

African American Studies

College of Letters and Science (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

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Department Website: African American Studies

Overview

The Department of African American Studies offers students a bachelor of arts degree, as well as a minor in African American Studies. The curriculum focuses on Africa and the African diaspora, with particular attention paid to the life and culture of the populations of African descent in North America and the Caribbean. There is also some focus on populations of African descent in Latin America and Europe. The program is interdisciplinary and prepares students to use and develop analytical approaches to critical issues associated with the African diaspora.

In preparation for declaring a major in African American Studies, students should complete the Reading and Composition requirement and freshman/sophomore seminars. African American Studies offers lower division courses that satisfy the American Cultures and College of Letters and Science breadth requirements. For a list of current semester freshman/sophomore seminars and other courses with selected topics, consult the description of courses for the current semester available at the department office. Students must have an overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 to declare.

Major Requirements

Completion of or enrollment in two of the following four courses is required in order to declare the major: 4A-4B, Africa: History and Culture; and 5A-5B, Black Life and Culture. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the lower division requirements early in their academic program; however, they may declare with only two of the four required courses completed.

Upon declaring the major, students are required to complete the following upper division core requirements:

- AAS 100 — Black Intellectual Thought
- AAS 101 — Interdisciplinary Research Methods
- AAS 116 — Colonialism, Slavery, and African American Life Before 1865
- AAS 117 — African Americans in the Industrial Age, 1865-1970

To complete the major, students must take a cluster of eight to ten courses (depending on thesis status) focused on a specific area of concentration. Such a concentration is expected to form the basis for a senior thesis. Five of the eight courses must be selected from Department of African American Studies course offerings. The remaining three courses may be taken from other departments. Students can meet with the undergraduate advisor to discuss possible cluster topics.

Honors Program

To be eligible for admission to the honors program, a student must have completed at least two semesters at UC Berkeley and have attained senior standing with a GPA of 3.3 or higher in all University work, as well as a 3.5 GPA or higher in the African American Studies major.

Students in the program must complete two consecutive semesters of African American Studies H195A-H195B under the supervision of a faculty member, culminating in the completion of a senior honors thesis or equivalent project.

Minor Requirements

Students in the College of Letters and Science may complete one or more minors of their choice, normally in a field both academically and administratively distinct from their major.

For the minor in African American Studies, students must complete at least one lower division course selected from 4A, 4B, 5A, or 5B and five upper division courses in the Department of African American Studies.

Consistent with Letters and Science requirements, a GPA of 2.0 is required in all courses applied to the minor program. All courses in the minor must be taken for a letter grade. Students may petition to have transfer credits accepted, but transfer students must take a minimum of three upper division courses from the Department of African American Studies.

Graduate Program

Students are admitted to graduate studies in the fall semester only. Applicants must file a University of California, Berkeley graduate application; two official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended; three letters of recommendation; writing sample (no more than 15 pages) that best reflects their program/research interests. TOEFL (required for all international students). Applications are accepted for the PhD only.

The African American studies graduate program focuses on life, culture, and social organization (broadly defined) of persons of African descent. Africa, North America, and the Caribbean are central components of the program. Students are expected to apply a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the international and national divisions of race as they pertain to persons of African descent, wherever they may find themselves. Such an approach is to be employed for the study and understanding of development and underdevelopment, domination and power, self-determination, mutual cooperation, and aesthetic and creative expression. Issues of identity construction, marginality, territoriality, and the universal role of race in the organization of political economy and in class formation are critical to the program's intellectual agenda.

Applicants must have completed an undergraduate degree and should demonstrate a general knowledge of African American history and an understanding of the disciplinary bases for the study of the African diaspora. Demonstrated knowledge in the field should include understanding relations among social, economic, and political structures and culture in African American life.

Fields of Emphasis

The fields of emphasis are focused in two general areas representing current faculty fields of expertise:

1. **Issues of Development:** History of the African Diaspora; Social and Cultural Institutions; Urban Sociology; Politics of Culture; Political Economy of the Diaspora.
2. **Cultural Studies:** Comparative Literatures and Cultures; Critical Theory, Popular Culture, Performance and Film; and Women's Studies.

The University requires a minimum of two years or four semesters of academic residence for all PhD programs. Academic residence is defined as enrollment in at least four units in the 100 or 200 series of courses. Thus every graduate student must enroll in and complete a minimum of four units of upper division or graduate coursework or both per required semester of academic residency. The program will require at least 48 semester units. At least 24 of the 48 units completed must be graduate courses in the Department of African American Studies. After successful completion of coursework with a minimum GPA of 3.3, the department will administer a pre-qualifying examination based upon general knowledge in the field of African American studies.

Students who have been accepted to this program and have earned a master's degree in another program will be evaluated based on requirements for the pre-qualifying examinations.

AFRICAM R1A Freshman Composition 4 Units

Department: African American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture and 1 hour of Discussion per week for 15 weeks. 6 hours of Lecture and 2 hours of Discussion per week for 8 weeks. 8 hours of Lecture and 2 hours of Discussion per week for 6 weeks.

Prerequisites: UC Entry Level Writing Requirement.

Training in expository, argumentative, and other styles of writing. The assignments will focus on themes and issues in African American life and culture. Satisfies the first half of the Reading and Composition requirement.

Satisfies the first half of the Reading and Composition requirement
Formerly known as 1A.

AFRICAM R1AN Reading and Composition 3 Units

Department: African American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Term course may be offered: Summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 5.5 hours of Lecture per week for 8 weeks. 7.5 hours of Lecture per week for 6 weeks.

To provide Summer Bridge students with training in expository, argumentative, and other styles of writing. The assignments will focus on themes and issues in African American life and culture. Satisfies the first half of the Reading and Composition requirement.

Satisfies the first half of the Reading and Composition requirement
Formerly known as 1AN.

AFRICAM R1B Freshman Composition 4 Units

Department: African American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture and 1 hour of Discussion per week for 15 weeks. 6 hours of Lecture and 2 hours of Discussion per week for 8 weeks. 8 hours of Lecture and 2 hours of Discussion per week for 6 weeks.

Prerequisites: UC Entry Level Writing Requirement and 1A.

Continued training in expository and argumentative writing, with more emphasis on literary interpretation. Satisfies the second half of the Reading and Composition requirement.

Satisfies the second half of the Reading and Composition requirement
Formerly known as 1B.

AFRICAM 4A Africa: History and Culture 4 Units

Department: African American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture and 1 hour of Discussion per week for 15 weeks. 7.5 hours of Lecture and 2.5 hours of Discussion per week for 6 weeks.

Emphasis on pre-colonial social, cultural, political, and economic structures; introduction to art, literature, oral traditions, and belief systems.
Instructor: Nwokeji

AFRICAM 4B Africa: History and Culture 4 Units

Department: African American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 10 hours of lecture/discussion per week for 6 weeks.
Emphasis on social, political, and economic change in 20th century Africa; with further emphasis upon the roles of modernization, urbanization, and