

AFRICAN & AFRICAN-AMER STUDIES (AAAS)

Course Descriptions

AAAS 106 Intro to the African Past 3 Credit Hours

This course is a survey of the social, economic, political, intellectual and cultural heritage of the African peoples from pre-history to the present. The emphasis is on the internal dynamics of the African society through five millennia, as well as the impact of external forces on African life. Themes of particular interest: the roots of African culture, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the African Diaspora in the New World, the European Conquest and the character of the colonial order and the ongoing struggle to end the legacy of alien domination. (YR)

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

AAAS 239 Storytelling: African American Literature 4 Credit Hours

A study of African-American literature designed to expose students to important periods, works, and authors within historical context. Topics will include slavery, reconstruction, the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance, and the contemporary renaissance in Black women's literature. Students will be required to read, critically discuss, analyze, and write their responses to several literary genres that will be incorporated (fiction, drama, poetry).

AAAS 250 Introduction to Black Popular Culture 4 Credit Hours

This course explores Black popular culture as a powerful, dynamic site of creativity, resistance, identity formation, and social and political commentary. Students will examine how Black artists, creators, and communities have shaped—and been shaped by—American and global pop culture. Through music, media, film, literature, and digital platforms, we analyze issues of race, class, gender, politics, commodification, and representation, drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship and cultural critique. (F, YR)

AAAS 300 Introduction to AAAS 4 Credit Hours

This gateway course in the African and African American Studies Program introduces students to the intellectual debates, historical perspectives and cultural issues central to the field of African and African American Studies. The course readings draw from the disciplinary strengths of the Humanities as well as the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Course materials include selections from literature, film, music, art, drama, folk and popular culture. The course content is supplemented by attendance at off-campus events and visits to institutions featuring significant aspects of African and African American history and culture. (F, W, S).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman

AAAS 304 Studies in Detroit History and Culture 4 Credit Hours

This interdisciplinary course explores the political, social, and cultural history of Detroit by examining ways various groups and classes have interacted with and been shaped by structures of power and influence. This course highlights trade and commerce, newcomers, and the influence of organizations and institutions within the contexts of labor, race, ethnic, and religious histories and current affairs, and examines how these fit into the evolution of Detroit from the 19th century to the present. Where pertinent the influence of national and international movements are included. (YR)

AAAS 313 African American Religious Experience 4 Credit Hours

Full Title: African American Religious Experience This lecture course presents a survey of African American expressions across diverse religious traditions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and will explore contested forms of spiritual expression such as secularism and new religious movements. The course tracks these experiences from the late 18th to the 21st century in light of the contemporaneous context of social, political, and economic forces in the United States. No prerequisites. (YR).

AAAS 316 African American History I: 1619-1865 4 Credit Hours

This course traces the experience of African Americans from their first landing in Virginia in 1619 through slavery and the Civil War. Emphasis will be placed on the origins of racism, the development of the slave system in the United States and the historical developments that led to the Civil War. (YR).

AAAS 320 African-American Music History 4 Credit Hours

A study of African American Music History from its African origins through the present. An understanding of the broad cultural, political, social, economic and media forces that have affected African Americans, their music and history- and in turn, the many important ways that African American music has influenced culture. Course examines multiple genre of music including classical, spiritual, jazz, blues and rap. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is

AAAS 325 Econ of Poverty/Discrimination 3 Credit Hours

An analysis of the economic aspects of poverty and discrimination. Emphasis on the theoretical economic causes of poverty and the economic bases for discriminating behavior, the impact of poverty and discrimination on individuals and society, and the effect of reform policies on the two problems. (AY).

Prerequisite(s): ECON 201 and ECON 202

AAAS 333 Intro to Gospel Music 4 Credit Hours

This course explores the history and aesthetics of Black sacred music within cultural context. Major figures (Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, The Winans Family, Kirk Franklin), periods (slavery, Great Migration, Civil Rights movement), and styles (folk and arranged Negro spirituals, congregational songs, and gospel songs - traditional to contemporary) will be studied through recording, videos, film and at least one field experience. Underlying the course is the theory (Mellonee Burnim and Pearl Williams-Jones) that gospel music is an expression of African American culture that fuses both African and European elements into a unique whole. (OC).

AAAS 340 Beyond Race: Understanding Human Variation 4 Credit Hours

This course examines the concept of race from a biocultural perspective. It focuses on several intertwined themes, including: (1) the nature of human biological variation, (2) how human populations have adapted to diverse environments across the world, (3) how Western scientific thought and colonization influenced ideas about race, and (4) how the concept of race has varied both cross-culturally and over time. Students will be asked to critically evaluate current and historical concepts of race and human variation, and to apply this understanding to contemporary issues. Prerequisite ANTH 101 recommended. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Sophomore or Junior or Senior

AAAS 345 West Africa Since 1800 4 Credit Hours

A history of the West African peoples since 1800, which focuses on their unique cultural heritage. Themes include: West Africa before the advent of alien domination, the European Conquest, West Africa under the Colonial regimes, and the liquidation of colonial rule and the reassertion of West African independence. (AY).

AAAS 3634 History of Islam in the US 4 Credit Hours

This course traces the long history of Islam and of Muslims in the United States (1730s-present), paying careful attention to the interaction among Muslims across the dividing lines of race, gender, immigrant generations, sect, political orientation, and class, and between Muslims and other Americans. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Sophomore or Junior or Senior or Graduate

AAAS 3640 Black Intellectual History 4 Credit Hours

Full Course Title: Black Intellectual History: From Africa to the Diaspora
This course will bridge thinkers in Africa and the African Diaspora, i.e., North America, the Caribbean, and South America. It examines African and Diasporic intellectual movements from Ancient Egypt and Ethiopia to the present. Authors studied will include C.L.R. James, Frederick Douglass, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Julius Nyerere, David Walker, Nelson Mandela, W.E.B. DuBois, Franz Fanon, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cornel West. (YR).

AAAS 367 Religion and Resistance 4 Credit Hours

This course examines how religion and spirituality as a cultural expression has been instrumental in influencing social, political, and economic thought and the action of violent and nonviolent resistance. In such, African Americans have affirmed their humanity, their citizenship, and have exerted mechanisms of protest and change that have in-kind influenced similar thought and activity around the globe. When contemporary students are aware of this history at all, it is often without the knowledge or understanding of the various forms of resistance and the range of reason and spirituality behind this activity. The course will present key figures and movements as well as forms of resistance as religious and/or spiritual activity and thought. (AY).

AAAS 368 African American History II: 1865-Present 4 Credit Hours

The history of blacks in America is traced from the Reconstruction era and the rise of Jim Crow segregation to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's and the current period. Special attention is paid to the migration of blacks to the north and the social-economic situation which they encountered there. (AY).

AAAS 369 Civil Rights Movement in Amer 4 Credit Hours

A survey of race relations and civil rights activity from the late 19th century to the present. The principal focus, however, is on the period since World War II, especially on the mass-based Southern civil rights movement (1955-1965) and the various policy debates and initiatives of the past thirty years, most notably affirmative action and busing. We also examine critiques of non-violence and integrationism. (AY).

AAAS 371 African Exper in the Americas 3 Credit Hours

The course is a survey of African populations and cultures from 1500 to the present throughout the Americas. The focus of the course is on the Caribbean and Latin American contexts of these populations, but comparisons to North America will be made. Topics include the slavery, the relationship between Africans and indigenous populations, religions, politics, music, and questions of race and ethnicity. Readings will include ethnographic description, history, biography and fiction. (YR).

Prerequisite(s): ANTH 101

AAAS 385 Black Cinema 4 Credit Hours

The course will examine selected films from African American and African film traditions in order to analyze how their cultural production is responsive to the conditions of social oppression, economic underdevelopment, and neo-colonialism. How film traditions define "Black aesthetics" will also be discussed. (AY).

AAAS 388 W. African Music: Trad.&Glob. 4 Credit Hours

West African popular music contains a unique mixture of African, Cuban, European and American influences. With the advent of radio and recording, music that was once locally based is now part of a national and international popular music industry. This course offers an overview of modern West African music, both traditional and popular. The course begins with an introduction to traditional West African instruments and musical genres. Next, there is an exploration of the fusion of traditional African styles with European, Cuban and American styles during and after the colonial era. The course culminates with an examination of the contributions of West African musicians to the World Music scene, focusing on issues of representation and Fair Trade. (OC).

AAAS 389 Odyssey of Black Men in Amer 3 Credit Hours

This course will examine the struggle of African American men for personal, political, and creative expression. This course incorporates several literary genres (narrative, fiction, essay, drama, and poetry) and the literary voices of black men who range from professional writers to politicians, from athletes to actors. Students will be required to critically read, discuss, analyze, and write their own responses to the literature found in the texts. (YR).

Prerequisite(s): (COMP 106 or COMP 220 or COMP 270 or COMP 280 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 40 or Composition Placement Score with a score of 107) and (ENGL 200 or ENGL 230 or ENGL 231 or ENGL 232 or ENGL 233 or ENGL 235 or ENGL 236 or ENGL 237 or ENGL 239)

AAAS 390 Topics in Af & Af Am Studies 3 Credit Hours

This course examines problems and issues in selected areas of African and African American Studies. The specific title of the course will change in the Schedule of Classes according to content. Course may be repeated for credit when specific topic differs. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate or Professional Development

AAAS 393 Black Women, Rel & Spirituality 4 Credit Hours

This lecture course surveys descriptive and critical literature relevant to the religious and spiritual experience and thought of African diasporic women. Studying religiosity and spirituality among this population helps students understand this influential, culturally-constructed world view of Black women as they engage in a variety of institutions including healthcare, economic activity, the criminal justice system, politics, and social relationships. The course gives particular attention to Black feminist and Womanist literature on these topics. (F).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman

AAAS 403 Race, Ethnicity and Immigration 4 Credit Hours

The status of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States with particular reference to the social dynamics involved with regard to majority-minority relations. Topics of study include inequality, segregation, pluralism, the nature and causes of prejudice and discrimination and the impact that such patterns have upon American life. Students cannot receive credit for both SOC 403 and SOC 503. (F, W).

Prerequisite(s): SOC 200 or SOC 201

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Level is

AAAS 433 Race/Ethnic Health 4 Credit Hours

Full Course Title: Race, Ethnicity and Community Health This course begins with a broad overview of health disparities in the United States, with a focus on three types of social inequality – race/ethnicity (and nativity status), socioeconomic status (SES), and gender. Following this introduction, epidemiological issues, health behaviors, health care services, and health and social issues specific to various minority populations in the U.S. are examined in greater depth. The underlying position of the course is that understanding why these groups are at a higher risk of developing poor health outcomes is crucial to developing better health care and health policy interventions and moving towards health equity. (F, OC).

AAAS 4401 Seminar: African Diaspora 4 Credit Hours

Research seminar on the history of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World. This course covers examples of classic texts in the field, as well as significant new scholarship, with an emphasis on critical reading, analysis, and the development of an independent research project. Students gain a deeper understanding of the significance of the African Diaspora in the New World, derived from lectures and discussions providing an overview of this subject, as well as the micro views gleaned from sharing classroom presentation about students' individual research topics. The graduate version of this course includes weightier readings and assignments, with a research paper for potential publication. (OC).

Prerequisite(s): HIST 300 or AAAS 275 or HIST 345 or AAAS 345

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman or Sophomore or Graduate

AAAS 449 Race, Ethnicity and Family 4 Credit Hours

U.S. racial and ethnic families are examined in relationship to the historical and contemporary forces that have shaped their patterns of family life, socioeconomic positioning, educational attainment, and racial/ethnic identities. These forces include the influence of structural racism and discrimination, urbanization, and poverty. The patterns of family life include parental roles, family structure, kinship relations, gender roles, and the maintenance of racial and ethnic identities. (YR).

Prerequisite(s): SOC 200 or SOC 201

AAAS 469 Contemporary African Amer Lit 4 Credit Hours

An intensive study of major 20th-century and 21st-century African-American writers. Fiction, poetry, autobiography, and drama will be examined but one genre will be stressed in any given term, e.g., the novel. Lectures will provide historical and biographical context for analysis and discussion of the works. Students cannot receive credit for both ENGL 469 and ENGL 569. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Graduate

AAAS 470 Black Women / Lit, Film, Music 4 Credit Hours

This course will examine works produced by Black women authors, activists, filmmakers and musical performers in order to determine the methods they have incorporated in order to challenge and eradicate the prevailing stereotypes about Black women while advancing their own personal and racial agendas. It will also focus on the extent to which race, gender and class have shaped the creative work of Black women. Students will be required to read, discuss, analyze and write their own responses to the works of such firebrands as author Zora Neale Hurston, activist Ida B. Wells, filmmaker Julie Dash, and singer Billie Holiday.

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is

Cannot enroll if Level is

AAAS 473 Race, Crime, and Justice 4 Credit Hours

This course is an analysis of race and its relation to crime in the criminal justice system. Students will analyze and interpret the perceived connection between race and crime, while exploring the dynamics of race, crime, and justice in the United States. This course is designed to familiarize students with current research and theories of racial discrimination within America's criminal justice system. (W).

Prerequisite(s): SOC 200 or SOC 201

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman

AAAS 477 African American English 3 Credit Hours

An examination of the structure, history and use of African-American English. Topics will include the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of African-American English, theories of origin, linguistic repertoire and code-switching in African-American communities, the Ebonics controversy, and the role of this variety in education and identity formation. Student cannot receive credit for both AAAS 477 and AAAS 577.

Prerequisite(s): LING 280 or LING 281 or LING 480

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

AAAS 491 Topics in African Diaspora 4 Credit Hours

This course deals with African Diasporan history from the 19th century to the present. The method is by definition cross-cultural and comparative, requiring that the works or figures under study represent a diversity of Diasporan nationalities and/or cultures. The course may focus on a wide range of topics. Students cannot receive credit for AAAS 491 and AAAS 591 when the topic title is the same. (OC).

Restriction(s):

Can enroll if Class is Sophomore or Junior or Senior

AAAS 491C Topics in AAAS 4 Credit Hours

Topic: Senior Research Seminar: Africa and the New World Diaspora. A history research seminar exploring the broad history of Africa and its descendants in the New World. Emphasis will be placed on a series of cross-cultural but interconnected themes including: African civilizations, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and comparative systems of servitude, the Haitian Revolution, the American Civil War, the European conquest of Africa, trans-Atlantic systems of inequality, the World Wars, the African intellectual renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, and Independence Movements in Africa. (OC).

Prerequisite(s): HIST 300

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman or Sophomore or Graduate

AAAS 498 Thesis 4 Credit Hours

Students pursuing the AAAS major or minor or a concentration in African and African American Studies may choose to complete their coursework with a final thesis project that reflects research interests developed during their course of study. This thesis, which can be used to fulfill four (4) hours of the required upper-division coursework, will be written under the direction of a faculty member whose scholarly expertise is compatible with the research field(s) of the student. (OC).

Prerequisite(s): AAAS 275 or AAAS 239 or ENGL 239 or HIST 106 or AAAS 106

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman or Sophomore

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

AAAS 499 Independent Study 4 Credit Hours

Students pursuing the AAAS major or minor as well as those interested in focusing on some particular area in African and African American Studies may wish to do research on a topic not covered in the regular AAAS curriculum. This course provides an opportunity for students to conduct such research under the direction of a qualified faculty member. The project must be defined in advance in writing. (OC).

Prerequisite(s): AAAS 275 or AAAS 239 or ENGL 239 or AAAS 106 or HIST 106

Restriction(s):

Cannot enroll if Class is Freshman or Sophomore

Can enroll if Level is Undergraduate

*An asterisk denotes that a course may be taken concurrently.

Frequency of Offering

The following abbreviations are used to denote the frequency of offering: (F) fall term; (W) winter term; (S) summer term; (F, W) fall and winter terms; (YR) once a year; (AY) alternating years; (OC) offered occasionally