AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES

Director, Professor Cheryl Townsend Gilkes
Program Faculty: Professor Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (African-American Studies and Sociology), Associate Professor Chandra Bhimull (African-American Studies and Anthropology), and Visiting Assistant Professor Yannick Marshall

Affiliated Faculty and Advisory Committee: Professors Catherine Besteman (Anthropology), Cedric Gael Bryant (English), Jill Gordon (Philosophy), Bénédicte Mauguière (French), James Webb (History), and Robert Weisbrot (History); Associate Professors Mouhamédoul Niang (French) and Tanya Sheehan (Art); Assistant Professors Laura Seay (Government) and Sonja Thomas (Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)

The African-American Studies Program is an interdisciplinary program of courses organized to provide an overview and introduction to the experiences of peoples of African descent in the United States and to connect those experiences to the literatures, histories, and cultures of Africa and of Latin America and the Caribbean. The program offers students the opportunity to explore the human experience of persons and peoples through the multiple perspectives offered by diverse social science and humanistic disciplines. Courses in the program expose students to classical and contemporary literature, to issues of public policy, to critical debates in history and social science, and to main currents of historical analysis and contemporary cultural expression. Students may elect a major or a minor in African-American studies built on courses in American studies, anthropology, art, history, literature, economics, government, music, philosophy, religious studies, and sociology. The program not only exposes students to the history, literature, and cultures of African Americans and people of African descent throughout the Americas, but it also requires exploration of African history, cultures, and artistic expressions. While the African-American Studies Program’s use of the phrase African American includes persons and peoples of African descent throughout the Americas, the program’s primary focus is on the literature, history, and culture of people of African descent in the United States and the Caribbean.

Requirements for the Major in African-American Studies

Eleven courses selected from courses specifically focused on African Americans and on peoples and cultures of Africa and the Caribbean. Six required courses: American Studies 276, English 343, History 247; at least one course focused specifically on Africa; at least one course focused specifically on the Caribbean or African-derived cultures in Latin America or the African diaspora (e.g., Anthropology 231); and at least one course focused on art, music, theater, dance, or other aspects of expressive culture. Four or more electives from among the relevant courses in the social sciences, humanities, and relevant interdisciplinary studies programs (e.g., American Studies; Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; English/Creative Writing; Latin American Studies; Education); at least one of the courses should be taken at the 300 or 400 level. Courses not specifically listed may be counted toward the major with permission of the advisor if substantial relevance can be established during a particular semester or in an off-campus program. At least one seminar at the 300 or 400 level with a member of the African-American Studies Program faculty where a substantial final paper or equivalent project explores in depth and engages significant debates about an aspect or aspects of African-American life and culture in the United States or in the African diaspora. Such courses could include, when the subject material is appropriate and with the permission of the advisor, American Studies 493, English 413 and 493, and Music 493. Course substitutions and exchanges may be made in consultation with the African-American Studies Program advisor.

Requirements for the Minor in African-American Studies

Seven courses including American Studies 276; History 247; American Studies 493; at least one course focused on Africa or the Caribbean; and two courses selected from American Studies 493, Anthropology 231, English 346, 413 (when appropriate), Government 255, 336, 455, Philosophy 213, Religious Studies 256, or Sociology 252, 355, 357, 358. Course substitutions and exchanges may be made in consultation with the African-American Studies Program advisor.

Interested students also may consider an independent major in Africana studies (a selection of courses combining study of the Caribbean, the Americas, and Africa) or an independent major that combines African-American studies with another relevant discipline or program, especially American studies, anthropology, art, government, Latin American studies, music, religious studies, or sociology.

Majors and minors are instructed to inform faculty in various programs and departments that they are African-American studies majors or minors when seeking the permission of an instructor to register for courses restricted to majors in other disciplines or when asking that prerequisites be waived.

Courses That Apply to the African-American Studies Major

African-American Studies
- 297B Deconstructing Daughters of the Dust: African American Origins

American Studies
- 276 African-American Culture in the United States
Anthropology
- 231 Caribbean Cultures
- 258 Anthropology, History, Memory
- 274 Africans in America: The New Diaspora
- 297A From Ferguson to South Africa: Movements for Black Life
- 316 Religion and Social Change in Contemporary Africa
- 333 Contemporary Theory
- 341 Culture, Mobility, Identity: Encounters in the African Diaspora
- 397 Police, Klansmen, Colonizers, and Cultures of White Power
- 421 Anthropology of Creativity

Art
- 256 African-American Art

English
- 343 African-American Literature: Speaking in Tongues
- 346 Culture and Literature of the American South
- 354 Slavery and the American Literary Imagination
- 413A Author Course: Toni Morrison
- 457 American Gothic Literature

French
- 236 Introduction to the Francophone World: The Americas
- 237 Francophone African Cinema
- 361 Creolization, Culture, and Society in the Indian Ocean Islands

Government
- 255 Introduction to African Politics
- 336 Politics of Development in Africa
- 338 Field Study in African Development
- 455 Seminar: Conflict and Crisis in Africa

History
- 247 African-American History, from Slavery to Freedom
- 297 Children and Youth in African History
- 297J Freedom Now and Then: The Black Freedom Struggle and Its Legacies
- 334 The Great Depression: America in the 1930s
- 342 Crisis and Reform: American Society and Politics in the 1960s

Music
- 114 Jazz Improvisation
- 118 African Music

Philosophy
- 213 Philosophical Inquiries into Race

Religious Studies
- 256 The African-American Religious Experience

Sociology
- 214 African-American Elites and Middle Classes
- 252 Race, Ethnicity, and Society
- 355 African-American Women and Social Change
- 357 Civil Rights, Black Power, and Social Change
- 358 The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois
- 359 Sociologies of Slavery and Slave Communities in the United States

Theater and Dance
- 118 Dance Technique Lab: Dance Forms of the African Diaspora

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
223 Critical Race Feminisms and Tap Dance

Note: Additional courses, often taught by visiting faculty, may be available from time to time as temporary offerings, and such courses may be counted toward the major or the minor with permission of the African-American Studies Program advisor.

Course Offerings


AA223 Critical Race Feminisms and Tap Dance Listed as Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies 223. Three credit hours.

AA231s Caribbean Cultures Listed as Anthropology 231. Four credit hours. I. MARSHALL

AA236f Introduction to the Francophone World: The Americas Listed as French 236. Four credit hours. I. MAUGUIERE

[AA237] Introduction to the Francophone World: Africa Listed as French 238. Four credit hours. I.


AA252f Race, Ethnicity, and Society Listed as Sociology 252. Four credit hours. U. GILKES

AA255f Introduction to African Politics Listed as Government 255. Four credit hours. S, I. SEAY

AA256f African-American Art Listed as Art 256. Four credit hours. A, U. SHEEHAN

[AA258] Anthropology, History, Memory Listed as Anthropology 258. Four credit hours.


AA276s African-American Culture in the United States Listed as American Studies 276. Four credit hours. S, U. GILKES

AA297f Children and Youth in African History Listed as History 297. Four credit hours. H, I. DUFF

AA297Af From Ferguson to South Africa: Movements for Black Life Listed as Anthropology 297A. Four credit hours. S, U. MARSHALL


AA298s Pan-Africanism: Histories, Politics, Aesthetics, and Poetics A critical exploration of Pan-Africanism as a response to the massive traumas of slavery and colonialism that define African and African diaspora modernity. With an eye toward aesthetics, poetics, and rhetoric, in addition to politics, we examine diverse modes of expression—music, political theory, poetry, fiction, religion, organizational literature, and journalism, through authors and movements including, but not limited to Wole Soyinka, Kwame Nkrumah, Bob Marley, Aime Cesaire, Paule Marshall, Marcus Garvey, Leopold Senghor, Rastafarianism, and Kwame Toure (Stokeley Carmichael), to name a few. Four credit hours. S, I. MARSHALL

AA333f Contemporary Theory Listed as Anthropology 333. Four credit hours. BESTEMAN
AA336f  Politics of Development in Africa  Listed as Government 336.  Four credit hours.  I.  SEAY

AA338j  Field Study in African Development  Listed as Government 338.  Three credit hours.  SEAY

[AA341]  Culture, Mobility, Identity: Encounters in the African Diaspora  Listed as Anthropology 341.  Four credit hours.  S, I.

AA342s  Crisis and Reform: American Society and Politics in the 1960s  Listed as History 342.  Four credit hours.  H.  WEISBROT


[AA344]  Black Radical Imaginations  Listed as Anthropology 344.  Four credit hours.

[AA354]  Slavery and the American Literary Imagination  Listed as English 354.  Four credit hours.  L, U.

AA355f  African-American Women and Social Change  Listed as Sociology 355.  Four credit hours.  U.  GILKES

[AA357]  Civil Rights, Black Power, and Social Change  Listed as Sociology 357.  Four credit hours.


AA359s  Sociologies of Slavery and Slave Communities in the United States  Listed as Sociology 359.  Four credit hours.  S, U.  GILKES

[AA361]  Creolization, Culture, and Society in the Indian Ocean Islands  Listed as French 361.  Four credit hours.  I.


AA397f  Police, Klansmen, Colonizers, and Cultures of White Power  Listed as Anthropology 397.  Four credit hours.  S, I.  MARSHALL

AA398s  The African Apartheid City: Explorations in Settler Colonialism  In order to understand historical and contemporary white separatist dreams in nations such as Algeria, Kenya, and South Africa, explores the segregated settler-colonial African city and the post-colonial persistence of its idea through imaginative literature, political rhetoric, community studies, biographies, and editorials advocating European supremacy, as well as theories of the space and the city in Africa. Also examines critical African literature and African forms of resistance, transgression, invasion, and squatting in white-only urban space, with particular attention to migrant, sex, and domestic workers.  Four credit hours.  S, I.  MARSHALL

AA413s  Author Course: Toni Morrison  Listed as English 413A.  Four credit hours.  L.  BRYANT

[AA421]  Anthropology of Creativity  Listed as Anthropology 421.  Four credit hours.

AA455s  Seminar: Conflict and Crisis in Africa  Listed as Government 455.  Four credit hours.  I.  SEAY

AA491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual study of special problems in African-American studies in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor and of the program director.  One to four credit hours.  FACULTY