The American Studies program is excited to announce that Dr. Brandon Manning will be joining us on February 8th! Dr. Manning is an Assistant Professor and Director of African American Studies and is jointly appointed in Gender and Sexuality Studies in the Interdisciplinary, Gender, and Ethnic Studies Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in the department of English. His current book project, *The Right Kind of Laughter: Black Men and Vulnerability in Post-Soul Satire*, reflects his scholarly interests in contemporary African American literary and cultural studies, black popular culture, black feminist theory, masculinity studies, and humor studies.

Dr. Manning’s talk will explore President Obama’s performance of anger and humor at the 2015 White House Correspondents’ Association dinner. This annual dinner provides a unique space for acknowledging the importance of political critique while at the same time criticizing it through the use of performance and humor.

At the 2015 dinner, President Obama famously presented his remarks through the aid of an “anger translator” named Luther, played by Keegan-Michael Key of the comedy duo “Key and Peele.” Luther’s translation of Obama’s remarks provided a chance for him to address issues he would normally avoid or approach with delicacy—issues related to race, masculinity, partisanship, and others—in a style that was open, aggressive, and direct. In his talk, Dr. Manning will examine the transgressive power of laughter and ridicule in Obama’s performance, focusing specifically on the way that Obama’s racial identity, his physical appearance, and his use of humor both reinforce and criticize the apparatus of the state.