

African American and African Studies

The major and minor in African American and African Studies is administered by the African American and African Studies Committee: Professors Brown (English), Gabriel (economics), Gadjigo (French), Grayson (religion), Hanson (history), Lemly (English); Associate Professors Brodie (biological sciences), Morgan (history), Mosby (Spanish), Smith (politics), Wilson (economics and African American and African studies); Assistant Professors Banks (sociology), Douglas (psychology and education), Omojola (music); Visiting Professor Pemberton (English).

Contact Persons

Holly Sharac, *senior administrative assistant*
Holly Hanson, *chair*

As a field of inquiry, African American and African studies describes and analyzes the origins and experiences of people of African descent wherever they live or have lived. These fields are inherently comparative, international, and interdisciplinary in approach, embracing the range of fields in the humanities and social sciences and including the performing arts.

The major prepares students for a number of careers: government, politics, international affairs, law, education, journalism, public health, religious studies, literature and the arts, and business management, to name only a few.

When declaring a major, each student chooses an advisor from the committee. In addition, she must have the approval of the program chair.

Students can choose one of two concentrations or take a combination of courses from each concentration in the major and minor. Each concentration has its own set of requirements that majors and minors have to

fulfill. Students can also select a combination of courses from each concentration.

The Concentration in African American Studies

The intent of African American studies is to provide a systematic investigation and analysis of the thoughts, experiences, and conditions under which people of African descent live in the United States. Courses making up the concentration will draw upon different disciplines to explore how African Americans relate to each other, to other Americans, and to other people of African descent living in the Americas, Europe, and Africa. Students majoring in the field should understand how blacks shape their lives in particular historical, social, political-economic, and cultural contexts.

Independent study or fieldwork is highly recommended to allow the student to study a particular topic in depth or to apply what she has learned in the classroom to issues affecting African Americans in the larger world. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for internships, study abroad, and exchange at other institutions.

Requirements for the Concentration

Credits

- A minimum of 40 credits
- 20 of these credits must be at the 300 level in at least two different disciplines.

Courses

- African American and African Studies 101, Introduction to African American Studies (or an equivalent introductory course, approved by the chair)

- One class on people of African descent in either Africa, the Caribbean, or the African diaspora at the 200 or 300 level

Other

- Independent Study 395 is strongly recommended.

Other courses to be counted for the concentration are drawn from departmental offerings with the approval of the program. Students may also count courses taken at the other Five College institutions subject to approval by the chair.

African American and African studies is an interdisciplinary major. Students who pursue an interdisciplinary major automatically fulfill the College’s “outside the major” requirement (see p. 8).

The Minor Concentration in African American Studies

The program should be planned carefully for coherence and integrity.

Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits
- 16 of these credits must be at the 200 level or higher.
- At least 4 of these credits must be at the 300 level. *395 may not be counted toward the minimum 4 credits at the 300 level.*

Courses

- African American and African Studies 101, Introduction to African American Studies

Other

- Signature of the program chair

Courses Counting toward the Major and Minor in African American Studies

See department listings for descriptions and course offerings.

Core

African American Studies

210 African American Culture and Society

English

250 African American Literature

History

281 African American History to 1865

282 African American History since 1865

Electives

Critical Social Thought

253 Critical Race Theory

Dance

132 Intro to Hip-Hop

142B Comparative Caribbean Dance

232 Intermediate Hip-Hop

Economics

225 Economics of Health Care and Health Service Organizations

306 Political Economy of “Race” in the U.S.

Education

205 Racism and Inequality in Schools and Society

English

101 Contemporary Autobiography: Race, Sexuality, Style

101 Multicultural Families

101 Memories of Home

101 The Poetics of Race and Identity

208 African American Poetry

250 African American Literature

251 African American Literature II

252 Harlem Renaissance

271	Women Writers: Black and White		<i>History</i>
	Southern Women Writers	101	The Civil Rights Movement
339	Race, Romance, and Reform:	280	Race and Gender in North
	Nineteenth-Century African		American History: African
	American Women's Literature		American Women and U.S. History
345	The Career and Legacy of Richard	301	Colloquium: The Abolition
	Wright		Movement
350	Studies in African American	301	Colloquium: The Age of
	Literature: Slavery and the		Emancipation
	American Literary Imagination	375	American History: The Middle
350	Studies in African American		Period: The Age of Emancipation
	Literature: Race, Grace, and the	381	Recent American History: The
	Politics of Salvation in African		Civil Rights Movement
	American Writing		
351	Toni Morrison		<i>Latin American Studies</i>
356	The Poetry and Prose of Langston	170	Readings in Caribbean Literature
	Hughes	260	Afro-Latin America: From Slavery
357	African Americans and Hollywood		to Invisibility
	Film	276	Contemporary Caribbean
368	African American Literature at		Societies
	Midcentury	289	Slavery in the Americas
370	The Caribbean in American	373	Studies in Comparative Caribbean
	Culture		Culture: Contemporary Caribbean
372	Contesting Borders: The Literature		Writers
	of Exile		
375	Black Texts, Black Experiments:	248	<i>Philosophy</i>
	Contemporary African American		Philosophical Issues in Race and
	Poetics		Racism
375	The Conceptual Black Body in		<i>Politics</i>
	Twentieth-Century and	100	FY Seminar: Black Metropolis
	Contemporary Visual Culture	210	Minorities and the Law
379	Suzan-Lori Parks, Revolutionary	244	Urban Politics and Policies
	Playwright	250	Black Urban Reform
389	American Memoir	251	Black and Latino Politics
		252	Topics in Urban Studies
	<i>Gender Studies</i>	313	The Politics of Poverty
204	Women and Gender in the Study of	347	Race and Urban Political Economy
	Culture: Black Women Writers:	348	Colloquium in Politics:
	Feminist Visions from the African		Community Development
	Diaspora		
333	Contemporary Latin American		<i>Psychology</i>
	Literature: Skin of a Woman: Afro-	213	Psychology of Racism
	Latina and Afro-Latin American		
	Women Writers		<i>Religion</i>
333	Interdisciplinary Seminar: Black	218	Women in American Religious
	Feminism: Theory and Praxis		History
333	Interdisciplinary Seminar: Sex,	228	On Human Freedom: Lordship and
	Love, and Gender in		Bondage in Religion and Culture
	Contemporary African Film	230	Spirituals and the Blues

- 323 Contemporary Theology: The Women Who Shaped the Mind of Frederick Douglass
Sociology
- 216 Issues in Sociology: Racial and Ethnic Relations
- 316 Special Topics in Sociology: Class in the Black Community
- 316 Special Topics in Sociology: Black Cultural Production and Consumption
Theatre Arts
- 350 Suzan-Lori Parks, Revolutionary Playwright

The Concentration in African Studies

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Courses

- History 141, Violence and Social Change in Modern Africa
- One class on people of African descent in either the Americas, the Caribbean, or the African Diaspora at the 200 or 300 level

Other

- Independent Study 395 is strongly recommended.

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The Minor Concentration in African Studies

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Courses

- History 141, Violence and Social Change in Modern Africa

Other

- Signature of the program chair

Courses Counting toward the Major and Minor in African Studies

See department listings for descriptions and course offerings.

Core

- English*
- 253 African Literature

	<i>Geography</i>		<i>Geography</i>
217	The African Environments	215	Geography of the Middle East and North Africa
	<i>History</i>		
140	Identity and Community in Early Africa	217	The African Environments
141	Violence and Social Change in Modern Africa	313	Third World Development
	Electives	319	Africa: Problems and Prospects
	<i>Anthropology</i>		
301	Education in South Africa: Policy and Practice: Education and Health in Post-Apartheid South Africa	241	<i>German Studies</i>
	<i>Dance</i>		
142A	West African Dance	241	Special Topics in German Studies: BunTsesrepublik Deutschland: Afro-Germans and Turkish Im/Migrants in Film and Text
243A	Cultural Dance Forms: West African	341	Topics in German Studies: Color Me German: Perceptions of Other in German Culture from 1800-1933
	<i>Earth and Environment</i>		
210	Political Ecology	206	<i>History</i>
304	Selected Problems in Regional Geography: Africa—Problems and Prospects	241	African Cities: Development Dreams and Nightmares in the Twentieth Century
311	Third World Development	242	African Popular Culture
	<i>Educational Studies</i>	296	Colonial Worlds: Africa and India
301	Education in South Africa: Policy and Practice: Education and Health in Post-Apartheid South Africa	301	Women in History: African Women's Work, 1880–1980
	<i>English</i>		
101	Seminars in Reading, Writing, Reasoning: Into Africa	301	Colloquium: Gift and Graft: The Long History of Political Corruption
251	Literature of the Black Empire	301	Colloquium: Ecology and Imperialism in Africa
253	African Literature	341	Colloquium: Food and Famine in African History
337	The Political Imagination in Contemporary South Africa	301	Colloquium: Money in History
	<i>French</i>		
120	African Cinema	341	Topics in African History: When Worlds Collide: The Colonial Moment in Africa
219	The French-Speaking World	341	Topics in African History: Power and Exchange in the African Past
311	<i>Paris dans l'imaginaire Africain</i>	341	Topics in African History: East African History
341	Ousmane Sembène: <i>L'oeuvre d'un artist-militant</i>		
341	<i>Contes et Legendes d'Afrique Francophone</i>		
370	Women and Writing in French-Speaking Africa		
			<i>International Relations</i>
			Human Rights and Democracy
			<i>Latin American Studies</i>
		170	Readings in Caribbean Literature
		276	Contemporary Caribbean Societies
		287	Topics in Latin American Studies: Afro-Latina/o Diasporic Performance
		347	Human Rights Democracy

373 Studies in Comparative Caribbean Culture: Contemporary Caribbean Writers

Music

126 Introduction to World Music
161 West African Drumming Ensemble
166 Introduction to the Music of Africa
226 World Music
229 African Popular Music
261 Intermediate West African Drumming Ensemble
371 Analytical Studies in World Music

Politics

213 African Political Systems
398 The Rwanda Genocide in Comparative Perspective

Sociology

103 Contemporary South Africa
301 Education in South Africa: Policy and Practice: Education and Health in Post-Apartheid South Africa
329 Social Change in Southern Africa

Spanish

105 FY Seminar: Roots and Routes: Intro to the African Diaspora in the Americas
230 Identities and Intersections: An Introduction: Afro-Latina/o Diasporic Performance
230 Identities and Intersections: An Introduction: Black Spain
230 Identities and Intersections: An Introduction: Afro-Latin American Literature
261 Afro-Spanish Literature
330 Advanced Studies in Identities and Intersections: Black Is Black: Afro-Central American Literatures and Cultures
341 Contemporary Latin American Literature: Skin of a Woman: Afro-Latina and Afro-Latin American Women Writers
341 Contemporary Latin American Literature: Treading the Ebony Path: Afro-Hispanic Literature
361 The Mind of the Traveler: Journey, Expeditions, Tours

Course Offerings

100s First-Year Seminar

Spring 2012

100s(1) The Civil Rights Movement
(First-year seminar; writing-intensive course; See History 101) We will examine the crusade for desegregation both within and beyond the South. Some attention will be given to the movement's Reconstruction precedents, but we will concentrate on the post-1954 period. Readings will cover how segregation was instituted; different phases of the movement; leaders, organization, and followers; the role of women and children; and post-movement history.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets

Humanities I-B requirement

L. J.Morgan

Prereq. fy; 4 credits

**100(2) American Dreams, American Dilemmas: Race, Democracy, and Human Capability in the Twenty-First Century*
(First-year seminar; writing-intensive course)

Dreams of full citizenship in North America for the descendants of enslaved African Americans have been overdetermined by dilemmas of racial inequality and racial conflict. After nearly 400 years in "the new world," the "beloved community" remains elusive. What progress has been made? What challenges remain? Is the project of integration and racial harmony dead (and, if so, what would an autopsy reveal)? What work remains in the quest for racial, gender, and economic justice and democracy? The course has two goals: to highlight critical questions and debates around black striving, and to develop good writing and critical thinking skills.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

L. Wilson

Prereq. fy only; 4 credits

***101f Introduction to African American and African Studies: Identity, Community, and Progress**

This course will introduce students to topics and methodologies within the vast field of African studies. This course will attempt to

disrupt the history-based, U.S.-centric model by presenting alternate texts and approaches to the study of the *global* black experience. We must necessarily begin by questioning the idea, definition, and practice of blackness: what is it? How/did a unified black identity emerge from disparate people, practices, and experiences? After investigating the formation of the African diaspora, we will consider texts from the Americas, Europe, and the continent, assessing each for its historical, aesthetic, political, and cultural value.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

The department

4 credits

***206s Black Women Writers: Feminist Visions from the African Diaspora**

(Writing-intensive course; Same as Gender Studies 204) This course will explore the influence of feminist politics on the writing of women throughout the African Diaspora. By exploring the different cultural, political, and historical contexts in which these writers work, we will attempt to define the continuities and conflicts that exist within the vast field of black women's writing. Why, when, and how did a black feminist consciousness emerge? How did racial tensions within the predominantly white feminist movement lead to the development of a separate black "womanist"/Third World agenda? How does feminist literature of the African Diaspora challenge negative stereotypes and misrepresentations of black women's realities?

Meets multicultural requirement; meets

Humanities I-A requirement

The department

Prereq. African American and African Studies 101 or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***208f Introduction to Twentieth-Century Critical Race Theory**

(See Critical Social Thought 253)

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

L. Wilson

4 credits

210f African American Culture and Society (Community-Based Learning course) Reviews theory and policy research that targets durable (race, gender, and class) inequalities.

How has recent policy (especially involving schools and prisons) shaped public life and private sector capacity in communities of color from 1976 to the present? What are the consequences of governing through crime and punishment? Is poor discipline a viable approach to strengthening the social fabric? Data and personal narrative will be used. Brings together Mount Holyoke students and women in the final stages of their sentences in Hampden County, who collaborate as peers in a semester-long exploration of these issues. The semester culminates with a reading and completion ceremony.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

L. Wilson

Prereq. admission by interview only, jr & amp; sr only except by permission; email

lbwilson@mtholyoke.edu for appointment; 4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

1-4 credits

***308s Luminous Darkness: African American Social Thought**

Examines the causes of and proposed solutions to "the Negro problem" in post-Civil War American public policy. Focuses on the life, work, and legacies of DuBois. Drawing on domestic and diasporic fictional and non-fictional depictions of black life in the "DuBoisian century" the course considers different responses to his 1903 question, "How does it feel to be a problem?" Examining theories, arguments, movements and policies targeting blacks and their environment allows us to criticize black modernity, assess the changing role of black intellectuals in society, evaluate "race theory" and consider dominant and marginal attempts to analyze and overcome the "color line" in America.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Social Sciences III-A requirement

L. Wilson

Prereq. 8 credits in department, permission of instructor; 4 credits

***320f Gender, Terror, and Trauma in African American Culture**

This course will explore representations of violence in African American culture, with special consideration given to literary depictions of rape and lynching. After examining the historical function of violence within the United States, students will perform a comparative analysis of texts authored by black women and men. We will also explore cultural, social, and political movements (abolition, civil rights, black power, black feminism, hip-hop) that have emerged in response to the violent policing of black bodies. How has violence been used to terrorize blacks? What role has violence played in the African American struggle for liberation and equality?

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement
The department
Prereq. 8 credits in the department or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

***335f Black Feminism: Theory and Praxis: Black Feminism: Theory and Praxis**

(Writing-intensive course) This course explores foundational texts of major authors along with lesser-known contributors to the black feminist movement, from the nineteenth century to the present. It also examines the various ways in which black feminist theory has been expressed in and applied to the arts and political activism, analyzing black feminist cultural criticism as it applies to music, film, fine arts, performance, and literature. Conflicts and continuities between black and white feminists, and the role of profeminist men within the movement will be considered as well.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement
The department
Prereq. 8 credits in department or permission of instructor; 4 credits*

***340s Sex, Love, and Gender in Contemporary African American Film**

(Writing-intensive course; Same as Film Studies 320-01) This course will explore the representation in film of intimate relationships among African Americans. Confronting an ongoing history of racist, sexist, and homophobic images, films produced by and

featuring blacks can offer alternate interpretations of love, romance, and sexuality. Coupled with literature and theoretical readings by feminists and black cultural critics, students will consider the function of—and challenges to—intimacy in interpersonal relationships among African Americans. Directors under consideration include Spike Lee, Kasi Lemmons, Marlon Riggs, and Sanaa Hamri.

*Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement
The department
Prereq. 8 credits in African American and African Studies, including African American and African Studies 101; 1 meeting (2 hours) plus screening prior to class (TBA); 4 credits*

395fs Independent Study

*Does not meet a distribution requirement
The department
1-8 credits*