Welcome to Africana studies

Major Overview

Africana studies is the study of Africans and African-descended peoples. It offers a multidisciplinary, integrative hermeneutics to investigate, educate, promote and value the contributions and experiences of Africans and African-descended peoples worldwide. The department’s vision is to impart innovative, creative, solidly-grounded knowledge and understandings of Africans and the African diasporas.

Goals:

1. Students will have knowledge of the national global roles, cultural contributions and experiences of Africans and people of African descent.
2. Students will have knowledge of oral traditions, literature, art and aesthetics, expressions and conceptualizations of spiritualism within the African purview.
3. Students will have knowledge of social, political and economic history of Blacks and the evolution of Black nationalism.

Courses

Here’s a list of sample courses that students in the Africana studies major take to fulfill the major’s requirements:

**AFST 101: Intro to Africana Studies**

This course is a broad survey of some of the major themes in African and African diaspora experiences over several hundred years. It is a multi-disciplinary exploration into the lives and cultures of people of African descent and how their shared experiences shape the social, political and economic structure of the African diaspora.

It incorporates lectures, discussions, films and guest speakers to help students gain a global understanding of the processes and dynamics that impact the lives of people of African descent. The course is designed to encourage and stimulate critical thinking regarding the people of African descent experience.

*General Education: G - Global Interdependencies, W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits*
AFST 180: Music of Africa, Caribbean & Latin America

An introduction to the study of world music (ethnomusicology) through an examination of both traditional and popular music styles from different music cultures within Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas.

Topics include the study of ethnomusicology, the social status and training of musicians and performers cross-culturally, the world music business and ongoing processes of musical exchange between musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds.

General Education: A - Aesthetic Perspective, G - Global Interdependencies, four credits

AFST 251: Islamic Cultures in Africa

With a history that goes back to the seventh century, Islam is now a vital part of the African cultural landscape. This introductory course explores a range of Islamic cultural productions from the advent of Islam to modern times by Muslim men and women in different regions of Africa.

The course focuses on religious didactic writings, literature, music, architecture and documentary films in studying the syncretism of Islam and indigenous African religions and/or cultures, and in highlighting the unifying cultural influences of the religion.

General Education: H - Humanities, W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits

AFST 284C: Black Nationalism in the U.S.

This course traces the evolution of Black nationalism from the era of the United States revolution to the 1960s. Though a persistent theme in the African-American experience, Black nationalism has tended to become especially influential at certain historical junctures, most notably the 1850s, the 1920s and the 1960s. The course is organized around the core issues of race, nationality, class, gender and sexual orientation.

This course is appropriate for first-year students.

General Education: W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits

AFST 387A: Immigrant & Refugee Health
The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with significant health and health service issues that currently (and will for the foreseeable future) challenge the lives and adaptation of immigrants and refugees in the U.S.

Students will be provided with an overview of the health status of immigrant and refugee populations. With a focus on migration, resettlement, adaptation, epidemiological, behavioral, cultural, socioeconomic, legal and political factors impacting health, and interventions to address needs.

*General Education: W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits*

**AFST 171: Intro to African Religion**

E. A. Wallis Budge defined African religion as “the worship of the souls of the dead, commonly called Ancestor Worship.” Also, Diodorus, a Greek historian, wrote over 2,000 years ago that Blacks were “the first to be taught to honor the gods and to hold sacrifices and processions and festivals and other rites by which men honor the deity; and ... sacrifices practiced among the Ethiopians [Black people] ...are those which are the most pleasing to heaven.”

Thus, the course reviews the history of religion as a discipline, nature and phenomenon of African religion, conception of God and gods and goddesses, ancestors and elders, witchcraft, and rituals and symbols that offer meaning to the lives of believers.

*General Education: H - Humanities, W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits*

**AFST 317: African Women & Feminism**

The focus this year is on immigration and the case of Nafissatou Diallo. We begin by determining the causative factors of African immigration to the United States. We will focus specifically on African women's immigration; the U.S. immigration policies toward African women; and the lives of African women in the U.S.

Thereafter, we will attend to the rape charges that Nafissatou Diallo brought against the former IMF director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. The rest of the course will be devoted to examining what happened to her. At the end of the course we will be able to see and understand the myriad components of the case.

*General Education: G - Global Interdependencies, H - Humanities, W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits*
AFST 373: The African Novel

This course will explore the development of the novel in Africa both historically and thematically. On the one hand, we shall trace the formal growth of the genre, beginning with its emergence from the oral narrative traditions of the continent, through its attachment to certain European trends and techniques, to its present achievement in blending various traditions (African and non-African) in the presentation of key problems in contemporary African sociopolitical life.

On the other hand, we shall examine some of the key concerns that have occupied one generation of writers after another: e.g., the European presence; apartheid; failures of the post-independence leadership; women in African literature and society.

General Education: W - Writing (Harpur req), four credits

Post-Graduation

Africana studies at Binghamton University prepares students for a wide array of careers, such as:

- business
- government
- public health
- technologies
- teaching
- medicine
- psychology
- social work
- counseling
- law enforcement

Our graduates have gone on to continue their studies at prestigious graduate schools including:

- Harvard University
- Yale University
- New York University
- Columbia University
- University of Michigan
- Boston University

Research Areas

Internship projects are completed under guidance of a faculty member in an institution, agency or program, and a written analytical report of the experience is required.
For internship opportunities, interested students are encouraged to consult with the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development.

Students can also take AFST 397, AFST 491, or AFST 497 for independent study credits. Additionally, Africana studies majors can pursue independent research on a topic of their interest in consultation with a faculty member.

Thank you!

For more information contact the Africana Studies Department at:

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