

2025 Dawe Lecture

Thursday, March 13, 6:30pm



How Rastafari Moved the World

Dr. Iyabo Osiapem

Teaching Professor in Africana Studies & Linguistics
Co-Director WMSURE, William & Mary

Rastafari cultural symbols are recognizable throughout the world. We see its sounds and symbols represented in so many ways, although we rarely have a good understanding of what they mean beyond the One Love ideology that it expresses. We know its music, language, and often identify with its social and political movement—but why? In this talk, I'll walk us through how a small and isolated community within Jamaica honed in on the anxiety of Black diasporic populations creating a religious and cultural practice that would inspire generations throughout the world

Professor Osiapem focuses on language variation and identity in the African Diaspora, particularly the Caribbean. She is collaborating on "The Linguistic Atlas of the Greater Caribbean," gathering linguistic data across Caribbean nations in a longitudinal study. Previously a Post Doctoral Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis, she earned her PhD at UGA. Osiapem leads Study Away programs in the Caribbean and has taken students to Barbados and the Virgin Islands. Her achievements include being the inaugural Richard Bland Faculty Fellow and director of the Africana House. Since 2007, she has combined her interests in Africana Studies and Linguistics at William & Mary, addressing race and representation in her courses.

The Dawe Lecture series is funded through the Donald and Nancy Dawe Fund for Emotional and Ethical Growth. The Fund was established thanks to a generous gift from Dr. Coleman Longan honoring Donald and Nancy Dawe. Dr. Dawe was professor emeritus of Union Presbyterian Seminary until his death in 2012.

The lecture series, which is held annually at Union Presbyterian Seminary, pays tribute to Dr. and Mrs. Dawe and promotes ethical, cultural, and religious understanding and interfaith dialogue.

This event is free and open to the public.
The lecture will be presented on the Richmond campus as well as livestreamed.

Location: Lake Chapel of Union Presbyterian Seminary
3401 Brook Road, Richmond, VA, 23227