AFRICAN STUDIES (AFST)

* AFST 001b / ARCG 001b / NELC 001b, Egypt and Northeast Africa: A Multidisciplinary Approach  
  John Darnell
  An introduction to Egyptology, examining approximately 10,000 years of Nile Valley cultural records and 3,000 years of Egyptian history. The course presents an overview of the historical and archaeological study of Egypt and her southern neighbor Nubia. Various original written and visual sources are used, including the collections of the Peabody Museum and the Yale Art Gallery, with some material accessible in the classroom. Students gain a basic understanding of the hieroglyphic script and the Ancient Egyptian language, and are able to read some inscriptions in museum visits at the end of the course. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

* AFST 028b / ENGL 028b / LITR 028b, African Literature in the World  
  Cajetan Iheka
  This seminar introduces students to a subset of African literature that has entered the canon of world literature. Bookended by the writings of Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Adichie, we explore the marks of regional specificity in these works and how they transcend local geographical markers to become worldly artifacts. Our considerations include why certain texts cross the boundaries of nation and region while others remain confined within territorial bounds. We also examine advantages of the global circulation of African literary works and the pitfalls of a global readership. The class moves from an introductory unit that orient students to African and world literature to focus on close reading of primary texts informed by historical and theoretical nuances. From analyzing works responding to the colonial condition and the articulation of anticolonial sensibilities, to those narrating the African nation at independence and the postcolonial disillusionment that followed, the seminar attends to the formal and thematic implications of globalization for African literary writing. Authors include Chinua Achebe, Mariama Ba, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mbolo Mbue, NoViolet Bulawayo, Taiye Selasie, and Chimamanda Adichie. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

* AFST 128b / ARCG 128b / EGYP 128b / NELC 128b / RLST 251b, Magic and Ritual in Ancient Egypt and the Near East  
  John Darnell
  Introduction to ancient Egyptian magic and rituals with an overview on the use of magic and discussion of the different rituals and festivals attested in Ancient Egypt and the Near East. HU

AFST 175a / PLSC 175a, Africa in International Relations  
  David Simon
  This courses examines key facets of how African countries interact with the rest of the world, and with other countries on the continent. Focusing mostly on Sub-Saharan African countries, it looks at international economic relations (focusing on aid but also addressing trade, investment, and debt); peacemaking and peacebuilding; and regional governance institutions.

AFST 184b / AFAM 160b / AMST 160b / HIST 184b, The Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery  
  Edward Rugemer
  The history of peoples of African descent throughout the Americas, from the first African American societies of the sixteenth century through the century-long process of emancipation.

AFST 220a / HIST 417a / HSHM 220a, Histories of Confinement: From Atlantic Slavery to Social Distancing  
  Staff
  This course looks closely at the history of asylums, hospitals, prisons, and schools. It seeks to understand their workings and the interplay between bureaucratic forms, spatial and material organization, and modes of discipline, control, and remediation. It asks, how is institutional power organized, displayed, deployed, and disputed, and what are the limits and contradictions inherent in these efforts? Our readings draw from a range of contexts and disciplines to consider the relationship between the built environment and institutional life.

AFST 238a / AFAM 192a / AMST 238a / ER&M 238a, Third World Studies  
  Staff
  Introduction to the historical and contemporary theories and articulations of Third World studies (comparative ethnic studies) as an academic field and practice. Consideration of subject matters; methodologies and theories; literatures; and practitioners and institutional arrangements.

* AFST 324a / EP&E 317a / HIST 368Ja / PLSC 324a, Nelson and Winnie Mandela  
  Jonny Steinberg
  A study of Nelson and Winnie Mandela's marriage and public careers and the political and philosophical questions the marriage raises. Students examine the Mandela's conflicting ideas on race and on the colonial experience and compare them to those of Mohandas Gandhi and Franz Fanon. Students also read recent philosophical work on forgiveness and on violence in order critically to assess the politics of reconciliation that so divided the Mandelas. The course examine the politics of global celebrity and the portrayal of men and women in public media.

AFST 335b / ER&M 325b / HIST 335b, A History of South Africa  
  Daniel Magaziner
  An introduction to the history of southern Africa, especially South Africa. Indigenous communities; early colonial contact; the legacies of colonial rule; postcolonial mismanagement; the vagaries of the environment; the mineral revolution; segregationist regimes; persistent inequality and crime since the end of apartheid; the specter of AIDS; postcolonial challenges in Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique.

AFST 340b / HIST 340b, Africa in the Era of the Slave Trade  
  Robert Harms
  Examination of the tumultuous changes experienced by African societies during the era of the Atlantic slave trade, approximately 1450–1850. Focus on the complex interaction between the internal dynamics of African societies and the impact of outside forces.
* AFST 344a / HIST 344a, African Independence: A Cup of Plenty or a Poisoned Chalice?  Staff
In every African colony after World War Two there emerged nationalist movements which no longer called for civil rights as in the pre-war years but demanded self-determination. While many of them got it easy, some had to fight long and bloody wars for it. By the 1960s the colonial edifice had crumbled except for the few settler colonies in southern Africa. But even here the winds of change could not be stopped. But what did decolonization and independence mean to Africa? Did Africans get what they wanted? Was independence a cup of plenty or a poisoned chalice? In addressing these questions, this course charts the economic, political, and cultural transformations of postcolonial Africa from the 1960s to the present. The argument is this: there can be no understanding of Africa's challenges today without an inquiry into the nature of what the continent got from the departing colonial powers.  HU  o Course cr

* AFST 368a / EVST 369a / HIST 366Ja, Commodities of Colonialism in Africa  Robert Harms
This course examines historical case studies of several significant global commodities produced in Africa to explore interactions between world market forces and African resources and societies. Through the lens of four specific commodities--ivory, rubber, cotton, and diamonds--this course evaluates diverse industries and their historical trajectories in sub-Saharan Africa within a global context from ~1870-1990s. Students become acquainted with the historical method by developing their own research paper on a commodity using both primary and secondary sources.  WR, HU

* AFST 396b / HIST 396Jb, Revolutions and Socialist Experiments in Africa  Benedito Machava
This seminar explores the contours of Africa's embrace and engagement with the most influential ideology of the twentieth-century. Why, and through which channels, were Africans attracted to socialism? Did particular forms of colonialism and decolonization push African political actors towards revolution and socialist experiments? Is it legitimate, as some scholars have suggested, to speak of genuinely African socialisms? If so, what was the nature of these socialisms and how did they differ from the versions of socialism around the world? What political, social, economic, and cultural ends did socialism serve in Africa? And what were the consequences and legacies of African socialist experiments? The seminar addresses these questions. Our goal is to place Africa in the mainstream of conversations about socialism. We begin with the assumption that, like any doctrine, socialism was the object of multiple interpretations, modification, and appropriation from its inception. In so doing, we challenge orthodox understandings of socialism, which hold the European versions as the pure models and the rest as diluted if not populist façades of the 'true' doctrine. We begin with theoretical readings that help us situate the major debates about socialism in general and socialism in Africa. We then proceed to examine the overall historical context in which African nationalists adopted socialism. We differentiate the first branch of "African Socialism" from the second wave of "Afro-Marxism." We also pay close attention to issues of decolonization and political imagination; ideas and experiments of development; gender, morality, and social engineering.  WR, HU

* AFST 435a / THST 335a, West African Dance: Traditional to Contemporary  Lacina Coulibaly
A practical and theoretical study of the traditional dances of Africa, focusing on those of Burkina Faso and their contemporary manifestations. Emphasis on rhythm, kinesthetic form, and gestural expression. The fusion of modern European dance and traditional African dance. Admission by audition during the first class meeting.  HU RP

* AFST 443b / FREN 442b / LITR 484b / MMES 402b, Decolonizing Memory : Africa & the Politics of Testimony  Jill Jarvis
This seminar explores the politics and poetics of memory in a time of unfinished decolonization. It also provides students with a working introduction to anticolonial, postcolonial, and decolonial critique. Together we bring key works on the topics of state violence, trauma, and testimony into contact with literary works and films by artists of the former French and British empires in Africa. Reading literary and theoretical works together permits us to investigate archival silences and begin to chart a future for the critical study of colonial violence and its enduring effects. Literary readings may include works by Djebar, Rahmani, Oualouguem, Sebbar, Diop, Head, Krog. Films by Djebar, Leuvrey, Sembène, and Sissako. Theoretical readings may include works by Arendt, Azoulay, Cesaire, Derrida, Fanon, Mbembe, Ngâ, Spivak, and Trouillot.  WR, HU o Course cr

* AFST 486a / HIST 374Ja / HSHM 486a, African Systems of Thought  Nana Osei Quarshie
This seminar explores the effects of colonialism and post-colonial power relations on the production of scientific, medical, and embodied knowledge about Africa. The course focuses on three broad themes covered across four units. First, we read debates over the nature and definition of science and tradition. How have colonialism and post-colonial power relations defined the tasks of an African science? What does it mean to decolonize African thought or culture? Second, we examine the nature of rationality. Is reason singular or plural? Culturally-bound or universal? To what extent are witchcraft, African healing practices, and ancestor veneration rational practices? Is there a “traditional” rationality? Third, we explore the relationship between scientific representations, social practices, and local culture. What relationship exists between social practices and culturally shared categories of knowledge? Lastly, we examine the intersection of capital and medical expertise. How have shifting conceptions of value and capital, reshaped scientific and medical authority in Africa?  WR, HU