AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Director of undergraduate studies: Elizabeth Hinton (elizabeth.hinton@yale.edu); afamstudies.yale.edu

The African American Studies major examines, from numerous disciplinary perspectives, questions of race, culture, and modern struggles for equality centering on the experiences of people of African descent in Black Atlantic societies including the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and Africa, 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 questions concerning race and inequality.

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.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

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 (DUS). Pertinent regulations can be found in Academic Regulations, section L, Special Academic Arrangements, “Two Majors.”

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 AFAM 162, which can be taken in either order; one humanities course in African American literature; 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).

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 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.

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

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.

ADVISING

Students considering a program of study in African American Studies should consult the DUS as early as possible. Areas of concentration and schedules for majors must be approved by the DUS.

Two majors The requirements for double majoring often depend on the other department or discipline in which the student is planning to major. Students interested in double majoring should initially make an appointment with the DUS in African American Studies to discuss their plans and the courses they have already taken towards the African American Studies major. The student should, then, plan a meeting with both the DUS in African American Studies as well as the DUS in the other department to ensure clarity on the requirements for both departments. During this meeting, the student may explore the possibility of writing a joint thesis instead of two separate theses.

Graduate work 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.
STUDY ABROAD
A limited number of courses taken during sophomore or junior semesters abroad can be counted toward the major with DUS approval.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR
Prerequisites None
Number of courses 12 term courses (incl sen req)
Specific courses required AFAM 160, 162, 410
Distribution of courses 1 humanities course in AFAM lit 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)

African American Studies is an interdisciplinary major that examines race, culture, and struggles for equality rooted in the experiences of people of African descent in Black Atlantic societies including the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and Africa. The program offers courses of study that intersect with a broad range of disciplines including history, literature, politics, economics, art history, music, theater studies, anthropology, African studies, film studies, modern languages, and ethnicity, race, and migration.

The major has twelve required courses, the bulk of which comprise the concentration. Majors have considerable freedom in their course choices and are encouraged to take classes across the humanities and social sciences. An area of concentration, selected by the student, may be rooted in a single discipline with courses in other departments such as American Studies, Ethnicity, Race, and Migration, Anthropology, Political Science, or English, or may encompass broader thematic and/or theoretical frameworks such as critical race theory; Black Atlantic art and visual culture; race, gender, and public policy; and African-American literary arts.

African American Studies emphasizes innovative teaching, focused mentorship, and excellent scholarship as it prepares students for brilliant futures.

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
Professors Elijah Anderson, David Blight, Daphne Brooks, Hazel Carby (Emeritus), Roderick Ferguson, Phillip Goff, Jacqueline Goldsby, Emily Greenwood, Matthew Jacobson, Gerald Jaynes, Christopher Miller (Emeritus), Robert Stepto (Emeritus), Michael Veal, Shane Vogel
Associate Professors Aimee Cox, Crystal Feimster, Elizabeth Hinton, Jonathan Howard, Edward Rugemer
Assistant Professors Ernest J. Mitchell, Carolyn Roberts
Lecturers Aaron Carico, Nicholas Forster, Thomas Allen Harris, Elleka Kelley

View Courses

Courses

AFAM 115a / WGSS 125a, “We Interrupt this Program: The Multidimensional Histories of Queer and Trans Politics” Staff
In 1991, the arts organization Visual AIDS and The Kitchen collaborated with video artist and filmmaker Charles Atlas to produce the live television broadcast "We Interrupt this Program." Part educational presentation, part performance piece, the show was aired in millions of homes across the nation. The program, in The Kitchen's words, "sought to feature voices that had often been marginalized within many discussions of AIDS, in particular people of color and women." This course builds upon and is inspired by this aspect of Atlas’s visionary presentation, an aspect that used the show to produce a critically multicultural platform that could activate cultural histories and critical traditions from various communities. In effect, the course uses this aspect as a metonym for the racial, gender, sexual, and class heterogeneity of queer art and organizing. It conducts its investigation by looking at a variety of primary materials that illustrate the heterogeneous makeup of queer and trans politics. The course also draws on more recent texts and visual works that arose from the earlier contexts that the primary texts helped to illuminate and shape. HU RP 0

AFAM 121b / HSAR 222, Print the Legacy Andrianna Campbell
Before Two Palms, Crown Point, Gemini G. E. L., and Tamarind presses, Robert Blackburn formed The Printmaking Workshop in 1947. The course surveys print production between 1945-1975, when print shops were sites of unparalleled black excellence, due to access and the opportunity for proprietorship. During a period in the mid-1940s, Roy DeCarava turned almost exclusively to printmaking.

This course examines the artwork of artist printmakers and their master printers including Blackburn, DeCarava, Genichiro Inokuma, Samella Lewis, Sol LeWitt, Ruth G. Waddy, Elizabeth Catlett, Emory Douglas, Melvin Eugene Edwards, Emma Amos, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Faith Ringgold, and Sylvia Plimack Mangold. From the woodcuts of Catlett (made at Taller de Gráfica Popular after 1938) to the kimonos printed by LeWitt at Crown Point, prints traversed national borders and state lines. They were a means of experimenting with material, style, and production on an aesthetic and commercial scale. The print workshops themselves are evaluated as sites of integration and disruption. Of focus is the significance of serialization and distribution as necessary units of communication and visualization in the arts. HU

AFAM 122a / HSAR 223a, Art Collectives: Protest, Entrepreneurship, and Praxis Andrianna Campbell
A crowd formed at the Whitney Museum, as San Francisco artists occupied the institution to protest Laura Owens’s solo exhibition opening. The gathering was in successive date order to Patrick Bright’s protest of Dana Schultz’s Emmet Till painting. It came a few years after the HowDoYouSayYaminAfrican? (YAMs collective) protest of Joe Scalans’s Donelle Woolford performance artwork. The protest
also foreshadowed the Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter (BWABLM) series of protests across the country. From the Sackler family to Warren Kanders, those who peddle in rue and misfortune are now being asked to resign from art boards as multiple allegations force them out of planning positions, and remove their names from wings and museum buildings. Hive-like sit-ins and stand-ins are actions of political organizers to make the democratic body heard in the public sphere. Today, these ethical shifts in art communities criticize and disrupt the planned temple-like meditative space of the museum. Between the cynical mole hill aims of a few of those San Franciscan artists who capitulated after the Whitney offered them an exhibition, to the effective efforts of BWABLM, we explore where the art object functions in relation to political discourse and performative disruption as art practice.  

AFAM 132b / HIST 132b, Mass Incarceration in Historical Perspective  Elizabeth Hinton  

This course traces the development of legal and penal systems in America over time to investigate the historical process that eventually gave rise to the mass incarceration of Black and Latinx people in the late twentieth century. Over the course of the term, our historical consideration provides us the necessary background to address the ongoing consequences of racial disparities in the criminal justice system and the extraordinary public policy implications of this dynamic.  

AFAM 146b / ECON 17b / EDST 271b, Urban Inequalities and Educational Inequality  Gerald Jaynes  

Analysis of contemporary policy problems related to academic under performance in lower income urban schools and the concomitant achievement gaps among various racial and ethnic groups in United States K-12 education. Historical review of opportunity inequalities and policy solutions proposed to ameliorate differences in achievement and job readiness. Students benefit from practical experience and interdisciplinary methods, including a lab component with time spent in a New Haven high school. Prerequisites: Any course offered by Education Studies, or one course in history or any social science, either: Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology. EDST 110 is preferred, although not required.  

AFAM 160b / AFST 18b / AMST 160b / HIST 18b, 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.  

AFAM 170b / HIST 47b / HSHM 241b / WGSS 270b, Sickness and Health in African American History  Carolyn Roberts  

A history of American medicine through the African American experience covering the period of slavery through #BlackLivesMatter. Oriented around the complex dynamics of medical abuse and medical resistance, key themes include medicine and slavery; gender and reproduction; medical experimentation and ethics; the rise of racial science; lynching and vigilante violence; segregation and public health; African-descended approaches to health and healing; the rise of the African American medical profession; and black health activism from slavery to #BlackLivesMatter.  

AFAM 186a / LAST 214a / PLSC 378a / SOCY 170a, Contesting Injustice  Staff  

Exploration of why, when, and how people organize collectively to challenge political, social, and economic injustice. Cross-national comparison of the extent, causes, and consequences of inequality. Analysis of mobilizations for social justice in both U.S. and international settings. Intended primarily for freshmen and sophomores.  

AFAM 192a / AFST 238a / 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.  

AFAM 193a / CGSC 277a / EDST 177a / EP&E 494a / PHIL 177a, Propaganda, Ideology, and Democracy  Staff  

Historical, philosophical, psychological, and linguistic introduction to the issues and challenges that propaganda raises for liberal democracy. How propaganda can work to undermine democracy; ways in which schools and the press are implicated; the use of propaganda by social movements to address democracy’s deficiencies; the legitimacy of propaganda in cases of political crisis.  

AFAM 209a, Justice and Society  Elizabeth Hinton  

This course is co-taught with Yale Law School's Justice Collaboratory, a social science research center focused on theories of justice, community, and safety. In this seminar students cultivate a rich understanding of the layered dimensions associated with community vitality. Throughout the semester students consider ideological, sociological, logistical, and historical elements associated with promoting, or compromising, individual and collective wellbeing, economic strength, social cohesion, public safety, and joy. One of the central goals is engaging in meaningful conversation about community composition and the role of the criminal legal system in upholding or impeding overall vitality. This exploration of community vitality begins by building a solid understanding of social efficacy theory. We then investigate distinctions amongst differing communities with an eye toward geography, race, ethnicity, marginalization, SES, heterogeneity, architecture, and history. Elements we explore include, but are not limited to criminal justice, public safety, social cohesion, shared expectations, informal & formal social control, public health, racism, gender, legal estrangement, citizenship, political voice, and love.  

AFAM 210b / AMST 445b / HIST 148b, Politics and Culture of the U.S. Color Line  Matthew Jacobson  

The significance of race in U.S. political culture, from the "separate but equal" doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson to the election of an African American president. Race as a central organizer of American political and social life.  

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This course examines their future impact on art historical scholarship, and their, at times, paradoxical perspectives on the art world. In an era of changing hierarchies of culture and status, the novelty of these exhibition spaces requires a constant flow of new artists, while hybridized commercial art fairs pair some of the most historically relevant exhibitions alongside transient booths with works for sale. In the 1990s, the Venice Biennale (1985), the São Paulo Biennial (1951), and the Documenta (1955) exhibitionary spaces emerged as key venues for the exchange of ideas and the presentation of new art. By the 1950s, the Venice Biennale (1985) had become a cornerstone of the art world, with its international reach and its role in shaping the canon of modern art.

Since the 1970s, there has been a proliferation of commercial art fairs and new small foundations dedicated to the arts---FIAC, JoBurg, 1-54, Miami Basel, Fondation Cartier, Louis Vuitton Foundation, and the Foundation Zinsou. These and their correlative personal histories and projects that draw from archives---including news sources, personal narratives, and found archives---to produce collaborative community storytelling. Conceived as a production workshop, the course explores the use of archives in constructing real and fictive narratives across a variety of disciplines, such as---participants create and develop autobiographies, biographies, or fiction-based projects, tailored to their own work in film/new media around Natalie Goldberg's concept that "our lives are at once ordinary and mythical."
AFAM 284a / AMST 282a / ENGL 414a / ER&M 284a, Black Life and the Human/Body  Cera Smith

African American activists have long demanded equal rights by asserting the humanity of Black people. These activists have rejected their racist treatment as animals and property by championing the qualities ascribed to Western Man. More recently, however, scholars have questioned whether claims to humanity really result in freedom and justice for all Black people. They ask, “Does mobilizing humanity as a strategy for recognition and respect benefit Black non-men, disabled people, or the working class? What impact does this assertion of humanity have on our species’ relationship to other living beings and our environments? Ultimately, are all people allowed to be ‘human?’” In this course, we evaluate the category of the “human” by studying the challenge that the U.S. Black past and present pose to the category’s assumed neutrality. We attend to how Black peoples’ bodily experiences confirm, deny, and complicate humanness. We read poetry, short fiction, novels, and creative nonfiction to investigate what it means to live a Black life. Analyzing historical, social scientific, legal, and theoretical texts alongside literature helps us explore the debates over the power dynamics that underlie claims to humanity. Through writing and in-class discussions, we explore the relationship between race, species, and political strategy.

AFAM 287b / AFST 412b / AMST 465b / FREN 412b / LITR 250b, Postcolonial Theory and Literature  Fadila Habchi

A survey of the principal modes of thought that have animated decolonization and life after colonialism, as seen in both theoretical and literary texts. Concentration on the British and French imperial and postcolonial contexts. Readings in negritude, orientalism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and novels. Lectures in English; readings available both in French and in English translation.

AFAM 289a / ENGL 228a, Counternarratives: Black Historical Fictions  Elleza Kelley

While historical records have long been the source from which we draw our picture of the past, it is with literature and art that we attempt to speculatively work out that which falls between the cracks of conventional archival documentation, that which cannot be contained by historical record—emotion, gesture, the sensory, the sonic, the inner life, the afterlife, the neglected and erased. This course examines how contemporary black writers have imagined and attempted to represent black life from the late 17th to the early 20th centuries, it asks what fiction can tell us about history. Reading these works as alternative archives, or “counterarchives,” which index the excess and fugitive material of black histories in the Americas, we probe the uses, limits, and revelations of historical fictions, from the experimental and realist novel, to works of poetry and drama. Drawing on the work of various interdisciplinary scholars, we use these historical fictions to explore and enter into urgent and ongoing conversations around black life & death, African-American history & memory, black aesthetics, and the problem of “The Archive.” Some familiarity with the events and themes of African American history is strongly recommended, but not required. This course is not open to students who have already taken AFAM 013/ENGL 005.

AFAM 307a / AMST 305a / ENGL 304a, The Harlem Renaissance: A 21st Century Remix  Andie Berry

In 1925, Alain Locke declared the emergence of the New Negro and with it, a movement in African American art and literature that came to be known as the Harlem Renaissance. Less than 100 years later, is it possible to say that we are in the midst of a second—or another—Black renaissance? This seminar explores the political, social, and artistic conditions that created and fostered the Harlem Renaissance. Rather than perpetuating an idea of the Harlem Renaissance as a singular, inimitable moment of Black cultural production, this course revisits and reimagines that period as a model of collaboration, innovation, and activism among Black writers, artists, and thinkers. Beginning in the 1890s with a focus on the United States, we seek to expand our understanding of the Harlem Renaissance as a diasporic movement that happened across several cities and nations as opposed to an event tied to a particular place and sensibility. We read pieces such as W.E.B. Du Bois’s “Criteria of Negro Art” and Claudia Rankine’s Citizen: An American Lyric, listen to Billie Holiday’s blues and Solange Knowles’s album A Seat at the Table, and consider the possibilities of television and film through Barry Jenkins’s Moonlight and Melina Matsoukas’s Queen & Slim. Ultimately, by tracing the continuities and divergences between the Harlem Renaissance and the contemporary field of Black cultural expression, we interrogate what a Black renaissance might look like in the digital, increasingly globalized, freedom movement of the 21st century.

AFAM 309a / ER&M 318a / WGSS 318a, Race as Spectacle  Fatima El-Tayeb

In this course, we analyze how race is both naturalized and deconstructed through visual media. We center one aspect: race as spectacle—the multiple ways in which race is produced as a visual mass culture commodity. This happens in political campaigns, music videos, local news reports, fashion, kids’ cartoons, mug shots, and countless other sites. We explore the modes of production of these racialized images as well as the conditions of their reception and political and philosophical analyses of this process—particularly those relating to questions of gender, class, sexuality, religion, and nation. We also explore counterstrategies, which rather than rejecting visual mass culture attempt to use it to undermine dominant images.

AFAM 313a / THST 319a, Embodying Story  Renée Robinson

The intersection of storytelling and movement as seen through historical case studies, cross-disciplinary inquiry, and studio practice. Drawing on eclectic source materials from different artistic disciplines, ranging from the repertory of Alvin Ailey to journalism, architectural studies, cartoon animation, and creative processes, students develop the critical, creative, and technical skills through which to tell their own stories in movement. No prior dance experience necessary.

AFAM 323a / ENGL 266a, Black Literature Since the Millennium  Sarah Mahurin

This course examines Black literature of the 21st century, and discusses the genre as one subject to continuous formation. It is a genre of both making and re-making, of reflecting (or refracting) current sensibilities, and of honoring present-day subjects and subjectivities. How does our sense of the “contemporary” shift and respond to Black authors and their narratives? How do these 21st century writers contend at once with the weight of history and the immediacy of the moment? And what counts as Literature in the millennium?
AFAM 326b / AMST 312b / ER&M 310b / WGSS 298b, Postcolonial Cities of the West  Fadila Habchi
Examination of various texts and films pertaining to the representation of postcolonial cities in the global north and a range of social, political, and cultural issues that concern those who inhabit these spaces.  HU

AFAM 329a / SOCY 342a, Managing Blackness in a White Space  Elijah Anderson
White space is a perceptual category that assumes a particular space to be predominantly white, one where black people are typically unexpected, marginalized when present, and made to feel unwelcome—a space that blacks perceive to be informally “off-limits” to people like them and where on occasion they encounter racialized disrespect and other forms of resistance. This course explores the challenge black people face when managing their lives in this white space.  SO

AFAM 349b / AMST 362b / HIST 115b / WGSS 388b, Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation  Staff
The dynamic relationship between the civil rights movement and the women’s liberation movement from 1940 to the present. When and how the two movements intersected, interacted, and diverged. The variety of ways in which African Americans and women campaigned for equal rights. Topics include World War II, freedom summer, black power, the Equal Rights Amendment, feminism, abortion, affirmative action, and gay rights.  HU

AFAM 352a / AMST 438a / ER&M 291a / LITR 295a / WGSS 343a, Caribbean Diasporic Literature  Fadila Habchi
An examination of contemporary literature written by Caribbean writers who have migrated to, or who journey between, different countries around the Atlantic rim. Focus on literature written in English in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both fiction and nonfiction. Writers include Caryl Phillips, Nalo Hopkinson, and Jamaica Kincaid.  HU

AFAM 397b / ER&M 380b / WGSS 381b, New Developments in Global African Diaspora Studies  Fatima El-Tayeb
This course traces recent developments in African Diaspora Theory, among them Afrapessimism, Queer of Color Critique, Black Trans Studies and Afropolitanism. We pay particular attention to interactions between theory, art, and activism. The scope is transnational with a focus on, but not restricted to, the Anglophone Diaspora Texts. Each session roughly follows this structure: One theoretical text representing a recent development in African diaspora studies, one earlier key text that the reading builds on, one theoretical text that does not necessarily fall under the category of diaspora studies but speaks to our topic and one text that relates to the topic but uses a non-theoretical format. Students are expected to develop their own thematically related project over the course of the semester. Preference given to juniors and seniors. Email instructor for more information. HU, SO

AFAM 410b, Interdisciplinary Approaches to African American Studies  Staff
An interdisciplinary, thematic approach to the study of race, nation, and ethnicity in the African diaspora. Topics include class, gender, color, and sexuality; the dynamics of reform, Pan-Africanism, neocolonialism, and contemporary black nationalism. Use of a broad range of methodologies.  WR, HU, SO

AFAM 442b / ANTH 442b, Theory and Methods of Performance Ethnography  Aimee Cox
Study of the theoretical framework that defines performance ethnography; the methodologies developed and utilized by research practitioners; the similarities and distinctions between ethnography and performance ethnography, and the innovations made in performance ethnography that impact social justice and community-building initiatives in various parts of the world.  HU, SO

AFAM 449b / AFST 449b / ENGL 378b, Challenges to Realism in Contemporary African Fiction  Stephanie Newell
Introduction to experimental African novels that challenge realist and documentary modes of representation. Topics include mythology, gender subversion, politics, the city, migration, and the self. Ways of reading African and postcolonial literature through the lenses of identity, history, and nation. Formerly ENGL 449.  WR, HU

AFAM 455a / EDST 340a / ER&M 438a, Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogy  Daniel HoSang
This seminar explores the pedagogical and conceptual tools, resources and frameworks used to teach about race and racism at the primary and secondary levels, across diverse disciplines and subject areas. Moving beyond the more limited paradigms of racial colorblindness and diversity, the seminar introduces curricular strategies for centering race and racism in ways that are accessible to students from a broad range of backgrounds, and that work to advance the overall goals of the curriculum. Prerequisite: ER&M 200 or an equivalent course addressing histories of race, ethnicity, and migration.  SO

AFAM 457a / AFST 457a / AMST 470a / ER&M 467a / FREN 481a, Racial Republic: African Diasporic Literature and Culture in Postcolonial France  Fadila Habchi
This is an interdisciplinary seminar on French cultural history from the 1930s to the present. We focus on issues concerning race and gender in the context of colonialism, postcolonialism, and migration. The course investigates how the silencing of colonial history has been made possible culturally and ideologically, and how this silencing has in turn been central to the reorganizing of French culture and society from the period of decolonization to the present. We ask how racial regimes and spaces have been constructed in French colonial discourses and how these constructions have evolved in postcolonial France. We examine postcolonial African diasporic literary writings, films, and other cultural productions that have explored the complex relations between race, colonialism, historical silences, republican universalism, and color-blindness. Topics include the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Black Paris, decolonization, universalism, the Trente Glorieuses, the Paris massacre of 1961, anti-racist movements, the "beur" author, memory, the 2005 riots, and contemporary Afro-feminist and decolonial movements.  HU
This course examines a series of transnational literary texts and films that illuminate how the displaced—migrants, exiles, and refugees—remake home away from their native countries. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have produced massive displacements due to wars, genocides, racial, ethnic and religious conflicts, economic and climate change, among other factors. Our course focuses on several texts that explore questions of home, nation, and self in the context of specific historical events such as the Holocaust, civil rights movements in the U.S., internment, the Indian partition, African decolonization, and Middle Eastern/Arab ethno-religious conflicts and wars. We examine these events alongside the shifting legal and political policies and categories related to asylum, humanitarian parole, refugee, and illegal alien status. Exploring themes such as nostalgia, longing, trauma, and memory, we look at the possibilities and limitations of creating, contesting, and imagining home in the diaspora. Our objective is to debate and develop the ethical, political, geographic, and imaginative articulations of home in an era of mass displacements and geo-political crises. We examine how notions of home are imagined alongside and against categories of race, gender, and sexuality.

Independent research under the direction of a member of the department on a special topic in African American studies not covered in other courses. Permission of the director of undergraduate studies and of the instructor directing the research is required. A proposal signed by the instructor must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the second week of classes. The instructor meets with the student regularly, typically for an hour a week, and the student writes a final paper or a series of short essays. May be elected for one or two terms.

An examination of the Afro-diasporic music cultures of Cuba and Jamaica, placing the historical succession of musical genres and traditions into social, cultural, and political contexts. Cuban genres studied include religious/folkloric traditions (Lucumi/Santeria and Abakua), rumba, son, mambo, pachanga/charanga, salsa, timba and reggaeton. Jamaican genres studied include: folkloric traditions (etu/tambu/kumina), Jamaican R&B, ska, rock steady, reggae, ragga/dancehall. Prominent themes include: slavery, Afro-diasporic cultural traditions, Black Atlantic culture, nationalism/independence/post-colonial culture, relationships with the United States, music & gender/sexuality, technology.

A seminar on issues and approaches in African American studies. The colloquium offers students practical help in refining their senior essay topics and developing research strategies. Students discuss assigned readings and share their research experiences and findings. During the term, students are expected to make substantial progress on their senior essays; they are required to submit a prospectus, an annotated bibliography, and a draft of one-quarter of the essay.

Independent research on the senior essay. The senior essay form must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by the end of the second week of classes. The senior essay should be completed according to the following schedule: (1) end of the sixth week of classes: a rough draft of the entire essay; (2) end of the last week of classes (fall term) or three weeks before the end of classes (spring term): two copies of the final version of the essay.