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# Author on Complexity of Race to Speak at President's Convocation

Monday, Aug. 21

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Award-winning author Jelani Cobb will speak at Illinois Wesleyan University's President's Convocation on Wednesday, Sept. 6, at 11 a.m. in Westbrook Auditorium, Presser Hall (1210 N. Park St., Bloomington).

His remarks, "The Half-Life of Freedom: Race and Justice in America Today," will be presented in connection with the University's [Summer Reading Program](#) selection, *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates. In keeping with Illinois Wesleyan's [annual intellectual theme](#), The Evolution of Revolution, Coates' book calls for a revolution of thought around the social construct of race.

Both men attended Howard University, where they began a continuing friendship and shared discourse on the complexity of race.

Cobb is the Ira A. Lipman Professor of Journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He has received Fellowships from the Fulbright and Ford Foundations.

As a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, Cobb has penned articles about race, culture, the police and injustice. In 2015, he received the Sidney Hillman Prize for Opinion & Analysis Journalism for his columns on police shootings in Ferguson, Mo., and similar happenings. His investigative series *Policing the Police*, which aired on PBS Frontline in 2016, won the 2017 Walter Bernstein Award from the Writer's Guild of America.

His books include *Substance of Hope: Barack Obama and the Paradox of Progress*; an insider's exploration of hip hop titled *To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic*; and *The Devil & Dave Chappelle and Other Essays*. His forthcoming book is *Antidote to Revolution: African American Anticommunism and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1931*.

"I write because a different world is possible—we must always remember that," Cobb has said of his work.

The President's Convocation traditionally opens the academic year at Illinois Wesleyan. The event is free and open to the public.



Jelani Cobb