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Ms Thomas
Human Resources Department,
Swansea University,
Singleton Park,
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Dear Ms Thomas,

Currently a Leverhulme early career research fellow at Oxford, I am writing to apply for the post of Fixed Term Lecturer in American Studies with a focus on The American Experience and African America. My monograph and additional articles on the work of Hammons and his engagement with contemporary black male experience in the USA are under review, providing strong submissions for the REF. This material and the research I have begun to critically appraise the relationships between art, media discourse and politics from 1970 to 1990 will furnish material for the teaching I would develop in the Department at Swansea. My approach to research and teaching aligns with the innovative and interdisciplinary nature of this Department, thereby enabling me to make a valuable contribution to scholarship and the learning environment.

I have had teaching experience at both Nottingham and Oxford, most recently supervising two PhD students in African American literature and history at Oxford and thus developing my skills as a mentor, in giving constructive criticism, offering guidance on academic work and career prospects, and pastoral care. At Nottingham I taught American Literature, a core module, to first-year undergraduate students, leading seminars of up to 15 students, preparing teaching materials and marking essays and exams independently and in cooperation with other teachers, giving one-to-one advice and feedback during office hours, and lecturing on one occasion. These experiences have developed my confidence in communicating complex information to students of different abilities and to facilitate discussion. Over half my students achieved marks in the mid 80s last year, my teaching feedback forms were positive at both institutions and I had a good relationship with both students and colleagues. In light of my expertise in African American studies, I would be thrilled to teach your African American module in addition to using my broad interdisciplinary American Studies knowledge to teach The American Experience. The American Literature module I taught at the University of Nottingham set primary texts firmly within cultural and political history and I look forward to drawing on this knowledge when teaching the The American Experience.

My written contributions to two research grant applications (in process) have prepared me for future funding applications from the Department in Swansea. Evidence for my oral communication skills includes various teaching roles, presenting at three international conferences and speaking at museum exhibitions for the general public. I have managed multiple tasks with little supervision during my studies, including organising two conferences. My administrative roles at the Fulbright Commission and at Nottingham Trent University have further honed my IT and organisational competencies required for convening course modules.

I look forward to the opportunity to work in cooperation with the Swansea American Studies teaching team, engage with your students and contribute to the research culture of the department. I would be delighted to discuss my application with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Rowena Cowley