



Dec 13, 2018 14:26 GMT

US expertise strengthened with new appointment

The ‘special relationship’ between Northumbria University and the United States has been further strengthened with the appointment of a visiting Professor from across the pond.

Northumbria University, in Newcastle upon Tyne, has one of the largest and most active [centres for American Studies](#) in Europe – bringing together academics with expertise in the history, literature and culture of the United States.

Now Northumbria has welcomed [Devin Fergus](#) from the University of Missouri to join its American Studies team for a year-long visiting professorship.

For the past two years Professor Fergus has held the role of Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professor of History, Public Affairs, and Black Studies at [University of Missouri](#).

He is an expert in politics, race, economics, and inequality in the US, writing for publications including The New York Times, Washington Post, Slate, and the Guardian.

His most recent book [Land of the Fee](#) (Oxford 2018) examines the rise and impact of hidden fees on the American middle class, especially the potential costs for the fastest growing segment of the middle class – ethnic and racial minorities

Speaking about his appointment Professor Fergus said: “I’m thrilled to join my colleagues in the American Studies group at Northumbria University. The University has assembled a stellar team of scholars who are highly regarded for their grant-winning research in modern American life, politics, race relations, social movements, culture, and consumption. I’m excited and eager to contribute to such a vibrant intellectual group - one that continues to interrogate, define, and reshape the contours of my discipline.

“As a scholar of political economy who edits a book series on capitalism, I could not imagine a more propitious moment to live in the UK and serve as a visiting professor at Northumbria than Brexit, with all of its historic social, cultural, and financial ramifications.”

Northumbria University has one of the largest teams in Europe dedicated to the study of the Americas. Members of the University’s [American Studies Research Group](#) have particular strengths in the study of race, diplomacy, presidential and congressional politics, civil rights, music, periodical culture. American and transatlantic modernist literature, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the transnational significance of the US South, feminist and queer literary theory, and the development of California and Florida are also areas of specialism.

Professor Fergus' appointment brings the number of Americanists working at Northumbria to 12 – with many of those staff appointed as distinguished lecturers by the [Organization of American Historians](#).

[Dr Patrick Andelic](#) is a Lecturer in American History and heads up [Northumbria's American Studies Research Group](#).

He said: "We are delighted to have Professor Fergus join our growing community of Americanists as a visiting professor. We know that a scholar of his considerable talents, accomplishments, and insight can benefit our staff and students, and make a considerable contribution to the life of the university, as well as build on our reputation as a respected centre for American Studies."

[Land of the Fee](#) (Oxford, 2018):

In his new book, Professor Devin Fergus exposes how fees have affected wealth distribution, tracing its history in America from the 1970s to the present, breaking down exactly how consumers pay exorbitant costs without realizing it.

He looks at the four categories most important to our lives: housing, work, transportation, and education. In each section he explains how the donor class—a tiny group comprising one-quarter of one percent of the US population who are 94% white, 65% male, and 100% rich—have influenced policies (and policymakers) over time to make fee collecting a normal part of our everyday lives.

It is but one example of how, since the deregulation of the 1970s, corporate fees targeting the have-nots have greatly enhanced the pocketbooks of those who have a lot. The book has been described as one of the [five best books for understanding capitalism today](#).

Professor Devin Fergus is available for media interviews – please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call 0191 227 4604

Find out more about Northumbria University's [American Studies BA \(Hons\)](#) degree programme by coming along to one of our upcoming [Open Days](#).

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call 0191 227 4604.

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk