AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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Lecturers  Thomas Allen Harris, Tasha Hawthorne, Ferentz Lafargue, Sarah Mahurin

FIELDS OF STUDY

The Department of African American Studies offers a combined Ph.D. in conjunction with several other departments and programs: currently, American studies; anthropology; English; film and media studies; French; history; history of art; music; political science; psychology; religious studies; sociology; Spanish and Portuguese; and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. Within the field of study, the student will select an area of concentration in consultation with the directors of graduate studies (DGS) of African American studies and the joint department or program. An area of concentration in African American studies may take the form of a single area study or a comparative area study. Students may focus on the history or artistic productions of any region within the African diaspora. Students are encouraged to draw from multiple disciplines in their intellectual pursuits, both in preparation for their qualifying examinations and in their dissertation research and writing. An area of concentration may also follow the fields of study already established within a single discipline, for example, race/minority/ethnic studies in a combined degree with sociology; the study of Black political thought, or voting patterns, in a combined degree with political science; a study of racial bias in a combined degree with psychology; or an ethnography in a combined degree with either anthropology, or sociology. An area of concentration must either be a field of study offered by the joint department or fall within the rubric of such a field. Please refer to the description of fields of study of the prospective joint department or program.

This is a combined degree program. To be considered for admission to this program, applicants must indicate both African American studies and one of the participating departments/programs listed above.
REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSFER INTO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAM

1. Students applying for transfer into the combined Ph.D. program must already have taken AFAM 505 or be taking it in the term of application; must provide a plan outlining the AFAM courses already taken and those they will take; and must submit a research statement that explains how the combined Ph.D. will advance their research interests.

2. Students must provide two letters of recommendation: one from their adviser in the joint department or program, unless that adviser is jointly appointed with African American studies, in which case a letter from the student’s DGS in the joint department or program is required; and a second letter from a faculty member in African American studies who commits to being the student’s adviser throughout the completion of the dissertation.

3. Students cannot apply sooner than the second term of the first year and must apply by January 3, which is the deadline for African American studies’ annual admissions cycle. Preference will be given to students in the second year of their Ph.D. program. Applications will receive a faculty vote early in the spring term to approve or reject, and results will be communicated to the student no later than spring break.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Students will be subject to the combined Ph.D. supervision of the African American Studies department and the relevant participating department or program. The student’s academic program will be decided in consultation with an adviser, the DGS of African American Studies, and the DGS of the participating department or program and must be approved by all three. Students are required to take five courses in African American studies, generally at least one course each term. Any variance in scheduling requires DGS approval. Core courses are (1) Theorizing Racial Formations (AFAM 505), which is a required course for all first-year graduate students in the combined program and (2) Dissertation Prospectus Workshop (AFAM 895 and AFAM 896), a two-term course, which graduate students in their third year of study must satisfactorily complete. This workshop is intended to support preparation of the dissertation proposal; each student will be required to present the dissertation prospectus orally to the faculty and to turn in a written prospectus draft by the end of spring term. Three other graduate-level African American studies courses are required: (1) a history course, (2) a social science course, and (3) a course in literature or culture.

Qualifying examinations and the dissertation proposal will be administered jointly by the African American studies department and the participating department or program and must be passed within the time required by the participating department or program. A current tenured or ladder faculty member in African American studies must serve on the qualifying examination committee, and on the dissertation committee. Both the qualifying exams and the dissertation must have an African American studies component. The total number of courses required will adhere to the requirements of the participating department or program. Each student must complete the minimum number of courses required by the participating department or program; African American studies courses (excepting the Dissertation Prospectus Workshop) count toward the participating department’s or program’s total. The number of courses
that will count depends on the joint department or program. For details of these requirements, see the special requirements of the combined Ph.D. for the particular department or program in this bulletin. Students will be required to meet the foreign language requirements of the participating department or program. (See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.) Students will not be admitted to candidacy until all requirements, including the dissertation prospectus, have been met and approved by the Graduate Studies Executive Committee of the African American Studies department and the participating department or program. A student who intends to apply for this combined Ph.D. in African American Studies and another department or program should consult the other department’s or program’s Ph.D. requirements and courses.

The faculty in African American Studies consider teaching to be an essential component of graduate education, and students therefore will teach, under the supervision of departmental professors, in their third and fourth years.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil.  See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the combined Ph.D.) Students will be awarded a combined M.A. degree in African American studies and the relevant participating department or program upon successful completion of all course work except the Dissertation Prospectus Workshop, which is taken in the student’s third year of study. See also Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

More information is available on the department’s website, http://afamstudies.yale.edu.