

# AFRICANA STUDIES

The Africana Studies Program is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and decolonial intellectual, philosophical, and political project that centers the histories, languages, politics, religions/spiritualities and oral & expressive cultures of Black peoples throughout the African diasporas. Africana studies considers how racial blackness, and the concept of race itself, influences the development of the modern world. We investigate the social, historical, cultural and aesthetic works and practices of Black communities throughout the diaspora with a particular focus on the centuries-long histories, politics, and cultures of how Black women, Black queer and trans folks have been and continue to be at the forefront of Black liberation movements.

The Africana Studies program values a range of interdisciplinary research and course foci, including forced or choiced migration, decolonization, political economy and globalization, anti-Black racism, institutional power, oppression, heritage, joy, resistance, and liberation. These topics encourage students to appreciate and critique the multiplicity of what Blackness is, while creating visions for all that it can be. We are committed to speaking truth to power and working to redistribute power equitably and justly, ensuring that students have tools to examine their own positionality, navigate systems, and effect change. The interdisciplinary nature of our program affords students the opportunity to experience a vast exploration of the lives, knowledge systems, and cultures of Africa and African descendants throughout the world.

The Minor in Africana Studies at Bryn Mawr College trains students to think critically, write analytically, and engage expansive theoretical and methodological frameworks. Students are encouraged to contemplate literary, artistic, and cultural expressions as well as archives, and political & social movements and institutions. Our course offerings, pedagogical commitments, and theoretical underpinnings are grounded in Black Queer Feminisms throughout the African diasporas. We are particularly invested in cultivating, mentoring, and nurturing an intellectual, philosophical, and political project of Black Studies that centers the political and scholarly labor of Black women and Black Queer & Trans scholars.

## Requirements

Students are encouraged to begin their work in the Africana Studies Program by taking any one of six gateway courses:

Code	Title	Units
HIST B102	Introduction to African Civilizations	1
AFST H101		1
AFST B202	Black Queer Diaspora	1
AFST B204	#BlackLivesMatterEverywhere	1
AFST B206	Black Latinx Americas: Movements, Politics, & Cultures	1
AFST B234	Advancing Racial Justice: Engaging with Community Organizat	1
AFST B300	Black Women's Studies	1

The required gateway course provides students with an intellectual experience in multiple disciplines as well as the foundations for subsequent courses in Africana Studies. The course should be completed by the end of the student's junior year. We also encourage our Minors to also take the following cross-listed courses as part of their academic training in the field of Black Studies:

Code	Title	Units
ARCH B101	Introduction to Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology	1
ARTD B138	Hip Hop Lineages	0.5
ENGL B247	Introduction to 20th Century African American Literature	1
ENGL B372	Black Ecofeminism(s): Critical Approaches	1
EDUC B200	Community Learning Collaborative: Practicing Partnership	1
EDUC B266	Geographies of School and Learning: Urban Education Reconsidered	1
HIST B243	Topics: Atlantic Cultures	1

## Minor Requirements

The requirements for a minor in Africana Studies are the following:

One-semester core course:

- AFST B202 Black Queer Diaspora
- AFST B204 #BlackLivesMatterEverywhere
- AFST B206 Black Latinx Americas: Movements, Politics, & Cultures
- AFST B234 Advancing Racial Justice: Engaging with Community Organizat
- AFST B300 Black Women's Studies
- HST B102 Course HST B102 Not Found
- HST B200 Course HST B200 Not Found
- Students may not count core courses twice. Any additional core course will count as a general elective.
- Five additional semester courses:
- Courses must be selected from at least two different departments and divisions.
- Chosen from an annual Bryn Mawr-approved list of courses at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Penn, or Swarthmore, or by permission of the Bryn Mawr Africana Steering Committee.
- At least three of these courses must be taken at Bryn Mawr or Haverford.
- One course from studying away may fulfill this requirement if approved in advance by the Steering Committee.
- At least one of the additional courses should normally be at the 300-level.
- Units of Independent Study (403) may be used to fulfill this requirement.
- Only two courses of these five Africana Studies courses may overlap with courses taken to fulfill requirements in the student's major.

Students are encouraged to organize course work along prototypical routes:

- Regional or area studies; for example, focusing on Black people in Latin America, the English-speaking Caribbean or North America.
- Thematic emphases; for example, exploring class politics, conflicts and/or economic development in West and East Africa.
- Comparative emphases; for example, problems of development, governance, public health or family and gender.
- The student should indicate the proposed focus of the minor in writing at the time of registration for the minor.
- Capstone experience:

- Should consolidate or synthesize the student's focus in the minor (e.g. a thematic or comparative emphasis).
- Constitutes a sixth course or its equivalent.
- Can be satisfied by taking a capstone course at the 300-level within the major or another field.
- If the department in which the student is majoring requires a thesis, the Africana Studies requirement can be satisfied by writing on a topic related to the minor that is approved by the student's department; if the major does not require a thesis or the student does not choose to write a thesis, a seminary project may be substituted formulated within the framework of a capstone course or as an independent study project.

#### **AFST B101 Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies (1 Unit)**

This interdisciplinary course situates the study of Black lives, known interchangeably as African American Studies, Black Studies, Africana Studies, or African Diaspora Studies, within the context of ongoing struggles against anti-Black racism. We will explore the founding principles and purposes of the field, the evolution of its imperatives, its key debates, and the lives and missions of its progenitors and practitioners. In doing so we will survey, broadly and deeply, the diverse historical, political, social, cultural, religious/spiritual, and economic experiences and expressions of the African Diaspora in the Americas and beyond.

#### **AFST B125 Introduction to Black Geographies (1 Unit)**

This course interrogates the relationship between Blackness and the social production (and imagining) of space and place across the Americas. Drawing on geography, history, ethnography, and other disciplines in the humanities, we will examine the tensions and possibilities that emerge when Black people are rendered "ungeographic" (McKittrick 2006) as a fundamental component of colonial-racial capitalism. We explore how Blackness across the diaspora is shaped by anti-Blackness but also by a continuous tradition of creating spaces of freedom.

#### **AFST B150 Topics in the African American Experience (1 Unit)**

This is a topics course. Topic will vary.

#### **AFST B202 Black Queer Diaspora (1 Unit)**

This interdisciplinary course explores over two decades of work produced by and about Black Queer Diasporic communities throughout the circum-Atlantic world. While providing an introduction to various artists and intellectuals of the Black Queer Diaspora, this course examines the viability of Black Queer Diaspora world-making praxis as a form of theorizing. We will interrogate the transnational and transcultural mobility of specific Black Queer Diasporic forms of peacemaking, erotic knowledge productions, as well as the concept of "aesthetics" more broadly. Our aim is to use the prism of Blackness/Queerness/Diaspora to highlight the dynamic relationship between Black Diaspora Studies and Queer Studies. By the end of this course students will have a strong understanding of how systems of power work to restrict the freedoms of Black Queer and Trans communities, and how Black LGBTQ people have lived, organized, and created in spite of and in response to these oppressions. This interdisciplinary undergraduate upper-level course will utilize academic texts accompanied by poetry, fiction, film, television, and visual art to understand Black Queer and Trans subjectivities.

#### **AFST B204 #BlackLivesMatterEverywhere (1 Unit)**

#BlackLivesMatterEverywhere: Ethnographies & Theories on the African Diaspora is a interdisciplinary course closely examines political, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual mobilizations for Black Lives on local, global and hemispheric levels. We will engage an array of materials ranging from literature, history, oral histories, folklore, dance, music, popular culture, social media, ethnography, and film/documentaries. By centering the political and intellectual labor of Black women and LGBTQ folks at the forefront of the movements for Black Lives, we unapologetically excavate how #BlackLivesMatterEverywhere has a long and rich genealogy in the African diaspora. Lastly, students will be immersed in Black queer feminist theorizations on diaspora, political movements, and the multiplicities of Blackness.

#### **AFST B206 Black Latinx Americas: Movements, Politics, & Cultures (1 Unit)**

This interdisciplinary course examines the extensive and diverse histories, social movements, political mobilization and cultures of Black people (Afrodescendientes) in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the course will begin in the slavery era, most of our scholarly-activist attention will focus on the histories of peoples of African descent in Latin America after emancipation to the present. Some topics we will explore include: the particularities of slavery in the Americas, the Haitian Revolution and its impact on articulations of race and nation in the region, debates on "racial democracy," the relationship between gender, class, race, and empire, and recent attempts to write Afro-Latin American histories from "transnational" and "diaspora" perspectives. We will engage the works of historians, activists, artists, anthropologists, sociologists, and political theorists who have been key contributors to the rich knowledge production on Black Latin America.

#### **AFST B210 Black History in American Cinema (1 Unit)**

This course will serve as an overview of the history of Black Cinema and the portrayals of persons of African descent in cinema from the early 1900s to the present. This includes developments from Hollywood, independent filmmakers, and experimental foreign films. Additionally, and more importantly, we will venture to gain a deeper comprehension of the politics of film, as well as the ways that cinema has been used as a form of socialization, and/or self-expression.

#### **AFST B234 Advancing Racial Justice: Engaging with Community Organizat (1 Unit)**

This course will provide opportunities for students to engage with a diverse group of Philadelphia area community-based organizations and/or the neighborhoods of those they serve. Through time in the field, reflection essays, small group work, and class readings and discussions, students will learn about and how to use racial equity tools (RET) and develop an understanding of: the theories, practices, and levels of DEIAR, the dynamics of system-wide change, and the impact of transformative and restorative justice on individuals, organizations, and communities.

**AFST B300 Black Women's Studies (1 Unit)**

Black Feminist Studies, which emerged in the 1970s as a corrective to both Black Studies and Women's Studies, probes the silences, erasures, distortions, and complexities surrounding the experiences of peoples of African descent wherever they live. The early scholarship was comparable to the painstaking excavation projects of an archaeologist digging for hidden treasures. A small group of mainly black feminist scholars have been responsible for reconstructing the androcentric African American literary tradition by establishing the importance of black women's literature going back to the nineteenth century. In this interdisciplinary seminar, students closely examine the historical, critical and theoretical perspectives that led to the development of Black Feminist theory/praxis. The course will draw from the 19th century to the present, but will focus on the contemporary Black feminist intellectual tradition that achieved notoriety in the 1970s and initiated a global debate on "western" and global feminisms. Central to our exploration will be the analysis of the intersectional relationship between theory and practice, and of race, to gender, class, and sexuality. We will conclude the course with the exploration of various expressions of contemporary Black feminist thought around the globe as a way of broadening our knowledge of feminist theory.

**AFST B400 Senior Capstone (1 Unit)****AFST B403 Supervised Work (0.5-1 Unit)****ANTH B367 Policing the Crisis 2020: Police Narrative and Black Lives Matter (1 Unit)**

The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, sparked by the police murder of George Floyd, led to a collapse in public support for the police. Radical demands to defund or abolish the police gained prominence and public legitimacy. This course studies the ways that police and their allies have worked to reassert police authority in the years since 2020. We will draw on Stuart Hall's classic essay, "Policing the Crisis," which examined police propaganda after a similar upheaval in the 1970s. Using Hall's work as a model, we will design and conduct a research project, using archival and qualitative methods to track the reassertion of police authority since 2020. At the end of the course, we will publicize our findings.

**COML B213 Theory in Practice: Critical Discourses in the Humanities (1 Unit)**

What is a postcolonial subject, a queer gaze, a feminist manifesto? And how can we use (as readers of texts, art, and films) contemporary studies on animals and cyborgs, object-oriented ontology, zombies, storyworlds, neuroaesthetics? By bringing together the study of major theoretical currents of the 20th century and the practice of analyzing literary works in the light of theory, this course aims at providing students with skills to use literary theory in their own scholarship. The selection of theoretical readings reflects the history of theory (psychoanalysis, structuralism, narratology), as well as the currents most relevant to the contemporary academic field: Post-structuralism, Post-colonialism, Gender Studies, and Ecocriticism. They are paired with a diverse range of short stories across multiple language traditions (Poe, Kafka, Camus, Borges, Calvino, Morrison, Djbar, Murakami, Ngozi Adichie) that we discuss along with our study of theoretical texts. We will discuss how to apply theory to the practice of interpretation and of academic writing, and how theoretical ideas shape what we are reading. The class will be conducted in English, with an additional hour taught by the instructor of record in the target language for students wishing to take the course for language credit.

**ENGL B208 Studies in Genre: Black Memoir (1 Unit)**

This course explores and interrogates the literary genre of memoir. More specifically, it takes up Black memoirs and Black political autobiography, thinking through the overlaps and the differences between these forms. Focusing on the final quarter of the 20th century and the contemporary, readings will include *The Autobiography of Angela Davis* (1974), *Assata: An Autobiography* (1987); Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother* (2006); and Frank Wilderson's *Afropessimism* (2020). What differences structure the memoir of the Black academic and the autobiography of the Black fugitive? Where do these differences collapse in theory and/or in lived experience? The course will delve into late 20th century and contemporary Black political movements and political philosophy as it pertains to these texts.

**ENGL B247 Introduction to 20th Century African American Literature (1 Unit)**

This survey course is an introduction to some of the major authors, canonical texts, and defining critical debates of African American literature from 1899-1989. Selected authors will include Angelina Grimké, Nella Larsen, Jean Toomer, Zora Neale Hurston, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Toni Morrison. Contending with the entanglements of socio-political and aesthetic questions the course will explore the following themes: the roots of African American literature as a "peasant" literature; the role of white funders and audiences in African American literature; racial uplift ideology and the politics of class; questions of gender and sexuality; the Black Arts Movement; geographical (urban vs rural) divides and ecological elements of the tradition. The course will revolve around close-reading and (written) interpretation within (and beyond) the historical and literary context of the works in question. Readings include novels, short stories, poetry, drama, autobiography and essays from across the 20th century. The course is open to all and assumes no prior knowledge of African American literature.

**ENGL B290 History & Theory: The Afterlives of Slavery (1 Unit)**

This course will introduce students to contemporary and historical debates on New World chattel slavery with an emphasis on what Saidiya Hartman has coined as "the afterlives" of slavery. With Hartman's groundbreaking historical and theoretical work, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in 19th Century America* (1997), as well as her memoir, *Lose Your Mother* (2006) as foundational texts, we will explore the applications, implications, and limits of this framework for understanding the structural position and lived experience(s) of Black persons in and beyond the present-day United States. Course readings will also include the work of Black sociologists, Marxist historians, and creative writers, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Orlando Patterson, Dorothy Roberts, Frank Wilderson, and Christina Sharpe. Course questions include: What is the relationship between the enslaved past and the present for persons of African descent in and beyond the U.S? How does blackness inflect would-be universal categories such as "the human" or "the worker?" What does it mean to think racial slavery as a relation alongside or in addition to its being thought as an event?

**ENGL B322 Black Marxism (1 Unit)**

This seminar course is for students who wish to deepen their understanding of Marxist historiography and theory in and beyond literary and cultural studies. In addition to the work of Marx and classical Marxist thinkers, we will engage the work of a range of Marxist feminists as we explore the contours of Western radicalism. We'll also explore the overlaps of Marxism and black radicalism through two key texts: Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983) and Clyde Woods's *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta* (2017).

**ENGL B372 Black Ecofeminism(s): Critical Approaches (1 Unit)**

How have Black feminist authors and traditions theorized or represented the ecological world and their relationship to it? How does thinking intersectionally about gender(ing) and racialization expand or challenge conventional notions of “nature,” conservation, or environmental justice? In what ways does centering racial blackness critically reframe a host of practical and philosophical questions historically brought together under the sign “ecofeminism?” Combining history and theory, the humanities and the social sciences, this interdisciplinary course will use the work of Black feminist writers (broadly defined) across a range of genres to approach and to trouble the major paradigms and problems of contemporary Euro-American ecofeminist thought. The course uses fiction and poetry by Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Countee Cullen as a gateway to a range of critical work by Jennifer Morgan, Sylvia Wynter, Maria Mies, and Val Plumwood as it attempts to define and deconstruct what Chelsea Frazier calls “Black Feminist Ecological Thought.”

**FREN B262 Débat, discussion, dialogue (1 Unit)**

Despite their differences, all countries face similar problems. Examples of challenges include humanitarian aid international justice, the environment, economic inequalities, invisibility and access to health and food. What can we learn from each other in order to find solutions to shared problems? In this course, students will develop the skills necessary to debate and deal with international/global issues. Everyone will expand their vocabulary in areas such as: politics, commerce, human rights, cultural diplomacy to name only a few key areas. We will gain in-depth knowledge of a particular region of the Francophone world as we explore shared themes. Each student will choose a francophone country and speak from that region, using the local press as reference. This will require independent research; including developing a bibliography pertaining to your country for each of the themes we study. Students will regularly share your expertise with others in formats ranging from reports to debates.

**HART B220 Critical Approaches to Visual Representation: Landscapes, Art, & Racial Ecologies (1 Unit)**

This course is writing intensive. This course uses art, visual, and material culture to trace the plantation's centrality to colonial and post-colonial environments in the Atlantic World from the eighteenth century to the present, as a site of environmental destruction as well as parallel ecologies engendered by African-descended peoples' aesthetic and botanical contestation. Objects to be considered include landscape painting, plantation cartography, scientific imagery, environmental art, and ecologically motivated science fiction. This course was formerly numbered HART B111; students who previously completed HART B111 may not repeat this course. Prerequisite: one course in History of Art at the 100-level or permission of the instructor. Enrollment preference given to majors and minors in History of Art.