

African American Studies

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The African American Studies major examines, from numerous disciplinary perspectives, questions of race, culture, and modern struggles for equality centering on the experiences of people of African descent in Black Atlantic societies including the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and Africa, and the global impact of those experiences. Students in the department explore the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social development of Black Atlantic societies. Majors work to become informed thinkers who are intellectually prepared to offer clarity and insight to ongoing academic and public debates centered in questions concerning race and inequality.

African American Studies majors become knowledgeable about the history, primary methodologies, and interdisciplinary breadth of the field. Students learn to critique, articulate, analyze, and interpret universal themes concerning both individuals in society and group interactions as they relate to the work of scholars, scientists, writers, artists, musicians, economists, and entrepreneurs.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

African American Studies can be taken either as a stand-alone major or as one of two majors in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). Pertinent regulations can be found in Academic Regulations, section L, Special Academic Arrangements, "Two Majors."

The major in African American Studies requires twelve term courses, including seven core courses and five electives in a focus area. The seven core courses include the African American history sequence AFAM 1160 and AFAM 1162, which can be taken in either order; one humanities course in African American literature; one course in the social sciences relevant to African American studies; the junior seminar (AFAM 4310); the senior colloquium (AFAM 4380) and senior essay (AFAM 4391).

Area of focus Students majoring in African American Studies are required to choose an area of focus comprised of five courses. This cluster of interrelated courses is intended to ground the student's learning experience in one area of investigation. Often students choose an area of focus in a traditional discipline such as political science, art history, economics, sociology, American studies, history, or English language and literature. Students can also construct interdisciplinary areas of focus that span traditional departments and encompass broader theoretical frameworks such as race and ethnicity, cultural studies, black arts, or feminism and gender studies. All majors are encouraged to take upper-level courses as part of their focus, especially those courses centering on research and methodology. None of the seven core courses may be counted among the required electives in the area of focus.

Junior seminar In their junior year students must take the junior seminar, AFAM 4310. This course provides majors with theoretical and methodological bases for the work they will do during their research-oriented senior year.

Credit/D/Fail No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

Outside credit Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Senior majors participate in a colloquium in AFAM 4380 that provides them an opportunity to exchange ideas with each other and with more advanced scholars. Students in AFAM 4380 submit a prospectus, compile a working bibliography, begin or continue research, and write the first twenty pages of the senior essay. After completing the colloquium, each student carries out the remaining research and writing of a senior essay in AFAM 4391 under the guidance of a faculty member in the chosen discipline or area of focus.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the summer between the junior and senior years for research directly related to the senior essay. For example, field or documentary research might be undertaken in urban or rural communities in America and throughout the diaspora. The particular research topic and design are to be worked out in each case with a faculty adviser.

ADVISING

Students considering a program of study in African American Studies should consult the DUS as early as possible. Areas of focus and schedules for majors must be approved by the DUS.

Two majors The requirements for double majoring often depend on the other department or discipline in which the student is planning to major. Students interested in double majoring should initially make an appointment with the DUS in African American Studies to discuss their plans and the courses they have already taken toward the African American Studies major. The student should, then, plan a meeting with both the DUS in African American Studies as well as the DUS in the other department to ensure clarity on the requirements for both departments. During this meeting, the student may explore the possibility of writing a joint thesis instead of two separate theses.

Graduate work African American Studies offers training of special interest to those considering admission to graduate or professional schools and careers in education, journalism, law, the arts, business management, city planning, international relations, politics, psychology, publishing, public health, or social work. The interdisciplinary structure of the department offers students an opportunity to satisfy the increasingly rigorous expectations of admissions committees and prospective employers.

STUDY ABROAD

A limited number of courses taken during sophomore or junior semesters abroad can be counted toward the major with DUS approval.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses, incl 7 core courses (incl sen req), and 5 electives in a focus area

Specific courses required AFAM 1160, 1162, 4310

Distribution of courses 1 humanities course in AFAM lit and 1 relevant social science course, both approved by DUS; 5 courses in focus area

Senior requirement Senior colloquium (AFAM 4380) and senior essay (AFAM 4391)

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Professors Elijah Anderson, David Blight, Daphne Brooks, Hazel Carby (*Emeritus*), Marlene Daut, Erica Edwards, Roderick Ferguson, Kaiama Glover, Phillip Atiba Solomon, Jacqueline Goldsby, Elizabeth Hinton, Matthew Jacobson, Gerald Jaynes, Tavia Nyong'o, Edward Rugemer, Robert Stepto (*Emeritus*), Michael Veal, Shane Vogel

Associate Professor Crystal Feimster

Assistant Professors Na Na Adusei-Poku, Allison Harris, Jonathan Howard, Elleza Kelley, Ernest Mitchell, Carolyn Roberts

Lecturers Thomas Allen Harris, Tasha Hawthorne, Ferentz Lafargue, Sarah Mahurin