AFRICAN STUDIES

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The program in African Studies enables students to undertake interdisciplinary study of the arts, history, cultures, politics, and development of Africa. As a foundation, students in the program gain a cross-disciplinary exposure to Africa. In the junior and senior years, students develop analytical ability and focus their studies on research in a particular discipline such as anthropology, art history, history, languages and literatures, political science, or sociology or on topics such as global health, economic development, or human rights.

African Studies provides training of special interest to those considering admission to graduate or professional schools or careers in education, journalism, law, management, medicine, politics, psychology, international relations, creative writing, or social work. The interdisciplinary structure of the program offers students an opportunity to satisfy the increasingly rigorous expectations of admissions committees and prospective employers for a broad liberal arts perspective that complements specialized knowledge of a field.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

The program in African Studies consists of thirteen term courses, including (1) one African Studies course in the humanities and one in the social sciences; (2) two years of an African language (Arabic, Kiswahili, Yorùbá, isiZulu, or others with permission of the director of undergraduate studies), unless waived by examination; (3) AFST 401, the junior seminar on research methods, or an alternative course that either serves to deepen the concentration or provide methodological tools for the senior essay; and (4) a concentration of four term courses and one research methods seminar, selected in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies, in a discipline such as anthropology, art history, history, languages and literatures, political science, or sociology, or in an interdisciplinary program such as African American Studies; Ethnicity, Race, and Migration; or Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; or in a cross-disciplinary area such as diaspora studies or development studies. The required courses represent the core of the program and are intended to expose the student both to the interdisciplinary nature of African studies and to the methodologies currently being brought to bear on the study of African cultures and societies.

Language requirement African Studies majors are required to complete two years of college-level study (or the equivalent) of an African language, and they are encouraged to continue beyond this level. For the language requirement to be waived, a student must pass a placement test for admission into an advanced-level course or, for languages not regularly offered at Yale, an equivalent test of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills administered through the Center for Language Study. Students should begin their language study as early as possible. If the requirement is waived, students must substitute other African Studies courses for the four required language courses.

With permission of the DUS, students may count courses in an additional language, such as French or Portuguese, toward the major requirements. Students are encouraged to include upper-level courses, especially those centering on research and methodology.

Program in African Languages The language program offers instruction in four major languages from sub-Saharan Africa: Kiswahili (eastern and central Africa), Yorùbá (western Africa), Wolof (western Africa) and isiZulu (southern Africa). African language courses emphasize communicative competence, using multimedia materials that focus on the contemporary African context. Course sequences are designed to enable students to achieve advanced competence in all skill areas by the end of the third year, and students are encouraged to spend a summer or term in Africa during their language study.

Courses in Arabic are offered through the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Noncredit instruction in other African languages is available by application through the Directed Independent Language Study program at the Center for Language Study. Contact the director of the Program in African Languages (john.wanjogu@yale.edu) for information.

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Students are required to complete a senior essay in AFST 491, working under the guidance of a faculty adviser. With prior approval by the DUS, a combined senior essay may be submitted for those pursuing a double major.

A preliminary statement indicating the topic to be addressed and the name of the faculty adviser must be submitted to the DUS by the end of the second week of the fall term in the senior year.

ADVISING AND APPLICATION TO THE MAJOR

Students planning to major in African Studies should consult the director of undergraduate studies as early as possible.

Graduate work, M.A. program Students in Yale College are eligible to complete the M.A. in African Studies in one year of graduate work if they begin the program in the third and fourth undergraduate years. Students interested in this option must complete eight graduate courses in the area by the time of the completion of the bachelor’s degree. Only two courses may be counted toward both graduate and undergraduate degrees. Successful completion of graduate courses while still an undergraduate does not guarantee admission into the M.A. program.
REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisites  None

Number of courses  13 term courses (incl senior req)

Distribution of courses  1 AFST course in humanities and 1 in social sciences; 2 years of African lang; 4 courses and 1 research methods seminar in area of concentration

Specific course required  AFST 401, or an alternative arranged in consultation with the DUS

Senior requirement  Senior essay (AFST 491)

Substitution permitted  If language req is waived, 4 addtl African Studies courses

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Professors  Lea Brilmayer (Law School), John Darnell (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations), Owen Fiss (Law School), Robert Harms (History), Roderick McIntosh (Anthropology), Christopher Miller (African American Studies, French), Nicoli Nattrass (Ethics, Politics, & Economics) (Visiting), Catherine Panter-Brick (Anthropology), Lamin Sanneh (History, Divinity School), Jeremy Seekings (Global Affairs) (Visiting), Ian Shapiro (Political Science), Robert Thompson (History of Art), Michael Veal (Music), David Watts (Anthropology), Elisabeth Wood (Political Science)

Associate Professors  Robert Bailis (Forestry & Environmental Studies), Daniel Magaziner (History)

Assistant Professors  Katharine Baldwin (Political Science), Adria Lawrence (Political Science), Louisa Lombard (Anthropology), Jonathan Wyrtzen (Sociology)

Senior Lecturer  Cheryl Doss (Economics)

Lecturers  Lacina Coulibaly (Theater Studies), Anne-Marie Foltz (Public Health), David Simon (Political Science)

Senior Lectors II  Sandra Sanneh, Kiarie Wa’Njogu

Senior Lectors  Oluseye Adesola, Matuku Ngame

Courses

* AFST 001b / ARCG 001b / NELC 001b, Egypt and Northeast Africa: A Multidisciplinary Approach  John Darnell

Examination of approximately 10,000 years of Nile Valley cultural history, with an introduction to the historical and archaeological study of Egypt and Nubia. Consideration of the Nile Valley as the meeting place of the cultures and societies of northeast Africa. Various written and visual sources are used, including the collections of the Peabody Museum and the Yale Art Gallery. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* AFST 015a / AFAM 016a / ENGL 015a, South African Writing after Apartheid  Stephanie Newell

An introduction to creative writing published in South Africa from the end of Apartheid in 1994 to the present. Close readings of contemporary fiction with additional material drawn from popular culture, including films, magazines, and music. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* AFST 160a, What is the Global South? Africa in the World  Vivian Lu

This course explores how history, culture, and power shape our conceptualization of the world and its peoples. By critically examining how social categories – such as culture, religion, race, economy, and ideology – have been mapped onto different parts of the world, the course traces how legacies of colonialism and imperialism in Africa continue to inform contemporary perspectives of economic development, geopolitics, and globalization. Students consider the history of world categorizations through the perspectives of the people who mobilized to transform them, from anti-colonial fighters and postcolonial scholars to the Third World solidarity movement and contemporary African activists and artists.  SO

AFST 184a / AFAM 160a / AMST 160a / HIST 184a, 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.  HU

AFST 213b / LING 213b, Hybrid Grammars: Dynamics of Language Contact, Acquisition, and Change  Staff

Traditional approaches to language acquisition and change have typically assumed that children develop a mental grammar that replicates uniformly the linguistic knowledge of the current members of their monolingual speech communities. Therefore, language change must result from external factors: language contact involving a cohort of L2-learners. Likewise, multilingualism, thus language contact, is commonly assumed to hinder acquisition, and presupposed ‘intense’ contact situations are regarded as propitious for creolization. This course proposes a shift of perspective, focusing on multiple-varieties ecologies such as creole societies in which speakers-listeners can acquire, alternate between, and sometimes ‘mix’ different languages, dialects, or registers. Two major questions are addressed in this course: How does acquisition proceed in such multiple-varieties ecologies? and What does a theory of the multilingual mind tell us about acquisition of L1 and the emergence of grammars? Familiarity with syntax and linguistic variation is assumed.  SO
AFST 238a / AMST 238a / ER&M 238a, Introduction to Third World Studies  Gary Okihiro
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.  SO

AFST 262a / AFAM 241a / MUSI 276a, Traditional and Contemporary Musics of Sub-Saharan Africa  Michael Veal
A survey of the traditional and popular musics of black Africa, organized both by nation, such as Ghana, and by region, such as Senegambia. Introduction to the fundamental musical principles, materials, and performance contexts of African music.  WR

AFST 281b / LING 281b, Comparative Syntax: A view from Kwa (Niger-Congo)  Staff
This course adopts a micro-comparative perspective by looking at closely related languages (i.e., Gbe and Kwa families of Niger Congo) as well as a macro-comparative perspective that situates these languages in the larger context of typologically and genetically unrelated languages (e.g., Romance, Germanic). We set the stage by first looking at word formation, word classes, and the role of tones at the morphosyntactic level. Building on this, the first part of the course discusses topics such as Tense, Mood, Aspect (TMA) expressions, word order variation (e.g., VO vs. OV patterns), serial verb constructions, restructuring, and the notion of ‘light verb.’ These topics establish a profile of the clause structure in these languages. With this knowledge at hand, the second part of this course addresses the question of information structure and the commonly assumed parallelism between the CP and DP domains. The descriptive framework adopted in this course is the Cartographic Approach developed by Rizzi (1997), Cinque (1999), Aboh (2004), and much related work. Some background in syntax is assumed.  SO

* AFST 302b / EP&E 303b / SOCY 330b, Civil Sphere and Democracy  Jeffrey Alexander
Examination of civil sphere theory in dialogue with normative and empirical approaches to civil society. The sacred and profane binaries that animate the civil sphere are studied, as are such civil sphere organizations as polls, mass media, electoral system, law, and office. Topics include: United States presidential elections, immigration and its controversies, the civil rights movement, the crisis of contemporary journalism, recent controversies over church pedophilia, the financial system, telephone hacking, and the challenge of de-provincializing civil sphere theory.  HU, SO

* AFST 306a / GLBL 306a, Social Enterprise in Developing Economies II  Robert Hopkins
Summer research developed into a case-study project on a topic related to the use of social enterprise in regional economic development.  GLBL 305

* AFST 324a / EP&E 317a / HIST 368Ja / PLSC 324a, Nelson Mandela  Jonathan Steinberg
A study of Nelson Mandela's life and career and the political and philosophical questions his career engages. Students examine his 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 in order to critically assess Mandela's politics of reconciliation. Examination of Mandela as a global celebrity, as well as the political career of Winnie Mandela.  AFST 333a / HIST 332a, African Encounters with Colonialism  Daniel Magaziner
How African societies and peoples encountered, engaged, and endured the colonial and postcolonial world, from the arrival of Kiswa--

* AFST 333b / MUSI 375b, Topics in World Music  Marissa Moore
A critical introduction to selected cultures of world music. Specific cultures vary from year to year but generally include those of Native America, South Asia, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Preference to Music majors according to class.  HU

* AFST 366a / EP&E 305a / HIST 367Ja / PLSC 364a, Bureaucracy in Africa: Revolution, Genocide, and Apartheid  Jonathan Steinberg
A study of three major episodes in modern African history characterized by ambitious projects of bureaucratically driven change—

* AFST 372a / HIST 375Ja / MMES 105a / SOCY 372a, Comparative Nationalism in North Africa and the Middle East  Jonathan Wyrtzen
The rise of nationalism in the Maghreb (or Arab West) and Mashriq (or Arab East). Introduction to major debates about nationalism; the influence of transnational (pan-Islamic and pan-Arab) ideologies, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Case studies include Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies, Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, and Berber and Kurdish movements.  SO

AFST 381b / PLSC 381b, Government and Politics in Africa  Katharine Baldwin
The establishment and use of political power in selected countries of tropical Africa. The political role of ethnic and class cleavages, military coups, and the relation between politics and economic development.  SO

* AFST 382a, Child Health and Development in Africa  Nicholas Alipui
Examination of the most critical issues and trends in child health, child survival and development, and efforts to incorporate priorities of children and future generations after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly.  SO
* AFST 414a / FREN 414a / LITR 269 / MMES 261a, Afterlives of Algeria's Revolution  Jill Jarvis
The Algerian War for Independence from France was the longest and most violent decolonizing war of the 20th century. This war and its aftermath transformed political, social, intellectual, and artistic life on both sides of the Mediterranean—and it became a model for other decolonizing and civil rights movements across the world. Memory of this war continues to shape current debates in Europe and North Africa about state violence, terrorism, racism, censorship, immigration, feminism, human rights, and justice. Through study of fiction, film, testimonies, graphic novels, and theater, this seminar charts the war’s surprising and enduring legacies. Films may include Pontecorvo’s The Battle of Algiers, Haneke’s Cache, and Panijel’s OCTobre à Paris. Literary works by Djebar, Camus, Sebbar, Etcherelli, Dib, Cixous, Kateb, Fanon, De Beauvoir, Mechaakra. The course is conducted in French. If you have any questions about your French ability, contact the instructor. 1.5, HU

* AFST 433b / THST 335b, 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 445a, The Fathers and Daughters of African Literature  Meredith Shepard
What do we read when we read African literature? For most of the twentieth century, African literature was defined by its “fathers,” the influential figures of Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and Wole Soyinka, among others. The twenty-first century, however, has seen an explosion of writing by African women authors, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, NoViolet Bulawayo, Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, and Yaa Gyasi. These women writers take up many of the same themes as their male predecessors, but with new perspectives and aesthetic techniques. We will consider these “daughters” of African literature as updating the work of their literary “fathers” (and “mothers”) but also and more importantly as forging new directions in literary production. Much as the first generation of African literature was conceived as a response to colonial literature and as an independent body of work, so too can twenty-first century African women writers be read in relation to their forebears or on their own terms. One of our key lines of inquiry will be to examine how the fathers and daughters of African literature engender new ways of looking at different stages of African history and African identity formation. In addition to literature, we will study some of the key scholarship on African identity as inflected by race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and class. Students will have the opportunity to become familiar with a range of theoretical writings by early postcolonial intellectuals and contemporary scholars. This course is intended for advanced undergraduate students. Readings include Heart of Darkness, Things Fall Apart, Purple Hibiscus, Kintu, A Grain of Wheat, Dust, Death and the King's Horseman, La Noire de… (Black Girl), Homegoing, Nervous Conditions, We Need New Names, Blackass. HU

* AFST 449a / AFAM 449a / ENGL 449a, 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. WR, HU

* AFST 486a / HIST 388Ja, Slavery and the Slave Trade in Africa  Robert Harms
The slave trade from the African perspective. Analysis of why slavery developed in Africa and how it operated. The long-term social, political, and economic effects of the Atlantic slave trade. WR, HU

* AFST 487a / HIST 387Ja, West African Islam: Jihad Tradition and Its Pacifist Opponents  Staff
The influence of Islam on state and society, and the encounters of Muslim Africans first with non-Muslim societies in Africa and then with the modern West in the colonial and postcolonial periods. Focus on Muslim religious attitudes and responses to the secular national state and to the Western tradition of the separation of church and state. WR, HU

* AFST 491a or b, The Senior Essay  Daniel Magaziner
Independent research on the senior essay. By the end of the sixth week of classes, a rough draft of the entire essay should be completed. By the end of the last week of classes (fall term) or three weeks before the end of classes (spring term), two copies of the final essay must be submitted.

Kiswahili Courses

SWAH 110a, Beginning Kiswahili I  Kiarie Wa’Njogu
A beginning course with intensive training and practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Initial emphasis is on the spoken language and conversation. 1.1 1½ Course cr

SWAH 130a, Intermediate Kiswahili I  Veronica Waweru
Further development of students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Prepares students for further work in literary, language, and cultural studies as well as for a functional use of Kiswahili. Study of structure and vocabulary is based on a variety of texts from traditional and popular culture. Emphasis on command of idiomatic usage and stylistic nuance. After SWAH 120. 1.3 1½ Course cr

SWAH 150a, Advanced Kiswahili I  Kiarie Wa’Njogu
Development of fluency through readings and discussions on contemporary issues in Kiswahili. Introduction to literary criticism in Kiswahili. Materials include Kiswahili oral literature, prose, poetry, and plays, as well as texts drawn from popular and political culture. After SWAH 140. 1.5
SWAH 170a, Topics in Kiswahili Literature  Kiarie Wa’Njogu
Advanced readings and discussion with emphasis on literary and historical texts. Reading assignments include materials on Kiswahili poetry, Kiswahili dialects, and the history of the language. After SWAH 160.  L5, HU

Yoruba Courses

YORU 110a, Beginning Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
Training and practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Initial emphasis is on the spoken aspect, with special attention to unfamiliar consonantal sounds, nasal vowels, and tone, using isolated phrases, set conversational pieces, and simple dialogues. Multimedia materials provide audio practice and cultural information.  L1 1½ Course cr

YORU 130a, Intermediate Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
Refinement of students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. More natural texts are provided to prepare students for work in literary, language, and cultural studies as well as for a functional use of Yorùbá. After YORU 120.  L3 1½ Course cr

YORU 150a, Advanced Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
An advanced course intended to improve students’ aural and reading comprehension as well as speaking and writing skills. Emphasis on acquiring a command of idiomatic usage and stylistic nuance. Study materials include literary and nonliterary texts; social, political, and popular entertainment media such as movies and recorded poems (èwí); and music. After YORU 140.  L5

YORU 170a, Topics in Yorùbá Literature and Culture  Oluseye Adesola
Advanced readings and discussion concerning Yorùbá literature and culture. Focus on Yorùbá history, poetry, novels, movies, dramas, and oral folklore, especially from Nigeria. Insight into Yorùbá philosophy and ways of life. Prerequisite: YORU 160.  L5, HU

YORU 180a, Advanced Topics in Yorùbá Literature and Culture  Oluseye Adesola
Designed for students with superior proficiency in Yorùbá who have an interest in topics not otherwise covered by existing courses. Development of language proficiency to the level of an educated native speaker. Discussion of advanced readings on Yorùbá philosophy, history, literature, and culture.  L5

Zulu Courses

ZULU 110a, Beginning isiZulu I  Sandra Sanneh
A beginning course in conversational isiZulu, using Web-based materials filmed in South Africa. Emphasis on the sounds of the language, including clicks and tonal variation, and on the words and structures needed for initial social interaction. Brief dialogues concern everyday activities; aspects of contemporary Zulu culture are introduced through readings and documentaries in English. Credit only on completion of ZULU 120.  L1 1½ Course cr

ZULU 130a, Intermediate isiZulu I  Sandra Sanneh
Development of fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, using Web-based materials filmed in South Africa. Students describe and narrate spoken and written paragraphs. Review of morphology; concentration on tense and aspect. Materials are drawn from contemporary popular culture, folklore, and mass media. After ZULU 120.  L3 1½ Course cr

* ZULU 150a, Advanced isiZulu I  Sandra Sanneh
Development of fluency in using idioms, speaking about abstract concepts, and voicing preferences and opinions. Excerpts from oral genres, short stories, and television dramas. Introduction to other South African languages and to issues of standardization, dialect, and language attitude. After ZULU 140. Course includes students from Cornell University via videoconference.  L5