AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES


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The African American Studies major examines, from numerous disciplinary perspectives, the experiences of people of African descent in Black Atlantic societies such as the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America, including the global impact of those experiences. Students in the department explore the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social development of Black Atlantic societies. Majors work to become informed thinkers who are intellectually prepared to offer clarity and insight to ongoing academic and public debates centered in the discipline.

African American Studies majors become knowledgeable about the history, primary methodologies, and interdisciplinary breadth of the field. Students learn to critique, articulate, analyze, and interpret universal themes concerning both individuals in society and group interactions as they relate to the work of scholars, scientists, writers, artists, musicians, economists, and entrepreneurs.

African American Studies offers training of special interest to those considering admission to graduate or professional schools and careers in education, journalism, law, the arts, business management, city planning, international relations, politics, psychology, publishing, public health, or social work. The interdisciplinary structure of the department offers students an opportunity to satisfy the increasingly rigorous expectations of admissions committees and prospective employers.

African American Studies can be taken either as a stand-alone major or as one of two majors in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies. Pertinent regulations can be found under Two Majors (http://catalog.yale.edu/archive/2016-2017/ycps/academic-regulations/special-arrangements/#twomajors) in section K of the Academic Regulations.

Requirements of the major  The major in African American Studies requires twelve term courses, including seven core courses and five electives in an area of concentration. The seven core courses include the African American history sequence AFAM 160 and , which can be taken in either order; one course in the humanities relevant to African American studies; one course in the social sciences relevant to African American studies; the junior seminar (AFAM 410); the senior colloquium (AFAM 480) and senior essay (AFAM 491). AFAM 162 will not be offered during the 2016–2017 academic year; students who need to fulfill the history requirement during this academic year should enroll in AFAM 125 during the spring term.

Area of concentration  Students majoring in African American Studies are required to choose an area of concentration comprised of five courses. This cluster of interrelated courses is intended to ground the student’s learning experience in one area of investigation. Often students will choose an area of concentration in a traditional discipline such as political science, art history, economics, sociology, American studies, history, or English language and literature. Students can also construct interdisciplinary areas of concentration that span traditional departments and encompass broader theoretical frameworks such as race and ethnicity, cultural studies, black arts, or feminism and gender studies. All majors are encouraged to take upper-level courses as part of their concentration, especially those courses centering on research and methodology.

None of the seven core courses may be counted among the required electives in the area of concentration.

Junior seminar  In their junior year students must take the junior seminar, AFAM 410. This course provides majors with theoretical and methodological bases for the work they will do during their research-oriented senior year.

Senior requirement  Senior majors participate in a colloquium in AFAM 480 that gives them an opportunity to exchange ideas with each other and with more advanced scholars. Students in AFAM 480 submit a prospectus, compile a working bibliography, begin or continue research, and write the first twenty pages of the senior essay. After completing the colloquium, each student carries out the remaining research and writing of a senior essay in AFAM 491 under the guidance of a faculty member in the chosen discipline or area of concentration.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the summer between the junior and senior years for research directly related to the senior essay. For example, field or documentary research might be undertaken in urban or rural communities in America and throughout the diaspora. The particular research topic and design are to be worked out in each case with a faculty adviser.

Credit/D/Fail  No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the major.

Study Abroad  A limited number of courses taken during sophomore and or junior semesters abroad can be counted toward the major in consultation with, and the approval of the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).
Procedures Students considering a program of study in African American Studies should consult the director of undergraduate studies as early as possible. Areas of concentration and schedules for majors must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies.

Requirements of the Major
Prerequisites None
Number of courses 12 term courses
Specific courses required AFAM 160, ,
Distribution of courses 1 relevant humanities course and 1 relevant social science course, both approved by DUS; 5 courses in area of concentration
Senior requirement Senior colloquium (AFAM 480) and senior essay (AFAM 491)