A Message from the Chair:

While we are physically distant, we remain joined by a common mission to “prepare students to critically understand, conduct research, and interpret the complex histories, societies, and cultures of people of African descent in the United States, Africa, and the Diaspora. . . conduct research that develops new or builds upon existing concepts, theories, and approaches to the study of the evolving experiences and contributions of Africa and the African Diaspora.” We are engaged in the work that prepares our students, ourselves, and our communities “to competently participate in diverse and competitive global societies where [we] may contribute viable practical solutions to critical challenges on multiple levels.” In the past six months, the mission and value of Black Studies has become increasingly more transparent as we confront a pandemic that continues to have a devastating impact on our global Black African and African Diaspora communities.

It is not only the dreadful and ravaging COVID-19 virus that has disproportionately claimed the lives, families, and legacies of Black people in the U.S.—with cities like Detroit and New Orleans that are heavily populated by Black people, accounting for the greatest percentages of COVID-19 related deaths. It is also the ceaseless, tragic, and senseless slaughter, incarceration, and terror inflicted upon Black lives that matter on all continents, as well as and the peoples, histories, and cultures they represent. In the wake of the Corona virus pandemic what remains clear is that a lack of knowledge, ignorance, and mis-education about Africa and the African Diaspora helps to spread one of the most deadly of all pandemics—plain and simple, from Linneas and Buffon to Mira and Loch: Racism, a malady exacerbated by other equally devastating forms of systemic oppression.

Black Studies has been and continues to be at the forefront of identifying problems, educating for solutions, and adapting with changing visions and versions of the worlds we represent in scholarship, teaching, and service. In our 50th year as an academic unit and seventh year as a department in the College of Arts & Science, we are reminded of the mission and legacy of those who made it possible for us to be here and now—to do the work we were called to do in the Academy. The Black Studies Department represents a fellowship of brave scholars, teachers, activists, and leaders who remain faithful to our call—to educate, inspire, imagine, and create out of our diversity of disciplines, thinking, and cultures, a better world.

This is why I know Black Studies matter! Now, more than ever.
“The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them. If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.”

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of Liberia (2006-2018)

Black Studies 2020 Graduates

Congratulations to our Seniors!

Majors - Allisa Foster
          Kierra Jones
          Kaelyn Sturgell

Minors – Kayla Branigan
          Brianna Dinwiddie
          Sierra Downing
          Rebecca Johnson
          Jasmine Pool
          Sage Williams

*Selected Fall 2020 Courses

BLSTU 1000: Introduction to Black Studies
BLSTU 1705: Writing Early Black Women's Spiritual Identity
BLSTU 1705/1705H - Swahili Language Course - Regular/Honors
BLSTU 3004: Africa and the World
ENG 3400W: Survey of African American Literature to 1900
BLSTU 3977: Black Studies Methodologies
BLSTU 4303: Black Studies in Race, Class, Gender, and U.S. Policy
BLSTU 4270/7270: African Americans in the 20th Century

*See Black Studies Department webpage for full list, instructor, date/time, and location: https://blackstudies.missouri.edu/academics/current-courses
Faculty and Staff News:

Congratulations and KUDOS to:

Dr. Daive Dunkley for receiving the Research Board Grant as well as A&S Research Leave Grant, and for enriching Black Studies and MU by highlighting local, national, and international scholars, activists, and others through symposia like Migrations #1 and 2 and BSD Fall conference on “Racial Health Disparities,” as well as using his ultimate connections to bring The Most Honorable Andrew Michael Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica to the University of Missouri-Columbia. All this with a new book and one on the way …

Dr. Admire Mseba for completing his first year in Black Studies with flying colors, bringing a fresh approach to our study of Black Studies of the African Continent through such new courses as “Africa and the World” (coming Fall 2020), and representing MU internationally in his scholarship and presence (Italy, Canada, Southern Africa, etc.). All this with multiple publications and a new book forthcoming …

Dr. Stephen Graves for not only his strong work with graduate and undergraduate students but also the incredibly rigorous work of supporting and strengthening our Black Studies curriculum—as our first Director of Undergraduate Studies, completing his second year as BSD faculty, he has done phenomenal work—serving not only BSD but all of A&S and our campus on major committees. All this and his strong showing at the National Council for Black Studies and National Conference of Black Political Scientists, where his research was well-received. All this with publications forthcoming (chapters, essays, and articles) and while researching and writing a book . . . and only in his second year at Mizzou . . .

Dr. Christina Carney recipient of the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation grant, as well as the University of Missouri Research Board, and College of Arts & Science awards Missouri. and recipient of numerous internal awards including Research Council leave. All this well deserved support for a book that promises to be an inaugural work in the field of interdisciplinary studies on the way . . .

Dr. Devin Fergus Arvarh E. Strickland Distinguished Professor of History and Black Studies whose book (Land of the Fee) has been called “one of the five best books for understanding capitalism today” and whose work in national and international media and venues from Washington Post, New York Times, and KBIA to the Schomburg Center and abroad contributes to the mission of Black Studies.

And, last but never least, please join us in extending a hearty to welcome to Mr. Shawn Hall for his amazing support as our best Department Administrator. Shawn’s people skills, financial acumen, and his smart negotiating efforts have not only saved us money – especially during the recent Jamaican Prime Minister’s visit, but throughout his first year he has served and continues to be the glue that holds us together. Shawn, as someone recently mentioned, “is the staff person that a great many other departments wish they had.” And, we are proud that is a member of the Black Studies family as continues to serve and support the Black Studies mission through his administrative role—all this in only 8 months!

If, we missed anyone’s achievements here it’s because BSD faculty and staff have done so much. So, please as they say in the vernacular, “charge it to the head and not the heart.” Just can’t be contained one paragraph.
Student News:

Congratulations to scholar Caleb Sewell who was selected as a McNair Research Scholar for 2020. The purpose of the program is to provide enriching experiences that prepare eligible students for doctoral study. One of the most exciting aspects of the McNair Program is the opportunity for undergraduate students at the junior and senior levels to participate in research experiences.

Alumni and BSD Affiliate News: Coming Soon …

If you want to be included in the BSD Newsletter, email info it to Stephen Graves (gravessc@missouri.edu).

Make a Gift

If you would like to support the work of the Department of Black Studies, we appreciate your tax-deductible contribution. You can make a gift to the Department of Black Studies online, using MU’s secure "Giving to Mizzou" webpage. Once at this webpage, please enter the amount of your gift and select “Other.” This will open a “Gift Designation” field. In that field, please type any of these choices:
- Department of Black Studies Unrestricted Gift Account
- Dr. Charles Sampson Endowed Scholarship in Black Studies
- James S. Rollins Slavery Atonement Endowment
- Mary Crawford King and Louis King Endowment in Black Studies
- Walter C. Daniel Endowment
- Arvarh E. Strickland Endowment

At the bottom of the page, click on “Continue” and follow the remaining steps. Donations to any of these funds will benefit the department as a whole.

Planned Gifts

Representatives from the Office of Gift Planning and Endowments are available to answer any questions and offer assistance when you choose to make a planned gift and/or Endowment to the Black Studies Department. For more information contact:

Office of Gift Planning and Endowments
University of Missouri, 302 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211
Phone: 573.882.0272, Toll-free: 1.800.970.9977, E-Mail: giftplanning@missouri.edu