Police brutality
- The prison industrial complex
- Immigration policy
- Black bodies
- Black sexualities and gender identities
- Suicide in black communities
- Race, class, and gender
- Critical race theory and marginalized communities
- Black art, music, performance, and theatre

We invite abstracts for papers, workshops, panels, video and poetry performances, and other artistic forms that address the above goals and themes. Abstracts should not exceed 250 words. Abstracts should explain the topic, the content, and highlight key discussion points that advance the conference theme of intersectional approaches to survival and legacies of resistance. All abstracts are due November 15, 2017. Please submit a 50-word biography.

For more information about the conference, please contact the Conference Committee electronically (at dpas@kent.edu) or by mail at: Conference Committee, Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University, P.O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio, USA, 44240.