Dina Michael Asfaha, PhD

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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2026- **Postdoctoral Fellow**
Department of Family and Community Medicine
University of California, Davis, School of Medicine

2026- **Research Scientist, Health and Society Pathway Program**
Department of Anthropology/Health and Life Sciences Initiative
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

2023- **Postdoctoral Associate/Lecturer**
2025 *Department of Anthropology*
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, MA

EDUCATION

2023 **PhD**, Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Dissertation Title: "Organic Clinicians: Medicine, Sovereignty, and Sustainability in Eritrea"
Dissertation Committee Chair: Dr. Adriana Petryna

MA, Oral History
Columbia University in the City of New York, New York, NY

BA, Africana Studies
Barnard College of Columbia University, New York, NY

PUBLICATIONS

Single-Authored Peer-Reviewed Publications
Asfaha, Dina Michael. 2024. "Medical Sovereignty in Eritrea: Reducing Maternal Mortality and Challenging Global Health Humanitarianism in Africa." Black Feminist Health Science Studies (BFHSS) Collaboratory special issue, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*: **https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12904** (Honorable Mention, Society for Medical Anthropology Rudolf Virchow Award)

Co-Authored Peer-Reviewed Publications
Owens, Kellie, Pamela Sankar, Dina M. Asfaha. 2023. "How Clinicians Conceptualize 'Actionability' in Genomic Screening." *Journal of Personalized Medicine*, 12 (x).

GRANTS

2024 MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Dean's Grant ($3000)
2023 American Anthropological Association Dissertation Fellowship for Historically Underrepresented Persons in Anthropology ($10,000)
2023 American Anthropological Association Yolanda Moses Scholarship ($2,500)
2023 Social Science Research Council-MMUF Dissertation Grant ($30,000)
2023 Carter G. Woodson Institute Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, University of Virginia ($30,000 – *withdrawn*)
2022 Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant ($11,203 - *withdrawn*)
2022 Penn GAPSA-Provost Award for Interdisciplinary Innovation ($6000)
2021 SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement ($2000)
2021 SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant ($840)
2020 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Travel and Research Grant ($4600)
2020 Marcus Garvey Memorial Foundation Research Fellowship ($500)
2019 Penn Anthropology Department Summer Funds ($2125)
2019 SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant ($1977)
2018 Penn Anthropology Department Summer Funds ($3850)
2018 Penn Museum Field Funds ($1300)
2018 SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Studies Enhancement Grant ($1020.60)
2018 President Gutmann Leadership Award ($625.10)

AWARDS & HONORS

2025 (Honorable Mention) Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) Rudolf Virchow Award
2023 American Anthropological Association (AAA) Dissertation Fellow
2018 (Honorable Mention) Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship
2017 UPenn Benjamin Franklin/William Fontaine Fellowship
2016 Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Scholar
2014-2016 Andrew W. Mellon/Benjamin E. Mays Undergraduate Research Fellowship (MMUF)

PRESENTATIONS

Invited talks/lectures

2026 "Clinical Ingenuity and Adaptive Infrastructure: Vernacular Medicine and Political Belonging in Eritrea." Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University. Nashville, TN. April 10.
2025 "A Pan-African Contradiction: Imperial Ethiopia, Eritrean Struggle, and the Origins of a Medical Crisis." Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies, UNC Chapel Hill. Chapel Hill, NC. March 3.
2025 "Medical Crisis and the Organic Clinician in Revolutionary Eritrea." Department of Anthropology, Hunter College, CUNY. New York, NY. February 25.

2025 "Afterlife of Eritrea's Underground Hospital Network: Navigating Abandonment and the Politics of Humanitarianism from the US African Diaspora." Department of African and African American Studies, Washington University in St. Louis. St. Louis, MO. February 6.

2024 "The Medical Underground: Organic Clinicians and Infrastructures of Care in Revolutionary Eritrea." Friday Morning Seminar in Medical Anthropology and Psychiatry, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. October 18. [virtual]

2024 "Africa through an Anthropological Lens." MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives-MIT Africa Program. Cambridge, MA. May 2.

2024 "Afterlife of an Underground Hospital Network: A sociology of medical humanitarianism in the US African Diaspora." Department of Sociology and Criminology, Howard University. Washington, D.C. March 19.

2024 "Race and Medical Sovereignty: A Look at Reducing Maternal Mortality in Eritrea." National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW). Richmond, VA. March 16. [virtual]

2024 "Making Do in Wartime: Medical Transformations in Conflict" module in "Making Medicines: Cultures of Therapeutic Preparation and Production" course. Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University. Baltimore, MD. March 6. [virtual]

2023 "Injury, Defense, and the Rise of the Underground Hospital Network in Eritrea." National Council of Eritrean Americans (NCEA) Conference. Seattle, WA. August 1.

2023 "Medical Sovereignty, Self-reliance, and Maternal Mortality in Eritrea." Walter Rodney Seminar Series, Boston University Center for African Studies. Boston University. Boston, MA. March 27.

2023 "Organic Clinicians and the Underground Hospital Network." MIT Anthropology lecture series. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Cambridge, MA. January 23.

2022 "Self-Defense." Sponsored by Harvard University's Asia Center and Department of Anthropology. Nuyorican Poets Cafe. New York, New York. December 8.

2019 "Conflict Medicine." Introduction to Medical Anthropology course. University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA. December 2.

Invited panels/workshops

2025 "Building Community" panel. National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). November 14. [held virtually]

2024 *Capitalism & Slavery* Symposium. Invited by Center for an Equitable Economy and Sustainable Society, Howard University. Havana, Cuba: September 16-22. Washington, D.C.: September 25-28.

2023 "Sovereignty: Organic Clinicians and the Underground Hospital Network in Revolutionary Eritrea." "Text to Deeds": Health, Language, and Development panel. African Studies Association (ASA). San Francisco, CA. November 30-December 2.

2022 "Medical Sovereignty, Self-Reliance, and Maternal Mortality in Eritrea." American Anthropological Association (AAA), "Black Feminist Health Science Studies Collaboratory: Transforming Medical Anthropology" panel. Invited by Society of Medical Anthropology (SMA). Seattle, WA. November 11.

2019 "Organic Clinicians in Eritrea's War for Formal Independence," with co-authors Dr. Tekeste Fekadu (Orotta School of Medicine, Eritrea) and Dr. Michael Ralph (NYU Dept. of Social and Cultural Analysis). *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM*) Social Medicine Case Studies Workshop. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. March 29-31.

Panel/workshop presentations

2025 "Eritrean Diasporic Participation in an Age of Sanctions." Panelist. International Conference on Eritrean Studies. Asmara, Eritrea. January 4-6.

2024 "United States Imperialism in Africa/the African Diaspora." Panel chair. American Studies Association (ASA). Baltimore, MD. November 14-17.

2023 "Anti-Colonial Medicine" panel co-chair and discussant at Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) conference. Honolulu, HI. November 8-11. [virtual]

2021 Paper reviewer. Black Feminist Health Science Studies (BFHSS) Collaboratory on "Racial Geographies of Health and Wellness." May 14-16. [moved online due to COVID-19 pandemic]

2021 "Underground Hospital: Medical Sovereignty and Infrastructures of Recovery." *Disrupted Lives* GRiSTS Conference, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. October 28-30. [moved online due to COVID-19 pandemic]

2020 "Underground Hospital: Conceptions of Sovereignty." 3rd Annual Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) Conference. Havana, Cuba. March. [declined due to COVID-19 pandemic]

2019 "Guerrilla Warfare and the Legacies of Conflict Medicine." American Anthropological Association (AAA), "Re-Imagining Africanist Medical Anthropology" panel. Vancouver, Canada. November.

2019 "Underground Hospital." SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Student Summer Conference, "Environmental Stressors" panel, New York, NY. June.

2018 "Fugitive Planning in the Underground Hospital." American Anthropological Association (AAA), "The Undercommons" panel, San Jose, CA. November.

2018 "Eritrean Diasporan Rituals & the Body." 9th Summer Institute "New Geographies: Africa and African Diasporas." Harriet Tubman Institute, York University. New York, NY. August.

2018 "Song, Sound, Time – In Tandem." SSRC-Mellon Mays Graduate Student Summer Conference. New York, NY. June.

2018 "Sound & Song in the Eritrean Liberation Struggle." Caribbean Studies Association (CSA): Education, Culture, and Emancipatory Thought in the Caribbean, "Emancipation in the Undercommons: Punishment, War, Finance" panel. Havana, Cuba. June.

2016 "From Repression to Revolution: Making Space for Eritrea." 7th Annual Diversity in Research and Practice Conference: The Power of Representation in an Era of Invisibility. Teachers College, Columbia University. New York, NY. April.

TEACHING, MENTORSHIP, & SERVICE TO PROFESSION

Teaching

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Spring 2025 Instructor. "In the Trenches: Critical Global Health and Infrastructure Studies in Africa." Cambridge, MA.
Instructor. "Disease and Health: Culture, Society, and Ethics." Cambridge, MA.

Fall 2023 Instructor. "Africa and the Politics of Knowledge." Cambridge, MA.

NYU Stern School of Business

Fall 2021 Adjunct Professor. "Commerce and Culture." New York, NY.

NYU Abu Dhabi

2020 Visiting Scholar. "Revolution – The Politics of Energy in Eritrea." Abu Dhabi, UAE/Asmara, Eritrea. January 5-24.

University of Pennsylvania

Spring 2020 Teaching Assistant. "The Modern World and its Cultural Background." (Professor Greg Urban)

Spring 2020 Research Assistant. "Cultures of Science and Technology." (Professor Adriana Petryna)

Fall 2019 Teaching Assistant. "Introduction to Medical Anthropology." (Professor Adriana Petryna)

Spring 2019 Teaching Assistant. "Global Food Security." (Professor Brian Spooner)

Fall 2018 Teaching Assistant. "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology." (Dr. Jennifer Hasty)

Mentorship

2024- Research Mentor. Barnard MMUF Program.

2023 Mentor. "Alumni Wisdom Workshop" panel, Career Pathways for Humanities and Social Science Majors. Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF) Scholars' Weekend. August 4-6.

2021 Auto-Ethnography Mentor. "What does public safety mean to me as a young adult growing up in Red Hook?" Red Hook Initiative, Public Safety Research Program. Brooklyn, NY.

2021 Graduate Mentor. Barnard MMUF Summer Colloquium. [moved online due to COVID-19 pandemic]

2021 Workshop Leader. Mellon Graduate Assistance Program (GAP) Statement of Purpose Bootcamp. virtual.

2020 Workshop Leader. Mellon Graduate Assistance Program (GAP) Statement of Purpose Bootcamp. virtual.

2020 Graduate Mentor. Barnard MMUF Summer Colloquium. [moved online due to COVID-19 pandemic]

2019 Graduate Mentor. Barnard MMUF Summer Colloquium. New York, NY. June.

2019 Mentor. Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (BGAPSA) Mentoring Project. Philadelphia, PA.

Service to Profession

2026- Program Chair, Association for Africanist Anthropology (AfAA)
2026-2027 At-Large Member, *Law & Society Review* (LSR)
2023-2026 American Anthropological Association (AAA) Fellowship Advisory Panel
2018-2021 Predoctoral Coach, Mellon-Mays Graduate Assistance Program (GAP)

PROJECTS/MEDIA/WORKSHOPS/EXHIBITIONS

2022 Graduate Research Assistant to medical sociologist Dr. Kellie Owens on project funded by National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine. Philadelphia, PA.

2020 Designer and Researcher. "Underground Hospital: Combat Medics in the Trenches of the Eritrean Struggle for Independence" installation, *Critical Engagements with Science(s) and Justice(s) Implosion Multimodal Exhibition*. Philadelphia, PA. December 4. https://www.dinamasfaha.com/projects

2019 Anthropological Airwaves Podcast Interviewer. "African Critical Inquiry Workshop: African Ethnographies." Cape Town, South Africa. May 13-17.

2017 Producer, Camera/Lighting, Narration, Editing. "Lit Lounge" film, produced through UPenn Graduate School of Education (GSE) Ethnographic Filmmaking course. Philadelphia, PA. https://vimeo.com/267451655/0d24e81f25

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2017 Oral History Intern. Stanford Historical Society, Oral History Program

2016 Oral History Interviewer. "Educating Harlem" Project, research initiative led by Teachers College, Columbia University's Professor Ansley Erickson

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Anthropological Association (AAA)
Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA)
Association of Black Anthropologists (ABA)
Association for Africanist Anthropology (AfAA)

TECHNICAL SKILLS & LANGUAGES

Technical skills: InqScribe, NVivo
Languages: English, Tigrinya, Spanish