



Washington State University

College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences

Dion Crommarty

Will defend their dissertation on

Date: April 22, 2026

Time: 9:00 A.M.

Pullman Campus – Elson S. Floyd Cultural Building, Sankofa Room

Zoom: Link by request ceshs.gradstudies@wsu.edu

Title:

ROOTED IN LOVE AND RESISTANCE: JOURNEYING THROUGH BLACK SPACES AND BLACK ABOLITION SPACES IN EDUCATION (BASE) TOWARD BLACK FUTURES, BLACK JOY, AND BLACK LIBERATION

Co-Chairs: T. Francene Watson and Obie Ford III

Abstract:

This portfolio-style dissertation is a journey to explore, celebrate, and redefine what it means to be Black in Spaces. Black Spaces emerge, evolve, and adapt—marked off, named, reclaimed, and created—whenever needed for Black people to thrive. Using literature reviews, theoretical frameworks, ethnographic inquiry, and lived experiences, this work explores the meanings of Black Space and how these concepts can transform educational environments for Black people. The portfolio-style dissertation includes four interconnected works — three papers and a documentary film — that build upon one another to tell a fuller story of what Black Space means to me, to theory, and to community. After a spoken word-style introduction, the dissertation’s research components get underway in Chapter Two, *Who Am I?: My Story and My Quest for Black Space*, a critical autoethnography grounded in lived experience and scholarship. It explores how Black Spaces operate as centers of love, resilience, affirmation, and liberation within environments shaped by whiteness. Drawing from my Blacksporation, Family narratives, ancestral wisdom, Afrocentric pedagogy, and the principles of Kwanzaa, I identify ten elements that serve as the foundation for creating and sustaining Black Spaces. Chapter Three, *Reclaiming Education: An Exploration of Black Spaces and Black Abolition Spaces in education (BASE)*, expands this conversation by engaging theoretical frameworks such as BlackCrit and Afropessimism. It introduces Black Abolition Spaces in education (BASE) as a new conceptual framework that defines how Black Spaces function as acts of resistance, survival, and transformation within educational settings. Chapter Four, *The Search for Black Spaces to Black Abolition Spaces in education (BASE)*, is a methodology and Art-Based Research (ABR) paper that grounds the accompanying film. Through an innovative methodology that combines ABR, documentary filmmaking, and critical phenomenology, this study amplifies lived realities of Black individuals in educational contexts. By using oral traditions, interviews, and visual storytelling, the project explores not only what Black Spaces and BASE are, but how they shape educational experiences and outcomes, and how they allow Black students, faculty, and communities not merely to survive in education, but to reimagine it entirely and thrive. Chapter 5 presents the research findings as a documentary film screenplay, *Filming Freedom: We Were Already Building*, which will accompany the filmed documentary. The documentary uses art-based research and critical phenomenology to explore how Black people experience, create, and sustain these spaces. Through oral tradition and film, the documentary centers Black voices and reclaims research as a space for love, creativity, and resistance. Together, these works do not simply describe Black Spaces—they insist upon their creation and protection. This dissertation celebrates Blackness as a living, evolving practice of joy, resistance, and liberation, reimagining educational spaces where Black people can thrive.