
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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About the Program

African American Studies is an interdisciplinary program. The program focuses on African American experiences, while recognizing that other academic subjects bear importantly on the understanding of these experiences and should have a place in the African American Studies curriculum.

Within the interrogative, interdisciplinary, reflexive, and justice oriented mode that guides African American Studies, students in the program acquire sophisticated knowledge of African American and other African diasporic experiences; become conversant with the role of race, power, difference, and intersectionality in the personal, institutional, and structural relations of our daily lives including their relevance for local, regional, national, and international affairs; cultivate rigorous transdisciplinary skills in analytic, reflexive, and community-based research methodologies, and written, oral, and multi-media communication, to formulate, articulate, and interrogate ideas in private and public spheres; develop critical, intellectual, and ethical perspectives that can guide and advance personal, educational, civic, political, and professional actions; and engage and interact with differential sites of community development and leadership in the Puget Sound and beyond so as to deepen and apply their understanding of African American Studies and to learn to contribute collaboratively to the ongoing work of equity.

General Requirements for the Major or Minor

General university degree requirements stipulate that 1) at least four units of the major or three units of the minor be taken in residence at Puget Sound; 2) students earn a GPA of 2.0 in courses taken for the major or the minor; and 3) all courses taken for a major or minor must be taken for graded credit. Any exceptions to these stipulations are indicated in the major and minor degree requirements listed below.

Requirements for the Major

A major in African American Studies consists of 9 units:

1. AFAM 101
2. AFAM 201
3. AFAM 399
4. Four elective units, including two depth and two breadth courses, selected and approved through advising from the courses listed below. At least three of the four must be taken at the upper-division level (courses numbered 300 or higher).
5. Capstone sequence: AFAM 401 and 402

Requirements for the Minor

A minor in African American Studies consists of 5 units:

1. AFAM 101.

2. Three elective units meeting the following conditions: (i) at least two must be taken outside the student's major; (ii) at least one must be a depth course from the list below; (iii) at least one must be a breadth course from the list below; and (iv) at least one must be an upper-division course (i.e., numbered 300 or higher).
3. Capstone: AFAM 401.

Notes for the major and minor

- a. Students may apply up to two approved courses of study abroad credit toward their African American Studies major or minor.
- b. Majors and minors may satisfy no more than two university core requirement from African American Studies offerings.
- c. When a course both supports their African American Studies major and fulfills a major or minor requirement in another field, a student may count no more than two units from that major or minor toward their African American Studies major.
- d. Students majoring or minoring in African American Studies must earn a grade of C- or higher in all courses which are taken in fulfillment of a major or minor requirement.
- e. The African American Studies program reserves the option of determining, on an individual basis, a time limit on the applicability of courses to the major or minor.

Depth Electives

Depth courses provide students with specialized knowledge in African American experiences, opportunities for sustained and deep thinking about a topic in African American Studies, and specifically highlight how African American Studies acquires, organizes, and defines knowledge. Students will acquire new methodological or theoretical tools to understand and situate African American experiences and their import. A course will meet the depth criteria if: (1) course topics are central to African American experiences; (2) these topics are considered across the course; and (3) the course introduces methodological or theoretical tools rooted in African American Studies. Courses that currently count toward the depth elective are:

AFAM 205 Survey of African American Literature
AFAM 210 Black Fiction and Feminisms
AFAM 346 African Americans and American Law
AFAM 355 African American Women in American History
AFAM 360 The Art and Politics of the Civil Rights Era
AFAM/COMM 370 Communication and Diversity
AFAM 375 The Harlem Renaissance
AFAM 495 Independent Study
COMM 347 African American Public Discourse
CONN 335 Race and Multiculturalism in the American Context
CONN 390 Black Business Leadership: Past and Present
ENGL 332 Genre: Poetry*
ENGL 335 Genre: Drama*
ENGL 338 Genre: Popular Literature*
ENGL 339 Genre: Print Media*
ENGL 363 African American Literature
ENGL 381 Major Authors*
HIST 254 African American Voices: A Survey of African American History
HIST 291 Modern Africa
HIST 293 Early Africa to 1807
MUS 221 Jazz History
PG 304 Race and American Politics
PG 346 Race in the American Political Imagination
PHIL 389 Race and Philosophy

REL 307 Prisons, Gender, and Education

* Applicable when the course emphasizes African American literature.

Breadth Electives

Breadth courses multiply points of application of specialized knowledge and expertise which students gain from African American Studies, allowing them access to different methodological and theoretical modes of treating topics and interrogating course material across disciplines, and varied platforms for building their capacity for critical and recursive intellectual engagement. A course will meet the breadth criteria if the syllabus or conversation with the instructor indicates that (1) topics show a distinct relationship to African American studies; (2) topics allow application of methods and theories from AFAM studies; and (3) the course expands lenses and extends contexts on topics instructive to African American experiences. Courses that currently count toward the breadth elective are:

AFAM/REL 265 Thinking Ethically: What is Justice?
 AFAM 304 Capital and Captivity
 ARTH 302 The Art of Mexico and Mesoamerica
 COMM 321 Film Criticism
 COMM 322 Television Culture
 COMM 373 Critical Cultural Theory
 CONN 325 Homelessness and Race
 ECON 218 American Economic History
 ECON 241 Urban Economics
 ENGL 362 Native American Literature
 ENGL 364 Asian-American Literature
 ENGL 365 Gender and Sexualities
 ENGL 366 Critical Whiteness Studies
 GQS 201 Introduction to Gender, Queer, and Feminist Studies
 HIST 280 Colonial Latin America
 HIST 281 Modern Latin America
 HIST 360 Frontiers of Native America
 HIST 381 Film and History: Latin America
 HIST 382 Comparative Revolution in Twentieth Century Latin America
 HIST 383 Borderlands: La Frontera: The U.S.-Mexico Border
 HIST 384 Transnational Latin America
 HIST 391 Nelson Mandela and 20th Century South Africa
 HIST 392 Men and Women in Colonial Africa
 HIS 393 Missions and Christianity in Africa
 LAS 100 Introduction to Latin American Studies
 LAS 387 Art and Revolution in Latin America
 LTS 200 Latina/o America: A Critical Introduction to Latina/o Studies
 LTS 300 Latina/o Literatures
 MUS 222 Music of the World's Peoples
 PG 303 Diversity in Post-Industrial Democracies
 PG 311 Politics of Detention: Criminal Justice, Immigration, and the War on Terror
 PG 315 Law and Society
 PG 316 Civil Liberties
 PG 325 African Politics
 PSYC 225 Social Psychology
 PSYC 265 Cross-Cultural Psychology
 PSYC 373 Perceiving Self and Other
 REL 302 Ethics and the Other
 SOAN 103 Social Problems
 SOAN 213 City and Society
 SOAN 230 Indigenous Peoples: Alternative Political Economies
 SOAN 301 Power and Inequality
 SOAN 305 Heritage Languages and Language Policies
 SOAN 335 Third World Perspectives

SOAN 350 Border Crossings: Transnational Migration and Diaspora Studies

SPAN 212 Latin American Culture and Civilization

SPAN 301 Literature of the Americas

SPAN 306 Latin American Film

SPAN 311 Migration Narratives

SPAN 402 Seminar in Nineteenth-Century Latin America

SPAN 405 Seminar in Twentieth and/or Twenty-First Century Latin America

THTR 250 World Theatre I: African Diaspora

Note that the following first-year seminars have relevance but cannot count toward the major or minor:

SSI1/SSI2 115 Imaging Blackness

SSI1 121 Multiracial Identities

SSI1/SSI2 135 Hurricane Katrina and the History of New Orleans

Course Offerings

Unless otherwise specified, each course carries 1 unit of credit and is offered at least once each academic year. Please see "Frequency of Course Offerings" on page 10.

Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry See *Seminars in Scholarly Inquiry in the Core Curriculum* section of this Bulletin for course descriptions. While these courses cannot count toward a major or a minor, the following are recommended for their focus on important aspects of African American Studies.

SSI1/SSI2 115 Imaging Blackness

SSI1 121 Multiracial Identity

Connections courses. See the Connections in the Core Curriculum section of this Bulletin for course descriptions (page 24).

AFAM 346 African Americans and American Law

AFAM 355 African-American Women in American History

AFAM 360 The Art and Politics of the Civil Rights Era

AFAM 375 The Harlem Renaissance

AFAM 401 Narratives of Race

101 Introduction to African American Studies This course provides an examination of intellectual and creative productions, developments, and events that have come to be recognized as forming the discipline of African American Studies. The course explores literature, history, popular culture (music, television, magazines, newspapers, movies, film documentaries), and politics as a way to identify the historical and political origins and objectives of Black Studies. It also explores the 1960's national and transnational Black Liberation struggles, the early academic and social concerns of Black Studies advocates, the theoretical and critical approaches to Black Studies as a discipline, and the early objectives of Black Studies in relation to present conversations and projects regarding goals of multiculturalism and diversity. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirements. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement. Offered each semester.*

201 Methods in African American Studies This course is the primary methods course for the major. The course provides students with a thorough grounding in the literature and research areas within African American Studies. In this course students are taught to investigate historical, cultural, economic, religious, political, and literary phenomena and are encouraged to formulate new thinking based on thoughtful reflection on personal and community experiences. *Prerequisite: AFAM 101. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement.*

205 Survey of African American Literature This course aims to provide a panoramic view of African American literature, from early oral traditions through the first written and published works in the 18th century, and continuing into the era of published slave narratives and early autobiographies. From there the course follows African American literature as its production accelerates and its variety expands after Emancipation, during and after Reconstruction, into the early 20th century. Students study poetry, prose, and drama from the Harlem Renaissance (circa 1919-1934). The latter part of the course concerns literature from the Civil Rights Era, the Black Arts period of the 1960s and 1970s, and more recent decades, when African American literature, criticism, and literary theory achieved immeasurable success and generated enormous influence nationally and globally. Cultivating an informed sense of African American literature as a whole is one major objective of the course. *Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement.*

210 Black Fictions and Feminism This course is an integrative course in the humanities that explores various constructions of black female identity. The course looks at black womanhood as it's represented in the public imaginary, feminist theories, critical race theories, and in literature and literary criticism written by black women writers. One of the questions the course asks is: How have scholars and writers addressed fundamental questions of black female identity? To answer this question, students read and view a wide survey of materials including novels, essays, memoir, and film. Through this investigation, students consider how studies of race, feminism, and gender connect to personal lives. *Prerequisites: AFAM 101 strongly recommended. Satisfies the Humanistic Approaches core requirement.*

265 Thinking Ethically: What is Justice? This course provides students with tools of ethical analysis so that they can think critically about pressing contemporary moral issues through the lens of justice. The course focuses on ethical methods from world Christianity and western philosophy. The course introduces both ethical theories and modern justice theories, and examines multicultural perspectives of the long-standing religious and philosophical understanding of justice. It analyzes how social justice concepts have been applied in different cultural contexts, including non-western communities. Students examine different models of justice and their implications for contemporary moral issues (e.g. healthcare, social welfare, racism, war, capital punishment, human rights, immigration, refugees, property rights, and the environment). The class includes interactive lectures on justice theories and students actively participate in discussions on selected case studies. Course readings include excerpts from Aristotle, Aquinas, Mill, Pope, Locke, Calvin, Kant, Rawls, Sandel, Nussbaum, Singer, and Hauerwas. *Cross-listed with AFAM 265. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement.*

304 Capital and Captivity Capital and Captivity is an upper-level introduction to the study of Capital and its modern development, especially as it relates to race and class. The seminar examines philosophical concepts central to Marx's theories of capital and capitalism regarding issues of human potential for freedom and happiness. Central ideas to be discussed are alienation, slavery, race, class, labor, surplus value, machines, money, debt, capitalist accumulation, and communism. This seminar includes a substantive Marxist critique of modes of control and domination in contemporary society, including a critique of incarceration and race. *Cross-listed with REL 304. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement. Offered every other year.*

370 Communication and Diversity The purpose of this course is to enhance students' understanding of diversity issues as they relate to the study of communication. The course looks at how the media,

its images and discourses, shape one's understanding of experiences, shape the experiences of women, and the experiences of people of color. The course also explores the ways in elements of the media socially reproduce prejudice and foster resistance to prejudice. As a result of engagement in the course, students gain the ability to critically analyze and evaluate media products. They also become aware of critical professional issues in relation to a diversified workforce as it relates to the production, distribution, and consumption of media products. *Cross-listed with COMM 370. Satisfies the Knowledge, Identity, and Power graduation requirement.*

399 Public Scholarship This is the African American Studies Program course in public scholarship. It provides students the opportunity to connect their coursework with the Race and Pedagogy Institute. One of the tenets of African American studies is the production of scholarship and public programs that effects change and impacts lives especially for communities historically underserved by official state and national institutions (i.e., public scholarship; some prefer the term civic engagement). The Race and Pedagogy Institute articulates these tenets in its various initiatives. The African American Studies program builds on the synergy evolving between the Institute's various activities including its Community Partners Forum, and debates and events in the larger community to provide students with unique opportunities for dynamic engagement with social and cultural challenges. This course provides students with the necessary educational scaffolding for the production of public scholarship and then offers them the opportunity to contribute their work as part of ongoing critical efforts to confront and transform historical disparities in power, and privilege between different communities especially among local, regional, and national communities. *Prerequisite: AFAM 101.*

402 Research Seminar in African American Studies In this course students employ the range of methods and understandings gained through AFAM 101 and further studies in the major to complete an independent research project/paper. *Prerequisite: AFAM 401.*