

# Keisha N. Blain

Brown University  
Full Professor of History & Africana Studies  
Incoming President, Center for Engaged Scholarship

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## **Education**

### **Ph.D., History—Princeton University, 2014**

- Areas of study: United States History (since 1865), African American History (since 1619), Women's and Gender Studies, and the modern African Diaspora

### **M.A., History—Princeton University, 2011**

- \*Graduate Certificates in African American Studies; and Gender and Sexuality Studies

### **B.A., History and Africana Studies—Binghamton University, 2008**

- \*Magna Cum Laude; Phi Beta Kappa; Phi Alpha Theta; Highest Honors in History

## **Academic Appointments**

### **Brown University, Departments of History & Africana Studies**

- Full Professor, 2022-present
- \* Affiliated Faculty, American Studies
- \*Affiliated Faculty, Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies

### **The University of Pittsburgh, Department of History**

- Associate Professor, 2019-2022
- Assistant Professor, 2017-2019

### **The University of Iowa, Department of History**

- Assistant Professor, 2015-2017

### **The Pennsylvania State University, 2014-2015**

- Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Africana Research Center

## **Professional/Leadership Experience**

- **Editor-in-Chief**, *Global Black Thought*, 2024-Present
- **Co-Founder**, Women Also Know History (WAKH), 2017-Present

- **Founding Co-Editor**, Book Series on ‘Black Internationalism,’ University of Illinois Press, 2018-Present
- **Co-Editor**, Book Series on ‘Politics and Culture in Modern America,’ University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019- Present
- **President**, African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS), 2017-2021
- **Editor**, *Washington Post’s* “Made By History” (History Section), 2020-2021
- **Member of the Founding Executive Board and Member of the Steering Committee**, African American Intellectual History Society, 2015-2016
- **Founding Senior Editor**, *Black Perspectives*, 2015-2019
- **Section Editor**, Global Black History, *Public Books*, 2017-2018
- **Steering Committee**, Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio, University of Iowa, 2015-2017

## **Publications**

### **\*CURRENT PROJECT**

- ***Black Thinkers: The Global Impact of Black Intellectual Thought*** (under contract, W.W. Norton)

### **\*SOLO-AUTHORED BOOKS**

- ***Without Fear: Black Women and the Making of Human Rights*** (New York: W.W. Norton, September 16, 2025)
  - **Winner of a 2026 Book Prize** [Embargoed until June 30, 2026]
  - Selected as a Semifinalist for the **2026 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Nonfiction**
- ***Until I am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer’s Enduring Message to America*** (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021)
  - **Nominated for a 2022 NAACP Image Award**—Outstanding Literary Work (*Biography/Autobiography*)
  - Selected as a **Finalist for the 2021 National Book Critics Circle Award** (*Biography*)
  - Selected as a **Finalist for the 2022 Hooks National Book Prize**
- ***Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*** (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018)
  - **Winner of the 2019 Darlene Clark Hine Award**, *given annually by the Organization of American Historians to recognize the best book on African American women’s and gender history*

- **Winner of the 2018 First Book Award** from the Berkshire Conference on Women Historians, *given annually by the Berks to recognize the best book that deals substantially with women, gender, and sexuality*
- **Finalist for the 2018 Hooks National Book Award**, *given annually by the Hooks Institute to the author of the best book that deals with the history of civil rights*
- **Finalist for the 2020 Karen Offen-Ida Bloom Prize for Transnational Women's and Gender History**, *given by the International Federation for Research in Women's History*

### **\*EDITED VOLUMES**

- ***Wake Up America: Black Women on the Future of Democracy*** (W.W. Norton, 2024)
- Co-editor with Ibram X. Kendi, ***Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019*** (Random House/One World Press, 2021)
  - Selected as a Finalist for the **2022 Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Nonfiction**
  - Debuted at #1 on the ***New York Times* Best Seller List**
- Co-editor with Tiffany Gill, ***To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism*** (University of Illinois Press, 2019)
- Co-editor with Christopher Cameron and Ashley D. Farmer, ***New Perspectives on the Black Intellectual Tradition*** (Northwestern University Press, 2018)
- Co-editor with Chad Williams and Kidada Williams, ***Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence*** (University of Georgia Press, 2016)

### **BOOK CHAPTERS AND ARTICLES IN REFEREED JOURNALS** (\*Selected)

- “Black Women’s Internationalism: Past, Present, and Future,” ***Journal of African American History*** (Accepted; In Press)
- “Black women and Internationalism,” ***Cambridge History of Black Women in the United States***, ed. Karen Cook Bell (University of Cambridge Press, forthcoming)
- Foreword to ***Sisters Across the Seas: Black Women and Radical Politics in the United States and South Africa in the Twentieth Century***, eds., Dawne Y. Curry and Holly Yvette McGee (University of Wisconsin Press, 2025).
- “From Associate to Full Professor,” in ***Conditionally Accepted: Navigating Higher Education from the Margins***, eds. Bertin M. Louis, Jr. and Eric Anthony Grollman (University of Texas Press 2023)

- “‘A Certain Bond Between the Colored Peoples’: Black Internationalism and Visions of Afro-Asian Solidarity during the Early Twentieth Century” in ***The Black Intellectual Tradition in the United States***, eds. Derrick Alridge, Cornelius Bynum and James B. Stewart (University of Illinois Press, 2021)
- “‘The Dark Skin[ned] People of the Eastern World’: Mittie Maude Lena Gordon’s Vision of Afro-Asian Solidarity,” in ***Toward an Intellectual History of Women’s International Thought***, eds. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge University Press, 2020)
- “‘The Language of Freedom’: Garveyite Women, Diasporic Politics, and Pan-African Discourses of the 1940s” in ***Global Garveyism: Diasporic Aspirations and Utopian Dreams***, eds. Adam Ewing and Ronald Stephens (University Press of Florida, 2019)
- “‘We will overcome whatever [it] is the system has become today’: Black Women’s Organizing Against Police Violence in New York City in the 1980s,” ***Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society***, Vol. 20, Issue 1 (Fall 2018): 110-121
- “‘To Keep Alive the Teaching of Garvey and the Work of the UNIA’: Audley Moore, Black Women’s Activism, and Nationalist Politics during the Twentieth Century,” ***Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International***, Vol. 7, Issue 2 (Fall 2018): 83-107
- “‘Confraternity Among All Dark Races’: Mittie Maude Lena Gordon and the Practice of Black (Inter)nationalism in Chicago, 1932-1942” in ***Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International***, Vol. 5, Issue 2 (Fall 2016): 151-181
- “‘We Want to Set the World on Fire’: Black Nationalist Women and Diasporic Politics in the *New Negro World*, 1940-1944” in ***Journal of Social History***, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Fall 2015): 194-212
- “‘[F]or the Rights of Dark People in Every Part of the World’: Pearl Sherrod, Black Internationalist Feminism, and Afro-Asian Politics in the 1930s” in ***Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society***, Vol. 17, No. 1 (June 2015): 90-112

### **SPECIAL JOURNAL ISSUES**

- Guest editor with Quito Swan, “Reconceptualizing the History of Black Internationalism” in ***The Journal of African American History***, Vol. 106, No. 4 (Fall 2021)
- Guest editor with Ula Y. Taylor and Asia Leeds, “Women, Gender Politics, and Pan-Africanism” in ***Women, Gender, and Families of Color***, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall 2016)

### **A SAMPLING OF PUBLIC WRITINGS**

\*MSNBC Columnist (2021-2024):

<https://www.msnbc.com/author/keisha-n-blain-ncpn1262124>

- [“Black historians know there is no such thing as objective history,”](#) *The New Republic*, September 9, 2022.
- [“Remembering past harms is a key first step for achieving social justice,”](#) *The Washington Post*, June 9, 2022.
- [“They Called Her Black Jet”](#) (On Joetha Collier), *The Atlantic*, April 28, 2022.
- [“Justice and the Meaning of the Tubman \\$20,”](#) *Ms. Magazine*, March 8, 2022.
- [“To Fight Attacks on ‘Critical Race Theory,’ Look to Black History,”](#) *The Nation*, February 18, 2022.
- [“Fannie Lou Hamer: The Civil Rights Icon Who Embraced Youth Power,”](#) *Teen Vogue*, November 23, 2021
- [“Black Political Rights Can’t Be Divorced From Economic Justice. Why Fannie Lou Hamer’s Message and Fight Endure Today,”](#) *Time Magazine*, October 27, 2021
- [“The Long Brutality: Black Women and the struggle to end police violence,”](#) *The Baffler*, May 5, 2021
- [“We need to retell U.S. history with Black people at the center,”](#) *Fortune Magazine*, February 11, 2021
- [“Black Women are Leading the Movement to End Police Violence,”](#) *The Washington Post*, October 1, 2020
- [“The Struggle to End Racism is Global,”](#) *The American Historian Magazine*, September 21, 2020
- [“Fannie Lou Hamer’s Dauntless Fight for Black Americans’ Right to Vote,”](#) *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 20, 2020
- [“Civil Rights International: The Fight Against Racism Has Always Been Global,”](#) *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 99, no. 5, September/October 2020
- [“John Lewis’ Fight for Equality Was Never Limited to Just the United States,”](#) *Time Magazine*, July 21, 2020
- [“Destroying Confederate Monuments Isn’t ‘Erasing’ History. It’s Learning From It,”](#) *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2020
- [“The Black Women Who Paved the Way for this Moment,”](#) *The Atlantic*, June 9, 2020
- [“A Short History of Black Women and Police Violence,”](#) *The Conversation*, June 12, 2020
- (With Tom Zoellner) [“Riots, Mobs, Chaos: The Establishment Always Frames Change As Dangerous,”](#) *The Guardian*, June 10, 2020
- [“Violence in Minneapolis is Rooted in the History of Racist Policing in America,”](#) *The Washington Post*, May 30, 2020
- [“God Is Not Going to Put It in Your Lap.’ What Made Fannie Lou Hamer’s Message on Civil Rights So Radical—And So Enduring,”](#) *Time Magazine*, October 4, 2019
- [“Tennessee Just Showed that White Supremacy is Alive and Well,”](#) *The Washington Post*, June 15, 2019
- [“I Lifted Up Mine Eyes to Ghana: W.E.B Du Bois and Pan-Africanism,”](#) *Jacobin*, August 27, 2018
- [“Ida B. Wells offered the solution to police violence more than 100 years ago,”](#) *The Washington Post*, July 11, 2017

### **MOST RECENT COURSES @ BROWN**

- Black Transnationalism (Undergraduate)
- History of Black Travel (Graduate)
- The Intellectual History of Black Women (Undergraduate)
- Introduction to Africana Studies (Undergraduate)
- Readings in African American Women's History (Graduate)
- Junior Seminar in Africana Studies (Undergraduate)
- African American Women's History (Undergraduate)
- Black Transnational Feminism (Graduate)

### **MOST RECENT HONORS & AWARDS**

- 2025, Elected, Society of American Historians, Columbia University
- 2024, Dan David Prize, Dan David Foundation, *awarded annually to outstanding early and midcareer scholars and practitioners in the historical disciplines*
- 2023 Humanities Research Award, Office of the Vice President for Research, Brown University
- 2022 Fellow, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (United States History)
- 2022 Fellow, Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program, Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Class of 2022, National Fellow, New America
- 2021-2022 Fellowship, School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study
- 2020-2022 Fellowship, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University's Kennedy School
- 2021 Stafford Ellison Wright Black Alumni Scholar-in-Residence, Occidental College
- 2020 Global Lecture and Innovators Series Speaker, Liberal Studies, New York University
- 2019-2020 W.E.B. Du Bois Research Fellowship, Hutchins Center, Harvard University
- 2018-2021 Distinguished Lectureship Program, Organization of American Historians (OAH)
- 2018-2019 Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
- 2018-2019 John Hope Franklin Center Research Grant for African and African American History, Duke University
- 2017 Roy Rosenzweig Prize for Innovation in Digital History, American Historical Association (AHA)
- 2016-2017 American Association of University Women (AAUW) Postdoctoral Research Leave Fellowship
- 2016-2017 Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University (*declined*)

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE** (\*Selected)

### *National*

- Executive Board, Society of American Historians, Columbia University, 2026-Present
- Committee of Scholars, Smithsonian American Women's History Museum, 2024-Present
- 2025 Lynton History Prize, Juror, 2024-Present
- Center for Engaged Scholarship Fellowship Reviewer, 2024-Present
- Term Member, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), 2022-Present
- American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship Reviewer, 2021-Present
- Advisory Board, Cambridge History of Black Women in the United States, Cambridge University Press, 2024-Present
- Editorial Advisory Board, "Black Women's History," University of North Carolina Press, 2023-Present
- Awards Committee, Liberty Legacy Foundation Book Award, Organization of American Historians (OAH), 2024-2025
- The Pulitzer Prizes, Juror (Biography), 2022-2023
- Editorial Board, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2021-2024
- Editorial Board, *Modern Intellectual History*, 2019-2022
- Editorial Board, *American Historical Review*, 2020-2023
- Editorial Board, *Journal of Women's History*, 2017-2021
- Editorial Board, *Journal of African American History*, 2018-2023
- Editorial Board, *Journal of Civil and Human Rights*, 2018-2021
- Advisory Board, *Washington Post's* 'Made by History', 2017-2020
- Editorial Board, *Cogent Arts and Humanities* (Division of History), 2015-2017
- Advisory Council, The Albert LePage Center for History in the Public Interest, Villanova University, 2021-2024
- Advisory Board, Harriet Tubman Center for Freedom and Equity, Binghamton University, 2019-2023
- Co-Chair, Planning Committee, 2023 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, Organization of American Historians (OAH), 2020-2023
- Awards Committee, Merle Curti US Intellectual History Book Award, Organization of American Historians (OAH), 2020-2021
- Awards Committee, Lawrence W. Levine US Cultural History Book Award, Organization of American Historians (OAH), 2019-2020
- Conference Planning Committee, American Historical Association (AHA), 2019-2020.
- Awards Committee, William Appleman Williams Junior Faculty Research Award, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), 2016-2019
- Awards Committee, John Higham Research Award, Organization of American Historians (OAH), 2016-2019 (Committee Chair, 2018-2019)

- Awards Committee, Letitia Woods Brown Article Prize, Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH), 2018-2019
- Conference Program Committee, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR), 2015-2016
- Book Review Editor, *National Political Science Review (NPSR)*, 2015-2017
- Manuscript Reviewer for University of North Carolina Press; Harvard University Press; Yale University Press; Oxford University Press; University of Illinois Press; Columbia University Press; Palgrave MacMillan; University Press of Mississippi; University of Pennsylvania Press; *Journal of Women's History*; *Journal of Social History*; *Gender and History*; *Radical History Review*; *Journal of Civil and Human Rights*; *Modern American History*; *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*; *Journal of African American History*; *American Historical Review*; *Diplomatic History*.

### *Brown University*

- Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Africana Studies, 2026-2029
- Search Committee Chair, 2026-2028 Mellon Postdoctoral Research Associate in Black Queer Studies, Spring 2026
- Chair, Graduate Restructuring Committee, Department of Africana Studies, 2025-2026
- Search Committee, Dean of the Graduate School, Fall 2025
- Search Committee, Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship, Office of the Provost, 2025-Present
- Vice Chair of the Graduate Council, The Graduate School, 2025-2028
- Member of the Curriculum Committee, Department of Africana Studies, 2025-2027
- Steering Committee, Brown 2026 (to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding), Office of the President, 2023-Present
- Standing Committee on the Academic Code (SCAC), 2024-2025

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- American Historical Association (AHA)
- Association of Black Women Historians (ABWH), *Life Member*
- African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS), *Life Member*
- Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)
- Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD)
- Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR)
- Organization of American Historians (OAH)