

# ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (AAAS)



**Brandeis**  
UNIVERSITY

## AAAS STUDENTS AND ALUMNI AT BRANDEIS

*Historically, 45 percent of AAAS alumni have completed advanced degrees, including nearly 32 percent who attained Ph.D. or JD-level degrees.*

*Since the Department's inception, approximately 500 students have graduated from Brandeis with a major or minor in AAAS.*

*In the past 30 years, over 6,100 non-AAAS students have taken AAAS courses at Brandeis.*

## Transforming Our Future

In connection with the 50th Anniversary commemoration of the establishment of the African and African American Studies (AAAS) Department at Brandeis, we look to honor our proud history and build towards a strong and sustainable future by establishing an Endowed Professorship in AAAS.

This permanent and prestigious position will elevate Brandeis's prominence, enabling the Department to attract top scholars, grow its faculty and remain at the forefront of AAAS academic development and research nationwide.

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*Brandeis seeks to raise \$3.5 million to establish an Endowed Professorship. This distinguished naming opportunity is closely aligned with the University's new strategic priorities.*

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*"In this period of unprecedented social, legal and political uncertainty, knowledge, critical thinking and research-based analysis should be recognized as the countermeasures to racism and xenophobia. At and outside of Brandeis, a AAAS chair would honor the department's intellectual contributions and recognize their links to the issues of the day and the burgeoning social justice movements that are developing to address those issues."*

University Professor Anita Hill



## Why an Endowed Professorship?

In alignment with President Liebowitz's strategic priorities for the University offered in 'A Framework for Our Future,' a senior scholar in AAAS will enrich the academic experience of all Brandeis students, while reflecting the University's values of inclusion, truth and critical inquiry.

An Endowed Professorship will afford the AAAS Department:

- » **Permanence**, enabling Brandeis to recruit and retain a scholar of the highest caliber to advance the University's continued leadership in the AAAS field.
- » **Prestige**, commensurate with its standing as one of the oldest AAAS departments in the country. This Professorship will attract diverse and exceptional faculty who seek to serve in programs of distinction.
- » **Longevity** through investment in the AAAS Department, allowing for its continued growth and expansion in areas of critical need.
- » **Students** who are enriched by the interdisciplinary scholarship and civic participation modeled by Brandeis's prominent AAAS academics.

## Honoring Our History

In 1969, approximately 70 Black and Latino students occupied Ford Hall, Brandeis's main academic and communications center. The protesters' most important demand was the "creation of an Afro American and African Studies Department with the right to hire and fire." The student occupation lasted 11 days and led to the establishment of the Department of African and African American Studies (AAAS) within three months.

Founded at the height of a broader movement for the creation of Black Studies, Brandeis's AAAS Department was among the first in the nation. AAAS has faced obstacles and challenges while steadfastly remaining at the forefront of Brandeis's educational mission, continuously pushing the boundaries of learning and knowledge production.

*Since its founding, AAAS has been the academic, cultural and social glue that has kept Brandeis's Black students and alums connected to each other and to the University.*



Provost Lisa Lynch (left) presents the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award to renowned literary critic and scholar Hortense J. Spillers, Ph.D.' 74 (right) at the AAAS 50th Anniversary commemoration.



Askia Touré (left), celebrated author, poet and leading voice of the Black Arts Movement, speaks with Kwesi Jones '21 (right) at the AAAS 50th Anniversary commemoration.

## Putting Social Justice into Practice

In framing knowledge of the Black experience as essential to building a just world, AAAS provides the space and intellectual tools for Brandeis students to connect their campus-centric activism to broader social justice movements. This resonates deeply with the Jewish ideal of Tikkun Olam - healing the world - a founding value of Brandeis.

Brandeis is part of a long, proud history of partnership between the African American and Jewish communities on causes related to social justice. Jewish support has played an important role in the advancement of the civil rights movement, as well as in expanding opportunities for Black people in higher education.

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*The establishment of the AAAS Endowed Professorship will mark a significant milestone in Brandeis's history and demonstrate, during this moment of racial and political upheaval, the necessity of Black-Jewish allyship and institution building.*

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## Scaling Impact and Public Engagement

The impact of AAAS is showcased on a national and global level. Its faculty are public intellectuals, activists and socio-political commentators who are regularly sought out for their expertise, using their knowledge to educate and advocate beyond the walls of academia. High profile media and leading news outlets regularly reach out to AAAS faculty for press interviews, Op Eds and feature documentaries. Additionally, AAAS faculty have produced award-winning publications, ground-breaking research and exclusively curated exhibitions.

AAAS faculty have similarly provided leadership throughout Brandeis, serving in numerous roles including: Chair of the Faculty Senate, Representative to the Board of Trustees, Director of Faculty Mentoring in Arts & Sciences, and spearheading development of the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) core curriculum.

AAAS programming is dynamic, broadly attended and designed to foster an enlightened campus community. In recent years, AAAS has hosted some of the greatest scholars, writers and artists in Black Studies, including Lani Guinier, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Angela Davis '65 and Hortense Spillers, Ph.D. '74.



Cassiopia Stith '22

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*An Endowed Professorship will confer lasting prestige and scholastic leadership for Brandeis in the interdisciplinary field of AAAS and beyond.*

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*This exceptional naming opportunity will advance Brandeis's ability to advocate for all facets of social justice and the University's founding values of inclusion and equity.*

## About Brandeis University

As a top-tier private research university with a focus on the liberal arts, Brandeis University is dedicated to teaching and mentorship of undergraduate and graduate students, engaging them meaningfully in the groundbreaking research of our faculty. Brandeis has always welcomed talented students and faculty of every ethnicity, religion and cultural background.





Brandeis AAAS Department students

## Outstanding Faculty

AAAS at Brandeis has always been unique in its breadth of interdisciplinary engagement and the study of peoples of African descent through the lens of history, literature, economics, art and sociology. Its distinguished faculty are among the nation's top AAAS experts, offering an exceptional scope of expertise and diverse perspectives to all students at Brandeis.

### **Chad Williams, Associate Professor and Samuel J. and Augusta Spector Professor of History in AAAS; Chair of the Department of AAAS**

Widely praised as a landmark study, Professor Williams's first book, [Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era](#), won the 2011 Organization of American Historians Liberty Legacy Foundation Award, the 2011 Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award and designation as a 2011 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title.



### **Salah Hassan, Professor of AAAS; Professor of Fine Arts**

A leading art historian, art critic and curator, Professor Hassan has authored, edited and co-edited numerous publications. His work has been featured in premier art journals and anthologies, and his curatorial credits include several prestigious international exhibitions. Professor Hassan is the recipient of multiple fellowships and major grants, and recently edited a Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) publication titled [Ibrahim El Salahi's Prison Notebook](#).



### **Wangui Muigai, Assistant Professor of AAAS and History**

Professor Muigai has received numerous prestigious awards and honors including the Karen Buhler-Wilkerson Faculty Research Fellowship from the University of Pennsylvania, the HistoryMakers Archive Grant, and the Shryock Medal from the American Association for the History of Medicine. Professor Muigai's research focuses on the history of health and the role of race and gender in shaping health care services and policies.



### **Wellington W. Nyangoni, Professor of AAAS**

Professor Nyangoni is a world-renowned specialist in African economic development and international political economy. His scholarship focuses on the role of the UN Specialized Agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and China-African trade relations. He has received numerous prestigious awards and grants and is prolific in his writings and publications.



**Carina Ray, Associate Professor of AAAS,  
Director of Faculty Mentoring, School of Arts & Sciences**

Professor Ray was awarded the Wesley-Logan Prize for her first book [Crossing the Color Line](#), an annual prize awarded by the American Historical Association to honor the best book in African diaspora history. She writes, "I have a duty to ensure that my research is made accessible, especially to those whose history it tells."



**Shoniqua Roach, Assistant Professor of AAAS and  
Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies**

Professor Roach is a Black queer feminist theorist whose work has appeared in numerous journals including Women and Performance, Feminist Theory, The Black Scholar and Journal of American Culture. Professor Roach is currently working on her forthcoming book, [Black Sexuality Sanctuaries](#), which explores the possibilities for black women's sexual citizenship.



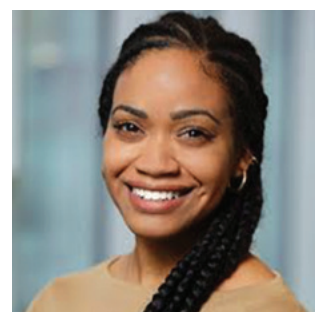
**Faith Smith, Associate Professor of AAAS, Latin American and Latino Studies,  
English, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies**

Professor Smith has received numerous awards and fellowships from institutions including the National Humanities Center and Andrew Mellon Foundation. She has published over 30 scholarly works and is currently completing a book about Caribbean people's conceptions of modernity.



**Amber Spry, Assistant Professor of AAAS and Politics**

Professor Spry's research and teaching address identity, race, and ethnicity in U.S. politics. She was a visiting scholar at MIT and her work has been supported by the National Science and Mellon Foundations. Professor Spry's research focuses on civic engagement of minority constituents. Her forthcoming book explores group identity in American politics.





## Affiliated and Emeritus Faculty

### **Gregory Childs**

Assistant Professor of Latin American History

### **Abigail Cooper**

Assistant Professor of History

### **Emilie Diouf**

Assistant Professor of English

### **Richard Gaskins**

Proskauer Chair in Law and Social Welfare;  
Director, Legal Studies Program;  
Director, Brandeis in the Hague

### **Anita Hill**

University Professor of Social Policy, Law and  
Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

### **Daniel Kryder**

Louis Stulberg Chair in Law and Politics

### **Janet McIntosh**

Professor of Anthropology;  
Department Chair, Anthropology

### **Siri Suh**

Assistant Professor of Sociology

### **Ibrahim Sundiata**

Professor Emeritus of African and African American  
Studies, and History

### **Derron Wallace**

Assistant Professor of Education and Sociology

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## Accomplished Alumni

AAAS majors and alumni are consistently among Brandeis's most outstanding graduates. They have gone on to hold positions of leadership and distinguished careers in over 35 diverse professions ranging from Medicine, Law, Healthcare and Performing Arts to Business, Public Policy, Education and Journalism.

*Here are a few of their stories:*



### **The Honorable Judge Edward Redd '71**

Judge Redd served under Presidents Ford, Carter and Reagan, and was elevated to Presiding Justice in the Massachusetts court system. Throughout his illustrious career, he has held leadership positions in community-based and environmental protection organizations.



### **Nicole Amarteifio '04**

Ms. Amarteifio is a self-taught TV writer, producer and executive director of a Ghanaian-based original series called "An African City" which portrays African women as modern and vibrant, instead of powerless. In 2015 The Financial Times named Ms. Amarteifio as one of its top 25 Africans to watch. Ms. Amarteifio premiered her first feature film at the New York African Film Festival in 2018.

**Curtis H. Tearte '73**

Curtis Tearte is Chairman and Founder of the Tearte Family Foundation (TFF), dedicated to supporting underrepresented students with academic promise to pursue higher education. A business transformation leader, Mr. Tearte worked at the senior executive level at IBM for over 30 years. After serving on the Brandeis Alumni Board, he joined the Brandeis Board of Trustees in 2014 and currently chairs the Academy Committee.

**Malika "Ra" Imhotep '15**

Ms. Imhotep was a Posse Scholar and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of African American Studies at UC Berkeley studying black women in society. She co-founded a group which explores black feminist teaching and the contributions of black women change makers.

**Napoleon Lherisson '11**

Mr. Lherisson serves as a school-based diversity coordinator. At Brandeis he was a Myra Kraft Transitional Year Program (MKTYP) Scholar and played on the Men's Basketball Team. He currently serves as Co-Chair of the Brandeis Alumni of Color Association.

**Reuel R. Rogers '90**

Reuel Rogers is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University with expertise in American Politics. His first book titled Afro-Caribbean Immigrants and the Politics of Incorporation won the Best Book Award from the American Political Science Association's (APSA) in 2007. He has written extensively about how racial minority status effects political integration.

## Future Leaders!

**Dannie Brice '20**

Originally from Haiti, Ms. Brice majors in AAAS, History, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, with a minor in English. She is a Research Assistant at Brandeis's Heller School and studies the cultural meaning of beauty and visual stereotypes in popular culture.

**Kwesi Jones '21**

Mr. Jones is a Posse Scholar studying visual and performing arts as a vehicle to promote social justice. He serves as co-President of the Brandeis Black Student Organization and received the Kappa Eta Sigma Award in 2019. Mr. Jones co-produced the AAAS 50th Anniversary commemoration video. [brandeis.edu/now/2019/february/aaas-video.html](https://brandeis.edu/now/2019/february/aaas-video.html).