



SPRING 2025

# PROVIDENCE COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF BLACK STUDIES NEWSLETTER

## A Message from Dr. Affigne, Interim Chair

### Moving Forward with Confidence

Our 30-Year Anniversary Thirty years ago this spring, PC's Black students and faculty, college President Philip Smith, and Provost Thomas McGonigle, asked me to serve as interim, founding director of the newly-established Program in Black Studies. After those first three years, when our curriculum, partnerships, and student enrollments were established, program directors including Drs. Cyril Daddieh, Julia Jordan-Zachery,



Zophia Edwards, and Eric Hirsch, brought Black Studies through periods of success, and years of challenge, finally gaining full department status in the spring of 2023.

The Black Studies Department Later that year, I was asked to again take on leadership, as interim chair of the new Department of Black Studies, following the loss of several faculty,  
*(continued on page 6)*

## A special thanks for Dr. Danny Kyei-Poakwa

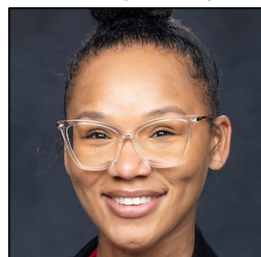


Since 2011, Dr. Daniel Kyei-Poakwa has taught many courses in Black Studies, including BLS 101 *Introduction to Black Studies*, and BLS 225 *The African World View*. For most of those years Dr. K-P was a part-time special lecturer, earning rave reviews from students and praise for his very popular end-of-semester African dinners. This academic year, when we needed additional help, Dr. K-P was

willing to step in as a full-time visiting assistant professor, with a full teaching load. Now that his term is ending, we want to extend our deepest and most heartfelt thanks, for Danny's steady commitment to our students. We hope we'll see him in the classroom again. Thank you, Dr. K-P!

## Research Leaves – Drs. Wheeler and Scott

This semester two core Black Studies faculty, Drs. Eva Michelle Wheeler and Aishah Scott, are away on pre-tenure research sabbaticals. Dr. Wheeler is in Europe where she is studying African diasporan communities; Dr. Scott is combing archival data here in the U.S., searching for evidence about racial health disparities. In addition to their contributions to sociolinguistics and health policy studies, respectively, when Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Scott return to



campus they will bring renewed enthusiasm and intellectual vigor to their Black Studies classes.



**For more information visit:** [black-studies.providence.edu](http://black-studies.providence.edu)

# FALL 2025 COURSES

## **BLS 101 - Intro to Black Studies\*** | Social Science, Civic Engagement, Diversity \*Open to Freshman, Sophomores, and Juniors\*

Section 001: Dr. Aishah Scott | MR 10-11:15am

Section 002: Dr. Aishah Scott | TR 1-2:15pm

Section 003: Dr. Alannah Caisey | TR 11:30am-12:45pm

Section 004: Dr. Alannah Caisey | TR 4-5:15pm

## **BLS/SOC 205: Race and Racism** | Diversity

Section 001: Staff | TR 11:30AM-12:45PM

Section 002: Staff | TR 1:00PM-2:15PM

## **BLS/EDU 211: Urban Education** | Diversity

Section 001: Dr. Sandra Silva-Enos | MWF 1:30-2:20pm

Section 002: Dr. Comford Ateh | M 4-6:30pm

## **BLS/EDU 220: Diversity and Culture**

Section 001: Dr. Jordan Hagar | MWF 1:30-2:20pm

Section 002: Staff | MWF 2:30-3:20pm

## **BLS 225 - The African World View** | Social Science, Diversity

Dr. Alioune Fall | TR 4-5:15pm

## **BLS 270\_001 - Black Radical Thought**

Dr. Paul Cato | MWF 1:30-2:20pm

## **BLS/SOC/AMS 307: Urban Sociology** | Civic Engagement

Section 001: Dr. Eric Hirsch | M 2:30-5pm

Section 002: Dr. Eric Hirsch | T 2:30-5pm

## **BLS/SOC/EDU/WGS 311: Equity Issues in Education**

\*Not Open to Freshmen\*

Dr. Carmen Rolón | W 4-6:30pm

## **BLS 314/WGS 314/SOC 314/PSP 314/ AMS 309: Black Feminisms**

Dr. Alannah Caisey | TWF 9:30-10:20am

## **BLS 321- AIDS, Race, and Gender in the Black Community** | Diversity

Dr. Aishah Scott | TR 2:30-3:45pm

## **BLS/PSC 334: African Politics**

Dr. Daniel Banini | MR 2:30-3:45pm

## **BLS/HIS 344: Colonialism & Nationalism in Modern Africa** | Diversity

Dr. Luz Colpa | TWF 10:30-11:20am

## **BLS 370\_001 - Black Diaspora in Providence**

Dr. Eva Wheeler | T 2:30-5pm

## **BLS/ENG 371: Global and Postcolonial Literatures** | Diversity, Intensive Writing II

Dr. Tuire Valkeakari | TR 4-5:15pm

## **BLS 490: Independent Reading in Black Studies**

Dr. Tony Affigne

PREQ: BLS 101. Restricted to BLS Majors and Minors, with Permission of Instructor and Chair.

## **BLS 491: Directed Research Project**

Dr. Tony Affigne

PREQ: BLS 101. Restricted to BLS Majors and Minors, with Permission of Instructor and Chair.

## Black Studies Curriculum

### Majoring in Black Studies

#### 30 credits (10 courses)

BLS 101: Intro to Black Studies

BLS 480: Seminar in Black Studies

8 additional courses from the three thematic areas

#### Thematic Areas include:

**CULTURE, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, & THE ARTS**

**SOCIAL & STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS**

**HISTORICAL INQUIRY**

### Minoring in Black Studies

#### 18 credits (6 courses)

BLS 101: Intro to Black Studies

5 additional courses from the three thematic areas



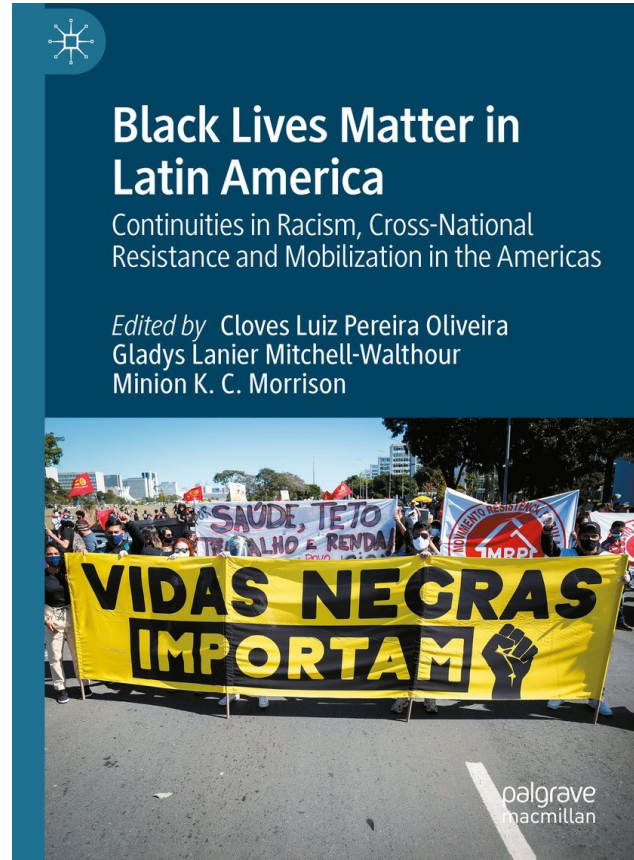
# 🔥 SPRING 2025 EVENTS

## **BLACK LIVES MATTER IN LATIN AMERICA (2024)**

Documentary screening and discussion with director Dr. Gladys Mitchell-Walthour.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 6TH AT 5:00PM IN MONDOR LLO6.**

This documentary includes footage of protests to combat police brutality and harassment of Afro-Brazilians and some key leaders in the fight for human rights in Brazil. Dr. Gladys Mitchell-Walthour discusses the history of Black resistance since the time of enslavement as well as the need for Afro-descendants to come together to strategize methods to combat racism as a collective.



## **BLACK STUDIES CELEBRATION DINNER**

Awards ceremony and dinner for the senior 2025 graduates of the Department of Black Studies, and to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Black Studies at PC!

**THURSDAY, MAY 1ST AT 6:00PM IN THE CENTER AT MOORE HALL 125 LOUNGE.**

**CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT OF BLACK STUDIES FOR INFORMATION REGARDING TICKETS.**



**FALL 2025**

**ALANNAH CAISEY, PH.D.**

NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
BLACK STUDIES

**EDUCATION:** Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology, University of Pittsburgh; bachelor's degree in Communication and Women's Studies, University of Scranton

**RESEARCH:** Intersectionality; Black Feminist Thought; Sociology of Education; Race and Ethnicity

**PROJECTS:** Dr. Caisey is currently working on articles and manuscripts on Black Women's Liberatory Pedagogies.



**“BUT THEN YOU READ  
[IN BLACK]”**

**“I’ve only been here for [..] two and a half months, [but] the first things I noticed when I came to Providence College was the **absence of Blackness.**”**

In November 2024, Dr. Paul Cato presented his lecture, “But Then You Read [In Black]’ Black Liberal Arts & The Fight Against Racism At Providence College”. Using the Black practice of testimony, Dr. Cato examined three prominent and “yet often siloed phenomena” at Providence College: PC’s celebration of the (white) Western Canon, the voices of outspoken Black people on campus, and reports of racism at the college. With this testimony, Dr. Cato called on the PC community to turn to fundamental Black thinkers for solutions to the college’s racial injustice. Dr. Cato’s lecture was extremely well attended, with a mix of students, faculty, staff, and administrators in attendance. A recording of the lecture is available on our website at <https://black-studies.providence.edu/new/>



# ENGAGED LEARNING IN THE BLACK STUDIES CLASSROOM

This past Fall 2024 semester, Dr. Wheeler brought her class on an engaged learning adventure for BLS 370: Black Diaspora in Providence. Over the course of the semester, the course explored different aspects of Black diasporic communities in Providence through in-class visits, food, and trips within the city and beyond. In October, the class took the ferry to Newport for a Black Heritage Tour.

Speaking about the trip, Dr. Wheeler said that “in previous courses, I have taught students about Black histories in Rhode Island through books and articles, but this first-hand experience of Newport as a cultural and historical text yielded an even deeper and more thoughtful engagement with Rhode Island’s Black heritage.” After the tour, the class had lunch at a local Black-owned restaurant called Humming Bird for some delicious Jamaican cuisine and a chat with the owner about the connections between food, culture, and identity.



**ARE YOU A BLACK STUDIES ALUMNUS/A?**

We'd love to hear how you're doing!

Send us an update at [black.studies@providence.edu](mailto:black.studies@providence.edu)

## A Message from Dr. Affigne, Interim Chair

### Moving Forward with Confidence, cont.

a failed outside search for a permanent chair, and concerns about whether Black Studies would survive. Instead, we have moved forward with confidence. We've hired our very first tenure-track faculty member, Dr. Alannah Caisey, and with support from the Consortium for Faculty Diversity, our very first postdoctoral teaching fellow, Dr. Paul Cato. (Read more on page 4). Last spring we graduated 13 Black Studies minors and currently have 14 students in the classes of 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028—including our first two declared majors, one of whom will graduate in May. Our hard-working administrative coordinator, Katherine Lynch, has hired five students to work as research and program assistants, developed campus-wide information and publicity, and furnished a Black Studies Community Room where students and faculty can meet, study, and work. Our public programming has included high-profile guest lecturers, video presentations, and co-sponsorship of events hosted by academic departments, the career center, and student groups such as Afro-Am Society, Women Empowered, and the BELIEVE Club. Most importantly, since the fall of 2023 nearly 500 students have enrolled in our Black Studies classes, and more than 1,150 overall, in our own courses and others we cross-list with twelve affiliated departments.

A Look Ahead In the coming year, the administration has committed to renewing our outside search for a department chair, an esteemed scholar to be hired at senior rank with tenure. In July, Dr. Eric Hirsch will again step in as interim Black Studies chair, and I will return to full time duties in the Department of Political Science. For the coming year we will offer more than 40 courses, many satisfying core proficiencies for diversity, civic engagement, and social science, and others which are new or re-imagined including, for example *Black Radical Thought; Black Feminisms; Racial Health Disparities; Challenges of Black Education; Black Diaspora in Providence; Black Love and Black Politics; African Politics; African American Women; Culture and Society in the Francophone Black World; and Afro-Latinidad(es)*.

A Challenging Environment As an academic field, Black Studies everywhere has faced resistance and in some cases, outright attacks. Apparently for many people, even peers in higher education, rigorous study of the Black experience, in the U.S. and around the world, threatens a worldview in which irrational discrimination, racial violence, and social marginalization either don't exist, or are somehow natural or inevitable. Likewise, when we foreground and celebrate Black resistance, creativity, and success, in spheres where resistance can be personally and professionally risky, we have come to expect indifference or hostility. Yet, we persist, even as the national climate turns against Blackness once again.

The First Reconstruction in the 19th century came to an end when the *de jure* and *de facto* imposition of Jim Crow unraveled progress made after the Civil War. The Second Reconstruction following the Civil Rights Movement is now, without doubt, facing a similar unraveling. Against this backdrop, campus-wide support for Black Studies will be critical, to protect what we've accomplished and to continue our core project: preparing our students for a world in which, as President Sicard recently wrote, the "Catholic vision of justice, truth, and human flourishing," will remain central to the Mission of Providence College. With your support for our students, our faculty, and our public events, the Department of Black Studies will continue to grow and thrive.

- Professor Tony Affigne, Interim Chair

### Contact Us:

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Providence College Department of Black Studies