

DEPARTMENT OF BLACK STUDIES NEWSLETTER

WELCOME / CONNECT / BUILD

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



DR. BRIGHT ALOZIE, CHAIR OF BLACK STUDIES

Welcome back. This is my first fall writing to you as chair, and I want to say plainly how I understand this work. I am not here simply to run this department. I am here to serve it: to hold the door open, carry what needs carrying, and make room for the people who make Black Studies what it is.

Two commitments guide us. The first is Ubuntu: I am, because we are. That is not decoration on a wall; it is our method. The second is that Black Studies is for every body and every kind of body. Whatever your background, identity, ability, discipline, or path through this university, there is room for you here.

Remember how we got here. The Black Student Union formed in 1968. The department followed in September 1970. Students led, and the institution caught up. I want that same order this year: students lead, faculty support. Tell us what you want this department known for, and we will put our platforms, budget, relationships, and time behind it.

What I want for us this year is simple and ambitious at once. I want a department that is visible, that is welcoming, and that is genuinely useful to the people who walk through our doors.

So consider this an invitation. Come take a class. Come to an event. Come sit in my office on a Wednesday afternoon and tell me what we should be doing better.

What do you need from us, and what are we not seeing? Tell me. I am listening.

STUDENTS LEAD, FACULTY SUPPORT

I want our students to leave here able to think, to question, to research, and to stand in a room and say something true. I want our alumni to know that this department still claims them. And I want our community partners to know that our door swings both ways.

I am because you are. Let love lead!

Bright Alozie, PhD

Chair and Associate Professor of Black Studies

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THREE WAYS TO CONNECT NOW

Take a Course

Five featured Fall 2026 courses begin on page 3, with the full schedule online.

Come to an Event

Six fall events, from the SGRN Open House to the Black Bag Series, are on page 5.

Talk with the Chair

Wednesdays, 2:00 to 4:00 PM in Parkmill 239, or book a time. Details on page 4.

HOW WE GOT HERE

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|------|---|
| 1968 | Black students organize. The Black Student Union forms at Portland State. |
| 1970 | The Department of Black Studies is established in September, two years after the students who demanded it. |
| 1970 | The Center for Black Studies is founded alongside the department to support the study of Black life past and present. |
| 2006 | Professor Ethan Johnson founds the Black Bag Speaker Series, our longest-running public forum. |
| 2026 | Bright Alozie begins his term as chair, and this newsletter begins with him. |

Students led, and the institution caught up. More than fifty years on, that is still how we want this department to work.

FEATURED FALL 2026 COURSES

Our courses span Africa, the United States, the Caribbean, South America, and Europe. Many carry University Studies and Race and Ethnic Studies Requirement credit.

BST 202

Introduction to Black Studies

4 CREDITS / LECTURE

Why the fuss? What drives our appetite to study blackness? What fuels this search? We examine the legacies of this probing gaze and Black refusals of surveillance, subverting being seen at all.

BST 221 / CRN 10343

Introduction to African American Literature

4 CREDITS / ONLINE, NO SET MEETINGS

BST 261 / CRN 13656

The African American Economic Experience

4 CREDITS / IN PERSON

BST 378 / CRN 10357

Philosophy of Race

4 CREDITS / IN PERSON

BST 466 / CRN 13652

History of the Black Panther Party

4 CREDITS / SEMINAR, IN PERSON

SEE THE FULL LIST

These five are a sample. The complete Fall 2026 Black Studies schedule, with meeting times, instructors, and remaining seats, is at pdx.edu/black-studies. Not sure which course fits your plan? Talk with an advisor, or book a time with the chair.

HOW OUR COURSES MEET

IN PERSON

Scheduled meetings on campus, where most of our discussion-driven courses live.

ONLINE

No set meeting times. Work through the term on your own schedule, with deadlines rather than class hours.

SEMINAR

Small, reading-heavy, and built around sustained conversation. Upper-division students and majors thrive here.

WHY STUDENTS TAKE THESE COURSES

"Black Studies gave me something far beyond academic knowledge. It gave me a stronger understanding of who I was, where I came from, and the role I wanted to play in my community."

TRENT ALDRIDGE, CEO, SELF ENHANCEMENT, INC.

"I entered Black Studies knowing what I wanted to become. I left better equipped to become it."

CHANTELL WESLEY, CLASS OF SPRING 2026

Many students discover they are one or two courses away from a Black Studies minor or the African Studies Certificate. If you have taken a Black Studies course and enjoyed it, it is worth a conversation.

THE CHAIR IS AVAILABLE

LISTENING SESSIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

WEDNESDAYS / 2:00 TO 4:00 PM / PARKMILL 239 / NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED

My door will be open every Wednesday afternoon. Stop by to share an idea, raise a concern, ask a question, or simply enjoy a cookie with me. I want to listen, learn, and lead with you.

Wednesday does not work? Some conversations need a different day or more time. Students, colleagues, alumni, and community partners can book directly, with no email chain required, at calendar.app.google/dbu2i8xGMi47VpSf9.

IMPORTANT FALL DATES

September 28	Classes begin
October 9	Last day to add a course with instructor approval
November 11	Veterans Day, university closed
November 26 to 27	Thanksgiving holiday, university closed
December 6	Classes end
December 7	Final exams begin
December 14 to January 4	Winter break

ACCESSIBILITY

To request accommodations for any event in this newsletter, contact blackstudies@pdx.edu at least five business days in advance.

WHAT YOU MIGHT BRING

A QUESTION	About your degree path, a course you are weighing, a requirement that is not making sense, or what comes next.
A CONCERN	Something you have not raised elsewhere, or something you raised that did not move.
AN IDEA	For an event, a course, a partnership, or something we have never tried. Bring the one you think we are not ready for.
NOTHING	Some of the best conversations start with someone simply saying they were curious. That counts.

WHO THESE HOURS ARE FOR

Students. Majors, minors, certificate students, and anyone who has taken one course and wondered about the rest.

Faculty and staff. Across the department, across SGRN, and across the university.

Alumni. This department still claims you. Tell us where your education has taken you.

Community partners. Our door swings both ways. Bring us the work you are already doing.

FALL EVENTS

School of Gender, Race, and Nations Open House

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 / 4:00 TO 6:00 PM / SGRN OFFICE, PKM 150

Interested in learning more about our programs? Already a major, minor, or certificate student in Black Studies, Chicana/Latinx Studies, Indigenous Nations Studies, ITECK, Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies, or Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies? Join us for cupcakes, snacks, crafts, activities, and information.

State of Black Oregon

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6 / 3:00 TO 4:30 PM / PSU URBAN CENTER BUILDING, 506 SW MILL STREET, 2ND FLOOR

It has been more than a decade since the last State of Black Oregon report, and this fall the Urban League of Portland is bringing it back. Hear key findings from the new report, listen to a panel of community voices, and connect with Black leaders and scholars from across the state. Black Studies faculty and students will be represented. A remote option is available. Space is limited, so please RSVP by October 2 and note your preference.

Career Check for the Humanities

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13 / 3:30 TO 5:00 PM / PARSONS GALLERY (ROOM 212), URBAN CENTER BUILDING, 506 SW MILL STREET

What does a humanities degree actually prepare you to do? Join Trent Aldridge, CEO of Self Enhancement, Inc. and a PSU Black Studies alum, for a candid conversation about where a humanities education can lead. Hear how the skills you are building in your coursework translate into real work, then stay for food and conversation. Part of PSU Career Week, sponsored by PSU Black Studies in partnership with the University Career Center.

Transferable Skills

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3 / 3:30 TO 5:00 PM / LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

Join Nathaniel Sprouse of the University Career Center for a hands-on workshop on naming and translating the skills your coursework has already given you, with Black Studies classes as worked examples. You will leave with a one-page resource you can use immediately.

Chair Social Hour with the Black Student Union and Pan-African Commons

DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED / SMITH MEMORIAL STUDENT UNION, ROOM 236

No agenda, no podium, no faculty panel. Just food and an honest exchange about what students need from this department and what we can build together this year. I am coming to listen. Bring a friend. Bring a question. Bring an idea you think we are not ready for.

Black Bag Speaker Series

DATE AND SPEAKER TO BE ANNOUNCED

Our longest-running public forum returns this year. Founded in 2006 by Professor Emeritus Ethan Johnson, the series brings together the scholars, artists, organizers, and community organizations doing work that matters to Black Portland.

WHERE OUR GRADUATES GO

ALUMNI VOICES



Trent Aldridge

BLACK STUDIES AND COMMUNICATIONS
CEO, SELF ENHANCEMENT, INC.
SPEAKING AT CAREER CHECK, OCTOBER 13

"Black Studies gave me something far beyond academic knowledge. It gave me a stronger understanding of who I was, where I came from, and the role I wanted to play in my community. It helped me connect history, culture, and lived experience in ways that continue to shape how I lead and serve others today."

"See your education as a tool for both personal growth and collective impact."



Chantell Wesley

BLACK STUDIES, SPRING 2026
M.A. STUDENT, CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
ASSOCIATE TO THE DEAN, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

"My professors gave me the tools to take the questions I already carried about my community, education, inequality, and the world around me and engage them as a scholar. They did not teach me that academic rigor required distance from the people or issues I cared about. They taught me how to examine those issues more deeply."

"I entered Black Studies knowing what I wanted to become. I left better equipped to become it."

SHARE YOUR STORY

Their stories are two of many. If you graduated from Black Studies at PSU, we want to hear where your education has taken you. Write to blackstudies@pdx.edu, or fill out our short testimonial form, linked from pdx.edu/black-studies.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY

Alumni Voices has a companion coming. We are collecting reflections from students in our classrooms now, to run alongside these pages in the winter issue. If a Black Studies course stayed with you, tell us what it has meant.

WHERE BLACK STUDIES LEADS

Community Leadership

Nonprofit direction, youth work, organizing, and the institutions that hold Black Portland together.

Graduate Study

Master's and doctoral programs in Black Studies, history, education, policy, and law.

Higher Education

Advising, student affairs, admissions, and administration inside universities.

FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT NEWS

Ethan Johnson

Professor Emeritus Ethan Johnson published "The Beautiful Game and Anti-Blackness: A Memoir" in the Spring 2026 issue of *Michigan Quarterly Review*. Moving from Oakland to Michoacán, Porto Alegre, Tokyo, and Castlemont High School, the essay explores how Blackness is constructed and commodified in global sport.

Christopher Ian Foster

Instructor Christopher Ian Foster signed a contract with University of California Press for his second book, *Against Fascism: A Critical History of the Present*, expected in 2027. It follows *Conscripts of Migration: Neoliberal Globalization, Nationalism, and the Literature of New African Diasporas*.

Opio Sokoni

Affiliated faculty member Opio Sokoni's forthcoming *John Thomas Betsch: A Prince of Black Wall Street in Jacksonville* has been acquired by Arcadia Publishing and The History Press. A companion vertical film series, *The Prince of Black Wall Street: The Betsch Constellation*, is also in development.

Bright Alozie

Bright Alozie begins his term as Chair of Black Studies this fall. His book *Arrivals and Afterlives of African Immigrants in Oregon since 1970* is expected in winter 2027. He has also signed a contract with Temple University Press for *Not a Luxury: Black Studies, the Arithmetic of Erasure and the Future of the American University*, expected in fall 2027.

Vandy Kanyako

Professor Vandy Kanyako of the Conflict Resolution Program joins Black Studies this fall to teach Postcolonial Studies of Africa, extending the department's long collaboration with colleagues across the university.

Paula Ioanide

Paula Ioanide joins the university this fall and is teaching our introductory Black Studies course, bringing with her a background in equity work outside the academy.

LOOKING AHEAD TO WINTER

Student Voices

A companion to Alumni Voices, drawn from students in our classrooms this term.

Black Bag Returns

The speaker and date for our longest-running public forum, announced once confirmed.

Excellence Awards

Nominations open later this term for our annual student awards.

THIS SECTION BELONGS TO ALL OF US

Faculty, students, and alumni: send your news to blackstudies@pdx.edu. A book, an article, an award, a new position, a community project. If it matters to you, it belongs here.

JOIN US

DEGREES, INVOLVEMENT, AND GIVING

Degrees and Certificates

We offer Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, a minor in Black Studies, and a postbaccalaureate certificate. Students can also pursue the African Studies Certificate and take courses connected to the graduate certificate in Gender, Race, and Nations. Curious about adding a minor or certificate? You may already be closer than you think. Talk with an advisor at blackstudies@pdx.edu.

Get Involved

Center for Black Studies. Established alongside the department in 1970, the Center supports the study of Black life past and present.

Excellence in Black Studies Student Awards. We honor outstanding student work every year. Nominations open later this term.

Student and community organizations. Find your people on and beyond campus.

SUPPORT BLACK STUDIES

Your tax-deductible gift supports student scholarships, research opportunities, and public programming that keeps the department in conversation with Portland. Every gift, at any size, goes to work here.



**Black Studies is for every body
and every kind of body**

UBUNTU · I AM, BECAUSE WE ARE

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US

EMAIL blackstudies@pdx.edu **PHONE** 503-725-3472

WEB pdx.edu/black-studies

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CONNECT WITH US ON OUR SOCIALS

Instagram @blackstudiespsu · LinkedIn PSU Black Studies · Facebook @PSUBlackStudies

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This is the first issue. We plan to publish each term, and the shape of it will change as more of you write in. Events, faculty and student news, alumni updates, and course spotlights all belong here.

Have something for the next issue? Send it to blackstudies@pdx.edu. A book, an award, a new position, a community project, a course that changed how you think. If it matters to you, it matters here.

Thank you for reading, and for being part of this department. I am because you are. Let love lead!