AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

The African American studies major offers a substantial interdisciplinary, comparative, and cross-cultural approach to the study of the experiences of people of African descent in the black Atlantic world, especially in the United States and the Caribbean. The major, which features courses in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts, enables students to apply, critique, and reimagine the methodologies and insights of many disciplines to their understanding of the cultural, historical, political, and social development of people of African descent. The curriculum enables students to better understand the social structures and cultural traditions created by Africans in the diaspora and to better understand Western conceptualizations of race, the relationship between issues of race and identity, and the histories and influences of people of African descent.

Students who graduate with a major in African American studies go on to pursue advanced degrees and careers in fields such as law, medicine, literature, education, business, public policy, African American studies, and the sciences.

The intellectual work of the African American studies program is enriched further by the programming of the Center for African American Studies. The center’s offerings deepen classroom and campuswide conversations about contemporary and historic matters relating to African American studies and to the African diaspora.

FACULTY

Lois Brown
BA, Duke University; PHD, Boston College
Class of 1958 Distinguished Professor; Professor of African American Studies; Professor of English; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Khalil Anthony Johnson
BA, University of Georgia Athens; MPHIL, Yale University; PHD, Yale University
Assistant Professor of African American Studies

Elisabeth McAlister
BA, Vassar College; MA, Yale University; MA, Yale University; MPHIL, Yale University; PHD, Yale University
Professor of Religion; Chair, African American Studies; Director, Center for African American Studies; Professor, African American Studies; Professor, American Studies; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Professor, Latin American Studies

Ashraf H.A. Rushdy
BA, University of Alberta; MA, University of Alberta; PHD, Cambridge University
Benjamin Waite Professor of the English Language; Professor of English; Professor of African American Studies; Professor, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Nicole Lynn Stanton
BA, Antioch College; MFA, Ohio State University
Dean of the Arts and Humanities; Associate Professor of Dance; Associate Professor, African American Studies; Associate Professor, Environmental Studies

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Anthony Ryan Hatch
AB, Dartmouth College; MA, University of Maryland College Park; PHD, University of Maryland College Park
Associate Professor of Science in Society; Associate Professor, African American Studies; Associate Professor, College of the Environment; Associate Professor, Sociology; Associate Professor, Environmental Studies Program

Jay Clinton Hoggard
BA, Wesleyan University; MA, Wesleyan University
Professor of Music; Professor, African American Studies

Renee Johnson Thornton
BA, SUNY at Binghamton; MALS, Wesleyan University; PHD, University of Rhode Island
Dean for the Class of 2022; Research Affiliate, African American Studies

Axelle Karera
BA, York University; PHD, Pennsylvania State University
Assistant Professor of Philosophy; Assistant Professor, African American Studies

Rashida Z. Shaw McMahon
BA, Wesleyan University; MA, Northwestern University; PHD, Northwestern University
Assistant Professor of English; Assistant Professor, African American Studies

H. Shellee Versey
BS, Tuskegee University; MPH, Columbia University; MS, University of Michigan; PHD, University of Michigan
Assistant Professor of Psychology; Faculty Fellow, College of the Environment; Assistant Professor, African American Studies

Tiphanie Yanique
BA, Tufts University; MFA, University Houston Univ Pk
Professor of English; Director, Creative Writing; Professor, African American Studies

VISITING FACULTY

Casey Hayman
BA, University of Massachusetts Amherst; MA, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Visiting Assistant Professor of African American Studies

Jesse Nasta
BA, Wesleyan University; MA, Northwestern University; PHD, Northwestern University
Visiting Assistant Professor of African American Studies

EMERITI

Gayle Pemberton
BA, University of Michigan; MA, Harvard University; MAA, Wesleyan University; PHD, Harvard University
Professor of English, Emerita; Professor of African American Studies, Emerita

DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING EXPERTS

Elizabeth McAlister, Chair, and Lois Brown
Undergraduate African American Studies Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/afam/ugrd-afam)

AFAM111 Introduction to Critical Philosophy of Race
This first-year seminar (FYS) course will examine contemporary figures in the emerging field of critical philosophy of race. We will attempt to examine what contributions (if any) the critical philosophy of race has provided not only to philosophy as a discipline but also to more traditional and established modes of thinking race and racism. We will do so by exploring issues such as the differences between critical philosophy of race and critical race theory, as well as the historical role of race and racism in philosophical thinking, and by attending to the major debates currently held in this emerging tradition.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL111
Prereq: None

AFAM152F Staging America: Modern American Drama (FYS)
Can modern American drama--as cultural analysis--teach us to reread how America ticks? Together we will explore this question as we read and discuss some of the most provocative classic and uncanonical plays written between the 1910s and the present. Plays by Susan Glaspell, Eugene O'Neill, Mike Gold, workers theater troupes, Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Amiri Baraka, Arthur Kopit, Ntozake Shange, Luis Valdez, David Mamet, Tony Kushner, Ayad Akhtar, and others will help us think about what's at stake in staging America and equip us as cultural analysts, critical thinkers, close readers of literature, and imaginative historians of culture and theater. This seminar will introduce first-year students to the kind of critical thinking developed in majors such as English; American Studies; African American Studies; Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; College of Letters; Theater Studies; and the Social and Cultural Theory Certificate.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: THEA172F, FGSS175F, COL125F, AMST125F, ENGL175F
Prereq: None

AFAM177F August Wilson (FYS)
During his lifetime, the world-renowned African American playwright August Wilson graced stages with award-winning and -nominated plays from his "Pittsburgh Cycle." This course examines the 10 plays of this cycle in the order that the playwright wrote them, from JITNEY (1982) to RADIO GOLF (2005). We will pay special attention to the playwright's use of language, history, memory, art, and music within his oeuvre.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL176F, THEA175F
Prereq: None

AFAM200 Introduction to Africana Studies
The aim of this course is to provide an interdisciplinary examination of the complex array of social practices that have shaped the role of Africa and the African diaspora in world history. The class will focus on both classic and modern texts that provide an introduction to the dynamics of African American and African diaspora thought and practice. Topics include What is Africana studies?, black studies to Africana studies, Africa and the origin of civilization, creating the African diaspora, transatlantic slave trade, Islamic slave trade, the Haitian revolution, African independence, the intersections of racism, black nationalism, black feminism, the case for reparations, and the future of Africana studies.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM201 Haiti: Between Anthropology and Journalism
This course will examine how anthropology and journalism make their subjects vis-à-vis the broader significance of the knowledge they create and their publics. Using the works of anthropologists and journalists, we will consider how and why Haiti has long been regarded as something of an oddity within the Caribbean and the world. Branded the "nightmare republic" since it gained independence in 1804, in the public sphere Haiti remains conceptually incarcerated with clichés and stereotypes that obscure understanding of its complex role in global history. Attention will be paid to the 2010 earthquake, current conditions, and possible futures. Our ultimate aim is to explore the myriad possibilities of anthropo-journalism.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ANTH
Identical With: ANTH210
Prereq: None

AFAM202 Introduction to African American Literature
This course is a survey of the history and traditions of African American literature from its earliest origins to its most modern manifestations. We will examine, in particular, the poetry, essays, and fiction produced by people of African descent from the 18th to the 21st centuries. The courses will focus on the ways African Americans used literature to document their New World experiences, bear witness to enduring traditions, and shape American society. We will work with poetry, drama, short fiction, essays, and novels, alongside music and visual culture, as we explore African American literary and cultural aesthetics, African American literary history, and issues of class, gender, and place.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: AMST275, ENGL240
Prereq: None

AFAM203 African American History, 1444-1877
This course examines the historical interactions between peoples on three continents--Africa, Europe, and the Americas--and the consequences of European colonization, trans-Atlantic slavery, and racial capitalism. Focusing on a period from the Antiquity to the late 19th centuries, we will explore how European notions concerning Africa its peoples evolved over millennia in response to shifting political, economic, and demographic circumstances. We will chart how Africans and their descendants in the Americas experienced and responded to colonialism. And we will analyze how debates concerning enslavement and freedom, indigeneity and civilization, and pan-Africanism and national citizenship played out across the African Diaspora and in the United States.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: AMST213
Prereq: None

AFAM204 Introduction to Modern African American History
This class will examine African American history from 1877 to the present. Central themes will include the post-Reconstruction period, Jim Crow, urbanization, migration, persistent institutionalized discrimination in education
and the legal system, and key social justice movements such as the civil rights movement and black power.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM206 Introduction to African American Women's History
This course offers a solid foundation in the history of black women in the United States, from the 17th-century beginnings of North American slavery to the present. Using a broad range of primary and secondary sources, from writings by and about enslaved women to films and documentaries, we will examine the experiences, voices, and contributions of everyday black women as well as famous figures in African American women's history. Major questions of the course will include how black women forged political and social movements that transformed the United States, even as they faced the constraints of slavery, segregation, and gender-based exclusion. Students will practice reading, thinking, speaking, and writing critically about a range of historical sources and questions, with an aim of understanding how race, gender, class, racial status, and sexuality have intersected to shape the lives of African American women throughout U.S. history.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: FGSS206
Prereq: None

AFAM211 Critical Philosophy of Race
This course will examine contemporary figures in the emerging field of critical philosophy of race. We will attempt to examine what contributions (if any) the critical philosophy of race has provided not only to philosophy as a discipline, but also to more traditional and established modes of thinking race and racism. We will do so by exploring issues such as the differences between critical philosophy of race and critical race theory, as well as the historical role of race and racism in philosophical thinking, and by attending to the major debates currently held in this emerging tradition.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL211
Prereq: None

AFAM212 Modern Africa
What is African Modernity? We will examine this question as we survey the major historical transformations in Africa since approximately 1800. Important themes include: African political innovations, the abolition of the slave trade and its effects, European colonialism, African adaptation and resistance, nationalism and decolonization, and Africa's role in shaping major global events. We will also study the impacts of religious and social transformations amid rapid economic and political change. Finally, we will examine African visions for post-colonial development and how to shape the future of the continent.

During the semester we will also cover some of the issues surrounding African history as a discipline. No single course can cover more than a sliver of the complexity and variety in the continent. For this reason, we approach the study of Modern Africa as comparative history. However, students satisfactorily completing this course will be able to write knowledgeably about African history and will have the foundation necessary to undertake further study about Africa with sensitivity to the complexity of its recent past.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST212
Prereq: None

AFAM219 African American Urban Politics, Economy, and Policy
This course provides an introduction to the political experience and public policies that have significantly shaped, and continue to shape, the social and political life of African Americans and the urban environment. Although the course will explore historical themes, it will be mostly contemporary in its temporal focus. Topics will include African American political thought, leadership, and black political economy as well as voting, participation, party politics, and elected office (i.e., legislative and executive). Additional topics include housing and labor markets, healthcare reform, and issues of gender, class, age, and sexual identity at the intersections of black politics. Finally, the class will explore the role of race and police relations.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: AMST288
Prereq: None

AFAM222 Slavery and the Literary Imagination
Enslavement in America and the New World was inextricably linked to the written word. What, then, does it mean to write the story of enslavement, loss, forced migration, liberation, and restoration? How does one tell the story of enslavement when that effort depends on articulating the unspeakable?

The works and writers examined in this course will prompt students to consider how one revisits history and what is required to imagine, write, and rewrite the stories and histories of people, places, and nations. We will discuss the ways in which specific literary forms enable, contain, and transform unwieldy, complicated, and stunning stories of enslavement, liberation, self-determination, activism, racialization, and nationhood.

Our readings will include an array of well-known, understudied, and newly recovered primary works and materials by and about individuals such as William Wells Brown, Charles Chesnutt, Frederick Douglass, Briton Hammon, Jupiter Hammon, James Mars, Pauline Hopkins, Mattie Jackson, Mary Prince, Chloe Spear, and Phillis Wheatley. Additional primary materials will include writings published in 18th- and 19th-century newspapers such as the "Boston Weekly Newsletter," "The Connecticut Journal," "The Liberator," and "North Star."

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: FGSS221, ENGL222
Prereq: None

AFAM223 20th-Century Franco-Caribbean Literature and the Search for Identity
This course investigates how 20th-century Francophone literature from the Caribbean defines Caribbean identity. Through a study of literary texts, films, and paintings from Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti, Guyana, and Louisiana, we will explore the evolution of Caribbean self-definition, focusing on the major concepts of Negritude, Antillanite, Creolité, and Louissantitude.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F

Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: FREN225, AMST226, COL225, LAST220
Prereq: None
AFAM224F Afrofuturism (FYS)
Mainstream readings of the African American literary and cultural canon have tended to emphasize texts with a social realist bent, those that present their audience with a supposedly "authentic" version of the African American experience. However, as cultural critic Greg Tate observes, 20th-century African American literary history includes "huge dollops of fantasy, horror, and science fiction" because, in his view, "Black people live the estrangement that science fiction writers imagine." While Tate's statement perhaps overly generalizes the black experience, there seems to be something to his notion that, in part because of the fact that they were forced to live an often "alienated" experience in America, there has always been a strong element of the speculative in black literary and cultural expression. This course traces this under-examined speculative strain in 20th and 21st-century African American literature, music, film, and visual art, as black artists explore, or speculate, on the possibilities that imagining alternative realities and modes of living open up. The course will focus especially on speculative and Afrofuturist aesthetics as they manifest in hip hop music and culture. We will examine the ways that black artists have employed elements of the speculative genre in order to re-envision the African American past, present, and future—rendering versions of historical African American experience and subjectivity that exceed traditional notions of "authenticity," complicating contemporary regimes of identification, and presenting alternative visions of the futures of blackness.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM232 Black and Indigenous Foundations of U.S. Society
The United States of America rests upon the historic dispossession of indigenous lands and the enslavement of bodies. Our course will chart how these two forces created enduring logics—elimination and alienation—that continue to structure U.S. society. Discussion topics will include whiteness, indigenous slavery, structural racism, settler colonialism, strategies of resistance, and alternative models of belonging and kinship.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM241 Ebony Singers: Gospel Music
This course will be a study of African American religious music through the medium of performance. The areas of study will consist of traditional gospel, contemporary gospel, spirituals, and hymns in the African American tradition. The members of the group will be chosen through a rigorous audition (with certain voice qualities and characteristics).
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC448
Prereq: None

AFAM243 Caribbean Writers in the U.S. Diaspora
The Caribbean cloaks a complex history in a Club Med exterior. While white sands and palm trees proclaim it the "antidote to civilization," Caribbean writers undertake to represent a fuller picture of the individual in a world shaped by colonialism, slavery, nationalism, and cultural striving. This course will examine selected literary texts as part of an ongoing dialogue among the region's history, mythology, and aesthetics.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00

Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: LAST247, AMST247, ENGL243
Prereq: None

AFAM244 Women Behaving Badly -Policing Race, Gender, and Deviance in History
This course focuses on "women behaving badly" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America. Students will explore the histories of female murderers and criminals as well as examine the experiences of women who transgressed racial, gendered, and sexual mores. Ultimately, we will investigate the tension between accepted social norms and the struggle for female autonomy.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: FGSS246
Prereq: None

AFAM245 Major Themes in Black Feminism
This course will explore critical issues and debates in black feminism from early feminist works to more contemporary writers and theorists. Fundamentally, the course will help students critically analyze feminist texts, paying attention to the ways that black feminism challenges and reflects mainstream social and political hierarchies. This course will also draw upon a range of texts including art, literature, poetry, film and music.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: FGSS247
Prereq: None

AFAM247 Contemporary African American Poetry and Its Pasts
In this course, students will engage African American poetry after 1960. Alongside gaining a thorough understanding of the currents of literary history from the civil rights movement through the age of Obama, students will gain an appreciation of what traditions contemporary poets engage. Using ANGLES OF ASCENT: A NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN POETRY as the primary text for the course, students will be able to gain a comprehensive overview of the rich literary moment of which they are a part. At the same time, students will explore the meaning of the anthology itself as a mechanism of canon-making. How does being part of a canon affect the possibilities in one's literary production?
By engaging the traditions upon which contemporary African American poets build their own poetics, students will gain a deeper understanding of the poetry itself. In addition, students will read critical works by the poets as part of their course-work gaining insight into the poets' creative processes. In addition to developing their critical voices through analytical papers, students will have a chance to develop their own poetics through a semester-long poetry collection assignment.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL238
Prereq: None

AFAM249 Sacred and Secular African American Musics
A fluid, multiconceptual approach to musicology will be introduced to view African American sacred and secular music traditions.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC269
Prereq: None

AFAM252 Writing on the Land of Freedom: The Pastoral in African American Literature
Landscape figures prominently and powerfully in the African American literary imagination. Writers have crafted evocative meditations on the natural world as they grapple with sobering realities of life, dramatic assertions of self, and transformative historical moments. This course will consider African American literary invocations of idealized, mythological, sacred, and knowable land and move toward a delineation of the African American pastoral aesthetic and tradition. We will read novels, poems, short stories, essays, letters, and journal entries by writers such as David Bradley, Charles Chesnutt, Lucille Clifton, Rita Dove, Charlotte Forten Grimké, Zora Neale Hurston, Randall Kenan, Victoria Earle Matthews, Gloria Naylor, and Marilyn Nelson.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL255
Prereq: None

AFAM260 Blues People: Race, Ethnicity and Popular Music
This course explores African American history in the United States through sound and song. As Ronald Radano, one of the scholars we will read this semester, has argued, the ways we discuss music can have a tangible influence on the social and political world, because debates about music stand in for larger social issues with real-life consequences. We will read texts that demonstrate how music has facilitated the creation of identities in the United States that recognize and celebrate difference, while offering alternate visions for what it means to be (and sound) American. We will read music as primary sources in order to investigate how musical genres may act as reservoirs of shared history and collective identity. And through diverse topics—from blues music and the rise of Jim Crow to 19th century tribal dancers in American flags on the Pine Ridge reservation to connections between elevator music and the Spanish American war—we will learn about how music and race have intersected with broader themes in U.S. history such as segregation, assimilation, internment, imperialism, and global capitalism.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM261 Beyond the Talking Book: Reading African American Literature in the Newspapers
The majority of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century African American writers, such as Frances Harper, Martin Delany, Pauline Hopkins, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Cyril Briggs, published their work in African American periodicals. In this course, we will examine the works of these canonical authors (as well as some lesser known ones) in their original publication context, the magazine archives of The Christian Recorder; The Anglo-African Magazine; The Colored American Magazine; The Crisis; The Crusader; Opportunity; and Fire!! The guiding question in our readings is this: how do our understanding of these canonical texts change when we read them in their original context—as either serial novels, or as components of a larger composite magazine, consisting of multiple different texts and images? In addition to honing students’ literary close-readings skills, this course aims to teach students how to do original research and critically engage with multi-genre, mixed forms like the magazine.
Authors we will read include: Frederick Douglass, Charles Chesnutt, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, W.E.B. Du Bois. In order to get a better understanding of the literary conventions of the serial form, students will read one of the assigned serialized novels (Pauline Hopkins' Of One Blood) in its original installment-format, week-by-week. Reading these works serially will also enable them to play closer attention to each installment’s relationship to its surrounding texts and images.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL262, AMST262
Prereq: None

AFAM262 Jazz Technique
This course is an introduction to the African American jazz dance vernacular through the embodied practice of Simonson Jazz. It will cover basic principles of alignment, centering, and technique through the context of jazz’s African roots. Class sessions will principally consist of movement exploration including a comprehensive warm-up and will be supplemented by online discussions and media to better understand the place of jazz dance in society and culture at large.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-DANC
Identical With: DANC213
Prereq: None

AFAM265 Music and Downtown New York
This course will explore the history and simultaneous flourishing of four distinct music communities that inhabited and shaped downtown New York City during two especially rich decades (the 1950s and 60s): urban blues and folk revivalists; an African American jazz-based avant-garde; Euro-American experimentalists; and Lower East Side rock groups. These four vanguard musical movements—at the heart of dramatic cultural shifts at the time, with reverberations and legacies that remain relevant up to the present day—are an essential part of American history. Much of the course will be devoted to discovering their points of convergence and divergence, especially in conversation with broader contemporaneous currents, including the Civil Rights Movement and related notions of freedom, shifting youth cultures, music and politics, and avant-garde aesthetics.
Drawing from primary sources, we will read about and listen to recordings of a wide variety of musicians, view a broad cross-section of film from the era, identify aesthetic and cultural trends, and study the local industry that supported them, including record labels, coffee houses, clubs, and concert spaces. Projects throughout the semester include written papers, individual and group presentations, and adding content to an interactive collaborative Google map of the neighborhood.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: AMST267, MUSC275
Prereq: None

AFAM266 Black Performance Theory
What does it mean to perform identity, to perform race, to perform blackness? How is blackness defined as both a radical aesthetic and an identity? In this course, we will focus on theater and performance as a resource for thinking about black history, identity, and radical politics in excess of the written word. Following recent work in Black Studies and Performance Studies, this class will pay particular attention to the doing of blackness, the visible, sonic, and haptic performances that give over to a radical way of seeing, feeling, and being in an anti-black world. Plays, films, and texts might include works by Fred Moten, Alexander Weihelye, Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins, Suzan Lori-Parks, Danai Gurira, Shane Vogel, Adrienne Kennedy, Sarah Jane Cervenak, Dee Rees, Celiné

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-THEA
Identical With: FGSS276, THEA266, ENGL263
Prereq: None

AFAM268 Contemporary Art in Africa and Diaspora
The main focus of this course is contemporary African art and art of the African diaspora. We begin with a brief survey of painting by African-American artists of the late nineteenth and twentieth century—an artistic flowering accompanied the independence of African nations after 1957. Contemporary African artists must address overriding issues of social and political importance. Their work speaks eloquently to such issues as the desire for peace, the struggle against pollution and climate change. As art becomes increasingly trans-cultural, the art of the African diaspora takes on a new cultural meaning.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA267
Prereq: None

AFAM269 Race, Incarceration, and Citizenship: The New Haven Model
This course will explore the elements of local responses to contemporary criminal justice issues, drawing on current research projects in New Haven, Connecticut. The course will explore a variety of promising practices, which emphasize community engagement and individual citizenship over incarceration and punishment. Topics will include evidence-based practices to reduce criminal recidivism, mental health issues in the criminal justice system, treatment engagement, and the creation of valued roles in the community. Students will have the opportunity to participate in federal research studies.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: ANTH269, CSPL269, AMST268
Prereq: None

AFAM271 The Prison State: Race, Law, and Mass Incarceration in U.S. History
This semester, we will examine early American texts that are preoccupied with the intersection between the unsettled (and often unsettling) categories of race and place. In the wake of colonial contact and in the midst of chattel slavery, people in varying positions of power and subjection took to the pen in order to reify or resist white supremacy and its attendant discursive and physical violence and violation. With an eye toward the strategic uses of memory and witnessing by those who were displaced and/or enslaved, we will read primary texts from the 17th to the mid-19th century that were written by people of color. To conceptualize race and nation is to think relationally, so we will also take up texts about people of color, which are often animated by the seductive effects of nostalgia and sentimentality.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL275
Prereq: None

AFAM275 Race and Place in Early American Writing
This course will begin from the premise that this intertextual approach was a foundational aesthetic technique for African American cultural producers long before any discourse around postmodernism entered the lexicon. From David Walker’s “sampling” of the Declaration of Independence in making his 1830 anti-slavery Appeal, to Kara Walker’s incorporations of imagery and artistic techniques of the antebellum South to comment on contemporary realities of blackness, African American artists have long made use of intertextual aesthetics not merely in the service of postmodern indirection, but in order to represent the realities of black lived experience in America. This course will investigate the transmedial history of this intertextual black aesthetic, examining African American literature, music, film, and visual art, and will consider various ways in which black intertextual aesthetics have been theorized, from Henry Louis Gates’ notion of “signifying(ly),” to discussions of hip hop sampling and Black Twitter. As mass-mediated technologies have proliferated in the 20th and 21st centuries and representations of “Blackness” writ large have exponentially multiplied in the popular imagery, contemporary artists increasingly sample and signify on these representations themselves. So a significant piece of our work in the course will be in analyzing the ways that the intertextual aesthetic is mobilized in the contemporary moment to speak to material realities of postmodern blackness, and to articulate nuanced black subjectivities in the face of subjection.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL275
Prereq: None

AFAM276 Intertextual Aesthetics in African American Culture: From Signifying(ly) to Sampling
Intertextuality, the integration of references to multiple texts into a single artistic work, has long been considered a hallmark of postmodern aesthetics. This course will begin from the premise that this intertextual approach was a foundational aesthetic technique for African American cultural producers long before any discourse around postmodernism entered the lexicon. From David Walker’s “sampling” of the Declaration of Independence in making his 1830 anti-slavery Appeal, to Kara Walker’s incorporations of imagery and artistic techniques of the antebellum South to comment on contemporary realities of blackness, African American artists have long made use of intertextual aesthetics not merely in the service of postmodern indirection, but in order to represent the realities of black lived experience in America. This course will investigate the transmedial history of this intertextual black aesthetic, examining African American literature, music, film, and visual art, and will consider various ways in which black intertextual aesthetics have been theorized, from Henry Louis Gates’ notion of “signifying(ly),” to discussions of hip hop sampling and Black Twitter. As mass-mediated technologies have proliferated in the 20th and 21st centuries and representations of “Blackness” writ large have exponentially multiplied in the popular imagery, contemporary artists increasingly sample and signify on these representations themselves. So a significant piece of our work in the course will be in analyzing the ways that the intertextual aesthetic is mobilized in the contemporary moment to speak to material realities of postmodern blackness, and to articulate nuanced black subjectivities in the face of subjection.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL275
Prereq: None

AFAM277 New England Bound: Slavery and Emancipation in the North
This course examines struggles over Black slavery, freedom, and community formation in New England, with a primary focus on Middletown and Connecticut.
We will explore the lived experiences and freedom struggles of Black individuals and communities, from revolutionary Black sailors to Middletown’s first free Black abolitionists. The course, which satisfies the Early AFAM History requirement for the major, will particularly invite students to grapple with Wesleyan’s and Middletown’s complex relationships to slavery and emancipation. As we will learn, slavery and the slave trade played central roles in New England’s culture and economy, especially here in Middletown. Like in other New England ports, Middletown merchants made a fortune from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the plantation economy that supported it, even selling enslaved Africans on Middletown’s Main Street. And southern slaveholders were among the first Wesleyan students in the 1830s. At the same time, free African Americans and their allies made Middletown a stop on the Underground Railroad and a center of the antislavery movement, laying the groundwork for Connecticut’s eventual abolition of slavery and for high-profile court cases like the Amistad trial. Combating popular images of the “free North,” this course will show slavery’s central role in Middletown’s local and state history, while also exploring how the Connecticut River tied Connecticut to regional and even global currents of slavery and antislavery.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM278 When Europe Met Africa: Portugal, Spain, West Africa, 1440–1650
This course looks at Iberian overseas expansion, from the early 15th to the late 17th century. The Portuguese and Spanish sea-borne empires may be termed the first globalization. This course, which focuses on West Africa, is interdisciplinary. It combines art history and history to integrate images and written documents. African artists depicted Europeans, just as European painters and sculptors represented Africans. These images tell us much about how members of one culture viewed the distant peoples with whom they were just coming into contact. The earliest European Renaissance paintings of Africans show them as dignitaries and often as rulers (e.g., “The Adoration of the Magi”). This reflects the presence in Europe of African dignitaries, both secular and religious. At the same time, African sculptors represented Portuguese soldiers and missionaries in ivory carvings, so it is possible for us, 500 years later, to compare these representations.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA268
Prereq: None

AFAM279 Award-Winning Playwrights
With textual analysis and intellectual criticism at its core, this course examines the dramatic work of award-winning playwrights through theoretical, performative, and aesthetic frames. The first half of our investigation explores companion texts written by premier playwrights. In the latter end of the course, we examine singular texts written by acclaimed newcomers. A select range of reviews and popular press publications help to supplement our discussions. In all cases, we are interested in surveying the ways in which these playwrights work within varying modes of dramatic expression and focus their plays on such topics as class, ethnicity, era, disability, gender, locale, nationality, race, and/or sexuality.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: THEA280, ENGL281
Prereq: None

AFAM280 Religion and the Social Construction of Race
In this course we examine aspects of the intersections between race and religion in a number of historical and social contexts. We place at the center of our discussions the question of how race and religion are co-constructed categories that function as a prism through which people come to understand and experience their own identities and those of others. We will privilege interpretations that emphasize (1) the intersectionality of race and religion as a process in which power plays a pivotal role; and (2) the means through which communities form collective identities. We will read a range of historical analysis and primary source materials from the U.S. and the Caribbean. After a theory module, we will examine a colonial-era captivity narrative, antebellum pro-slavery document, missionary works, analyses of anti-Semitism, works on Rastafari, Haitian Vodou, Jonestown, the Christian White Supremacy movement, as well as the contemporary U.S. relationship to the Middle East.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: AMST391, RELI391
Prereq: None

AFAM282 Mixed in America: Race, Religion, and Memoir
This course examines the history of mixed-race and interfaith identities in America. Using the genre of the memoir as a focusing lens, we will look at the various ways that Americans of mixed heritage have found a place, crafted an identity, and made meaning out of being considered “mixed.” How has being multiracial or bi-religious changed in the course of history in this country? What has occasioned these changes, and what patterns can we observe? We will explore questions of racial construction; religious boundary-making; rites of passage; gender, sexuality, and marriage; and some literary and media representations of mixed-heritage people.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI280, AMST242
Prereq: None

AFAM284 African American Philosophy
This course will examine the philosophical questions that have been of particular interest to African American philosophers. We will explore the domains of knowledge in which African American philosophers and thinkers have felt compelled to intervene. We will approach these questions by engaging with canonical historical figures such as DuBois, Douglass, and Cooper, and then we will assess the extent to which contemporary African American philosophers have remained (and continue to be) concerned with the same questions, albeit with different discursive methodologies. The purpose of this course is to trace the philosophical articulation of race, racism, identity, politics of freedom, and subject formation in the history of African American philosophical thought.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL284
Prereq: None

AFAM286 When Harlem Was in Vogue
This course will examine the aesthetics and politics of the first Modern African American cultural movement, known today as the Harlem Renaissance. In our readings of key literary texts by authors such as Alain Locke, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston, Eric Walrond, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Nella Larsen, and Jean Toomer, we will discuss both the national and global contexts of so-called “New Negro Writing” and focus on debates surrounding representation, “respectability,” and racial authenticity. During this course students will read
canonical and popular literary works by early 20th-century African American authors in tandem with the vibrant body of literary criticism that emerged from this cultural moment in order to arrive at a richer understanding of how the early 20th-century African American canon was curated and proliferated. To this end, we will pay special attention to the role of anthologies and literary magazines (such as "The Crisis," "Opportunity," and "Fire!!") in collating an emergent modern African American literary tradition. At the end of this course, students will not only be familiar with the key authors and works of the Harlem Renaissance, but also with the central debates about the direction and uses of African American art.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL286, AMST282
Prereq: None

AFAM291 Afro-Asian Intersections in the Americas
This course explores a range of historical, cultural, and political intersections between African and Asian diasporic people in the Americas from the late 19th century to the present. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, we will examine key moments in the history of Afro-Asian encounters in the Americas, including the importation of slave and coolie labor in the 19th century, the formation of anticolonial and antiracist "Third World" movements in the United States and abroad, and the 1992 Los Angeles uprising. We will also study forms of cultural interracialism, from African Americans' mania for kung fu in the 1970s, to interracial buddy films like Rush Hour (1998), to the contemporary fiction of writers such as Patricia Powell and Charles Johnson.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AMST
Identical With: AMST291
Prereq: None

AFAM298 Richard Wright and Company
This course offers an in-depth consideration of the work and career of Richard Wright, a defining figure in 20th-century African American literature, and seeks to understand Wright's interactions with a wide array of mentors, protégés, and enemies. By placing Wright amid the network of supporters, admirers, and detractors who surrounded him, we will gain a deeper understanding of Wright's development and a useful map of 20th-century African American literary expression and American literary history more broadly. Writers to be covered in the course may include, along with Wright, Hannah Arendt, James Baldwin, Gwendolyn Brooks, Horace Cayton, Ralph Ellison, James T. Farrell, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Chester Himes, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Alain Locke, Gertrude Stein, Margaret Walker, John Williams, and Frank Yerby.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: SISP300, CHUM300
Prereq: None

AFAM300 Black Phoenix Rising: Death and Resurrection of Black Lives
The Black Lives Matter Movement has renewed our collective need to theorize the value of black lives within a deluge of death and disappearance in black communities. This movement is part of a deep transnational tradition in black radical praxis that aims to transform scholarly, activist, and public discourse and public policies concerning the systemic and epistemic effects of institutional racisms and the prospects for antiracist futures. How might we envision a black radical praxis that simultaneously recognizes the vitality of black lives and challenges the cultural ideas and social practices that generate and justify black people's death and suffering? This seminar traces a genealogy of black radical praxis that interrogates the necropolitics of race and positions this system of power against the prospect of thriving black people. In doing so, the course erects an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that features scholarship in critical race science studies, intersectionality, and transnational cultural studies as they inform how a black radical praxis can contribute to the uprising and raising up of black communities.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: SISP300, CHUM300
Prereq: None

AFAM301 Junior Colloquium: Defining African American Studies
Between 1896 and 1914, W.E.B. Du Bois organized an annual conference at Atlanta University devoted to documenting and analyzing the oppressive structural conditions shaping black life in the United States. Though arguably the genesis of African American studies as a systemic academic endeavor, these sociological conferences also joined a longer intellectual tradition that has always exceeded and often resisted the Western academy. This colloquium examines how the African diaspora has generated knowledge both within and beyond the ivory tower—from cargo holds to quilombos, prisons to abortion clinics, newsrooms to classrooms, from music studios to dancehalls and soundstages. Students will engage closely with several defining texts, methods, movements, and moments concerning black life in the Americas. Ultimately, we seek possibilities toward defining an African American studies program and praxis that addresses the political, social, intellectual, and epistemic needs of the 21st century.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None
AFAM302 Seeing in the Dark: Research Methodologies in African American Studies
This reading seminar provides an introduction to research methodologies that have shaped the field of African American studies, from archival research and ethnography to geography and statistical analysis. In particular, we will focus on works that have expanded temporal, spatial, and methodological borders of the field, opening up new pathways toward investigating the richness of Afro-diasporic life in the Americas and beyond.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM304 Philosophy of Memory in African American Literature
This course will consider the importance of memory in African American literature and will explore the many ways in which authors of African descent engage, transform, and build on long-established intellectual traditions of the mind. Students will explore the importance of the idea of “memory” to these intellectual traditions of the mind and will trace the praxis of remembering as a literary act through African American literature of the long 19th century. Finally, students will explore how persons of African descent are dehumanized through a systematic reduction of their mental capacities in these same philosophical traditions of the mind. We will discuss the ways in which memory specifically figures into this dehumanization and how authors of African descent used these very theories to resist the reification and overdetermination of both their literary works and their selves.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL301
Prereq: None

AFAM305 Lyric Poetry and Music: The Color and Politics of Cry, Sound, and Voice
Lyric poetry may be the most musical of literary forms. In one of its basic definitions, the lyric poem begins after the overhearing of a sound. This sound may be familiar and pleasant, like the timbre and cadence of a lover’s voice. Or it may be recognizable and terrifying. It may be imbricated with other senses or meanings, provoking a memory that stimulates a sense of touch or smell. Or it may be unrecognizable and terrifying. It may be imbricated with other senses or meanings, provoking a memory that stimulates a sense of horror at the inevitability of death. In any of these cases, sound is thought to reveal an attachment, a memory, and to give rise to composition in the poet’s effort to reshape memory and feeling in lyric form. But such articulations do not always come out as easily as this description may imply. Indeed, moans, screams, stutters, cries, and the madness of possession by the Muses are part of lyric’s history and practice. In this course, we will read from African American, African diasporic, Caribbean, Latina/o/x, and Indigenous poetic traditions, and we will consider their relation to myth and musical forms, such as the blues, son, bomba, biguine, jazz, reggae, hip-hop, salsa, among others. The dynamics between lyric speakers and musicians, sound and story, seen and voiced language will play out.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL304, AMST302
Prereq: None

AFAM306 Visual Storytelling: Race, (In)Visibility, and the American Landscape
What is visual storytelling, and how does this medium enable or frustrate our efforts to behold the landscape and the individuals who occupy it? What histories, tools, and perspectives enable rigorous and inspiring creative processes that culminate in inclusive, restorative narratives? Students will develop their own visual storytelling concepts and projects and together will consider realities and mythologies of place, inclusion and exclusion, human-land relationships, visibility and invisibility, built and threatened environments, and the work of the visual storyteller in 20th- and 21st-century America.
Assignments and student projects will be informed by the semester-long study of visual artists such as Edward Mitchell Bannister, Carole Bayard, Romare Bearden, Robert Duncan, Gordon Parks, Henry Ossawa Tanner, and Carrie Mae Weems and the works of writers such as Kimberly Ruffin, Nikky Finney, and Jamaica Kincaid.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM307 Black Middletown Lives: The Future of Middletown’s African American Past
In this service learning course, students do hands-on history by uncovering, preserving, and sharing Middletown’s rich African American past. We will focus on the history of the Beman Triangle. This African American neighborhood, now part of Wesleyan’s campus, served as a regional and national antislavery and Underground Railroad center and home to one of the nation’s first handful of independent Black churches. Students will partner with local archives, libraries, and museums to help preserve and share this neighborhood’s remarkable history. Our projects will include building a website and an exhibit to share this history with the Wesleyan and Middletown communities.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Prereq: None

AFAM310 Iberian Expansion and the “Discovery” of Africa in Travel Narratives and Art, 1420–1640
This seminar is broadly centered on Atlantic history from the early 15th to the middle of the 17th centuries. The course addresses the origins of culture contact between Europe and Africa and the subsequent creation of mixed cultures. We will trace European expansion from the earliest Portuguese sea voyages along the African coast, shortly after 1420, to the opening of maritime commerce to West Africa and the origins of the transatlantic slave trade. We will examine evolving attitudes on the part of both Europeans and African peoples toward each other as documented in travel literature and in artistic representations of Africans by European artists and of Europeans by African sculptors. After Portuguese explorations of Africa began around 1420, the expansion of commerce and the settlement of Europeans, mostly Portuguese, on the West African coast led to a period of extensive métissage (mixture), both cultural and physical, and of remarkable fluidity in attitudes toward Africans. However, by the early 17th century, the Atlantic slave trade had begun to take on important dimensions, setting the stage for the increasingly racist attitudes that would characterize European relations with Africa during the colonial period.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM, HA-AFAM
Identical With: ARHA300
Prereq: None

AFAM312 Black Speculative Fictions and the Anthropocene
The genre of black speculative fiction—in the form of literature, art, music, and theory—provides a generative framework through which to (re)think understandings of race, gender, sexuality, class, the body, disability, citizenship, and the human. Often couched as taking place in the “future,” black speculative
fictions also engage the past and critique the present. This makes the genre a
critical resource for addressing the Anthropocene. The term "Anthropocene" first emerged from the discipline of geology in 2000. Scientists proposed that Earth had entered a new epoch (following the Holocene) in which "human" had become geological forces, impacting the planet itself. However, the term Anthropocene raises numerous questions. What does it mean to think about the human at the level of a "species"? What constitutes evidence of the Anthropocene and when did it begin? Who is responsible for the Anthropocene’s attendant catastrophes, which include earthquakes, altered ocean waters, and massive storms? Does the Anthropocene overemphasize the human and thus downplay other interspecies and human-nonhuman, animate-inanimate relations? Or does it demand a (potentially fruitful) reconceptualization of the human? Further, how does artificial intelligence complicate definitions of the human and, by extension, of the Anthropocene? Centering the work of black speculative thinkers and placing it in conversation with scientific studies ranging from marine biology and geology to cybernetics, this course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the Anthropocene that endeavors to (re)conceptualize the human, ecological relations, and Earth itself. Texts engaged will include: novels, art, music, theory, and scientific studies.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: FGSS301, E&ES125, CHUM302
Prereq: None

AFAM314 Storied Places: Revival, Renewal, and African American Landscapes
Conceptions and histories of place figure prominently and powerfully in African American literary, social, and cultural histories. Writers and artists have used the written word, images, and film to explore issues of presence and absence, claim and trespass, ownership and dispossession, as well as safety and vulnerability. We will use this course to think about how African American writers and artists in particular have used word, image, sound, and movement to highlight the histories of iconic places and terrains and to reclaim erased histories and disappeared bodies. We also will consider how revival and renewal function both as essential tropes and necessary efforts in the work to make African American life and history visible. Readings may include works by Gwendolyn Brooks, Octavia Butler, Langston Hughes, Randall Kenan, Gloria Naylor, Marilyn Nelson, Natasha Trethewey, Alice Walker, Dorothy West, and Richard Wright.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-AFAM
Identical With: ENGL242
Prereq: None

AFAM322 Advanced Themes in 20th-Century Afro-American Art
This seminar is intended for students who have already taken introductory Afro-American art or ARHA 267 (Art in Africa and Diaspora). The purpose of the seminar is to organize an exhibition and to write an accompanying, online catalog of works by African American artists from the collection of the Davison Art Center.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ART
Identical With: ARHA368
Prereq: [ARHA267 or AFAM268] OR [ARHA268 or AFAM278]

AFAM323 Survey of African American Theater
This course surveys the dynamism and scope of African American dramatic and performance traditions. Zora Neale Hurston’s 1925 play COLOR STRUCK and August Wilson’s 2006 play GEM OF THE OCEAN serve as bookends to our exploration of the ways in which African American playwrights interweave various customs, practices, experiences, critiques, and ideologies within their work.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: THEA323, FGSS323, ENGL385
Prereq: None

AFAM324 Black Power and the Modern Narrative of Slavery
The historical moment immediately after the civil rights and black power movements saw an explosion of African American writing about slavery. In the past half-century, black writers have written award-winning novels that have given unprecedented attention to the intricacies of the life of people who are enslaved and to slavery as a system that they suggested could help us better understand late-20th-century American culture. We will read some of the most important works written by contemporary African American writers to see how and why they transformed the first autobiographical form for black writers—the slave narrative—into a fictional form that has served them as they dissect their own cultural moment.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL324, AMST334
Prereq: None

AFAM325 Race and the Enlightenment: A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry
It was during the Enlightenment Era (c. 1760-1800) that scientific reasoning, a belief in progress, and new claims on personal and political liberty swept away a tenacious medieval worldview. It was also during this era, however, that the notion of race crystalized in European and North American thought. Today, we still live with implications of this major shift, be it in classification schemes, anatomical prejudices, or ethnographical myths. This is particularly true for Africans or people of African descent. This class will bring some the Enlightenment’s most prominent thinkers into dialogue with the emergency of the concept of race theory. In particular, we will focus on the clash between the Enlightenment era’s belief that “all men were created as equals” and the various ways that the Black African came to be studied within “natural history” and various philosophical models. This historical backdrop will lead us not only to a discussion of the economic imperatives of human slavery but to a series of contemporary reflections on the status of the Enlightenment put forward by postcolonial critics. Note: This class is offered in the context of the Wesleyan’s Center for the Humanities’ “Grand Narratives/Modest Proposals” theme and speakers series.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: SISP324, CHUM324, FIST325
Prereq: None

AFAM328 Brown, Black, and Queer Forms and Feelings
Given how brutally not neutral the world is to black, brown, and queer forms of life and pleasure, this course thinks with “otherwise” spaces, figures, and feelings, like the queer club, the dance floor, abnormality, errancy, illegality, fugitivity, rage, indifference, and love. We will take up José E. Muñoz’s invocation of a “minoritarian theory of affect” that insists that “whiteness is a cultural logic which can be understood as an affective code that positions itself as the law.” We will study affect beyond whiteness through attention to sonic forms and “audio-visual shapes” in African diasporic, Latina/o/x, and Caribbean arts. We will consider the diasporas and collectives grouped together in the terms “minoritarian,” “brown,” and “black” as normals that generate alternative modes of moving through and feeling ourselves in the world. We will study for
radical potentiality in the beautiful, obscene, and off-kilter affects of brown, black, and queer aesthetic and poetic forms.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: FGSS308, ENGL328, AMST327
Prereq: None

AFAM334 Special Topic: Something in the Air: Mining the Oral/Aural Tradition in African American Poetry
In his book-length manifesto, Poetry as an Insurgent Act, Lawrence Ferlinghetti claims that "the printing press killed poetry." What he seems to be lamenting—at least, in part—is the privileging of the written word to the detriment of poetry’s musical, or aural, qualities. In this advanced-level workshop, we will focus on the poem as something intended to be read aloud and listened to. This course will also examine the roots and evolution of the African American oral poetic tradition with special attention paid to the rhetorical strategies derived from the black church, adopted by civil rights leaders and speech writers, and used to varying degrees by poets ranging from those of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and ’70s to practitioners of contemporary hip-hop and spoken word. Some of the poets under consideration include Amiri Baraka, Oscar Brown Jr., Jayne Cortez, Gil-Scott Heron, June Jordan, The Last Poets, Carl Hancock Rux, Sonia Sanchez, Patricia Smith, Jessica Care Moore, Laini Mataka, and Saul Williams.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL216 OR ENGL336 OR ENGL337

AFAM344 The Haitian Revolution Beyond Borders
In 1791, enslaved people rose up against their masters in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, at the time the most profitable plantation society in the world. Thirteen years later, their efforts would culminate in the declaration of independence of Haiti, a nation founded on the pillars of antislavery, anticolonialism, and racial equality. This course investigates the regional and global significance of this revolution through its interconnections with Haiti’s neighbors in the Caribbean and across Latin America. First, we will look at the immediate implications of Haiti’s founding for the fate of New World slavery during the Age of Revolutions. Next, we will consider Haiti’s long-term impact on national identities, racial formations, and future revolutionary struggles in the Americas over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Identical With: LAST344

AFAM350 The Law, the Citizen, and the Literary and Cinematic Imaginations
In this course, we will study several major legal events that highlight the contradictions and injustices in the history of U.S. citizenship and the ways this history has been reimagined in literature and cinema. Among the topics discussed will be the slave codes, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Jim Crow order, the Bracero program, sodomy laws, and SB 1070. We will consider theories of citizen, state, race, and sexuality implicit in these legal structures, with an eye for who may be incorporated into the body politic and who is unsuitable by design, and on what terms. In addition, we will consider the way literary and cinematic texts engage the rhetoric and psychic effects of the law and the way they present different imaginaries of human bodies, communities, and temporalities. Our focus will be on African American, African diasporic, Latina/o/x and Indigenous literatures and cinemas, as they reveal the rifts and conjunctions among the categories citizen, “savage,” “gente sin razón,” slave, illegal, pervert, and deviant.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: AMST350, ENGL350
Prereq: None

AFAM361 The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination
This seminar offers a social psychological analysis of different forms of prejudice and discrimination, including racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, and less recognized forms of bias, such as the exploitation and control of indigenous peoples, animals, and the natural environment.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC361
Prereq: PSYC260

AFAM362 The Sounds of Black and Brown Performance
This course organizes itself as a scene of listening with care to black and brown sounds, where listening is conceived as a mode of audience engagement of performances informed by avant-garde, queer, and critical race theories. Listening, then, is part of the artistic-theoretical practices that students will both read about and act out in this course. Here, we will engage theater, dance, and performance with the demand of listening in brown for the distinct sounds made in different performances, whether by identifiably racialized artist-subjects or not, and how they compel us to think of embodiment. If to say black is to say abjection, prison, AIDS, as well as the generative, the contra-rationally beautiful (Moten), and if to say “gender-γ” is to say threatening, off-kilter, violable, as well playful, and transformative (Sedgwick, Doyle), then what happens when we listen in brown, that is, with the headphones of melancholia, depression, as well as wildness, the excessive, the “hot and spicy” as critiques of the violence of the whitened norm (Muñoz)?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: THEA366, ENGL363, CHUM366
Prereq: None

AFAM364 Friendship and Collaboration: In Theory, In Practice
How do we conceive of friendship, collaboration, love, and collectivity? In an interview, Michel Foucault stated that the relational task of the homosexual was to “invent, from A to Z, a relationship that is still formless, which is friendship: that is to say, the sum of everything through which they can give each other pleasure.” This course considers theories and performances of relationality, queer belonging, and friendship with an emphasis on forms of belonging and recognition that exceed normative protocols. We will ask how queer practices, black thought, brown study, and indigenous epistemologies inform our own imaginings of collaborative projects. Beginning with philosophical determinations of friendship, we will branch out to imagine ways in which artists, lovers, friends, and/or cohabitators enact togetherness. Artists and projects to be discussed include: Andy Warhol’s Factory, Hugo Ball, Emily Johnson, Black Salt Collective, My Barbarian, Harriet’s Apothecary, General Sisters, the Critical Indigenous Photographic Exchange, Bataloc and more.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-THEA
Identical With: ENGL362, THEA364
AFAM365 Black Leadership in Historical Perspective
This course uses the lens of history to evaluate why some individuals are considered most effective as civic, elected, bureaucratic, and appointed leaders in African American history. The course will analyze social scientific models of leadership and then go into the historical record to discover meaningful and illuminating patterns. Careful consideration is given to the distinctive challenges posed by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and institutional settings.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: AMST342
Prereq: None

AFAM371 Sister Acts: Black Feminist/Womanist Theater of the African Diaspora
This course surveys the dynamism and scope of contemporary feminist/womanist drama written by black women playwrights of the African Diaspora. Reading select plays from Africa, Canada, the Caribbean, England, and the United States, alongside theory and criticism, we examine the impact of race, gender, identity, and sexuality politics on black feminist/womanist theater. Throughout our study of these dramatic texts, their performances, and their subsequent critiques, we are equally invested in the bridges and the gaps, the audibles and the silences, and the overlaps and the divides, as they are formed. Significantly, this analytic undertaking involves a simultaneous critique of the role of the playwright, the spectator, and the critic of black feminist/womanist theater. At all times, consideration is given to the ways in which these playwrights collectively use theater as a platform to explore black and female and diasporic subjectivities across regional, national, and, at times, linguistic differences.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL371, THEA371, FGSS371
Prereq: None

AFAM375 Black Global Cities
In this course, we will analyze representations of cities and Black urban modernity in Afro-diasporic literature of the twentieth and twenty-first century. Placing special emphasis on the global hubs of London, Cape Town, Kinshasa Lagos, New York, Marseilles, and Kingston, we will ask what makes these former imperial cities Black global cities? We will read literary works on and from Black Global Cities alongside sociological texts on urbanization, globalization, and discuss the extent to which literary representations either collide with or challenge dominant national and transnational narratives about Black urban modernity. Although each week’s readings will focus on a different location, we will approach these locales as nodes in larger global networks of people, texts, and goods rather than as discreet, bounded places. To this end, we will trace how histories of racial formation move across borders and are transposed onto different spaces, and to what effect. Authors we will read include: Claude McKay, James Baldwin, Gabeba Baderoon, Petina Gappah, Kei Miller, and Teju Cole. We will also watch films such as Girhood (2014), Black Panther (2018), The Harder They Come (1972), Bad Friday: Rastafari After Coral Gardens (2011), Welcome to Nollywood (2007).
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: AMST375, ENGL375
Prereq: None

AFAM386 Theory of Jazz Improvisation
This course concentrates on the vocabulary of improvisation in the African American classical tradition. Rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic knowledge will be approached through the study of scales, chords, modes, ear training, and transcription. Theoretical information will be applied to instruments in a workshop setting. Audition and permission of instructor are required at the first class. Intensive practice and listening are required. This course may not be repeated for credit.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC210
Prereq: MUSC103

AFAM387 Anthropology of Black Religions in the Americas
This course examines Afro-Creole religions and cultural expressions in selected communities throughout the Atlantic world. How were religious communities created under colonial domination? Under what conditions were religions shaped, and what shapes did they take? How are African-based religions produced through aesthetics and the ritual arts of spiritual talk and sermons, song, dance, drumming, and medicine-making? How do these religions continue to survive, thrive, and, in some cases, grow in the current historical period? This course will pay special attention to the yearly ritual cycle and its attendant festivals: Christmas, carnival, Lent, Easter, saints' days, feasts, and pilgrimages, as well as the emergent spiritual and aesthetic traditions such as Capoeira and Rara. We will study Orisha religions such as La Regla de Ocha, or Lukumi, in Cuba and the Latino U.S.; Candolle in Brazil; Vodou in Haiti; and Garifuna traditions and spiritism in Puerto Rico.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: LAST268, ANTH267, RELI268
Prereq: None

AFAM388 Wesleyan Ensemble for 20th and 21st Century Classical and Contemporary Music Part I
This ensemble class offers a unique opportunity for graduate and undergraduate performers and composers to explore and perform various acoustic, electronic, and electroacoustic works composed by various composers of experimental and spiritism in Puerto Rico.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC459
Prereq: None

AFAM389 Wesleyan Ensemble for 20th and 21st Century Classical and Contemporary Music Part II
This ensemble class offers a unique opportunity for graduate and undergraduate performers and composers to explore and perform various acoustic, electronic, and electroacoustic works composed by various composers of experimental
and new music in America and Europe after 1950. Additionally, composers who are enrolled in the course may be asked to compose pieces that are specifically designed for any number of the ensemble participants. Through extensive ensemble rehearsals and individually scheduled rehearsal labs that will culminate in a performance (or multiple performances), students will develop a deep understanding and appreciation of contemporary music performance techniques and collaborative processes. It is expected that students will gain skills that pertain to the reading of scores, the execution of complex rhythmic and melodic passages, and extended instrumental performance techniques. Advanced Western musical literacy is required in order to succeed in this course. All instrumentalists (including the human voice) are encouraged to participate.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC460
Prereq: None

AFAM390 Jazz Improvisation Performance
In this extension of MUSC210, Theory of Jazz Improvisation, all materials previously explored will be applied to instruments in a workshop setting. Intensive practice and listening are required.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC456
Prereq: None

AFAM396 Jazz Orchestra I
This course is an intensive study of large-ensemble repertoire composed by Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Thad Jones, Fletcher Henderson, and others. A yearlong commitment to rehearsal of the compositions as well as listening and reading assignments will culminate in a second-semester public concert.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC457
Prereq: None

AFAM397 Jazz Orchestra II
This course continues the work begun in MUSC457 with intensive study of large-ensemble repertoire composed by Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Thad Jones, Fletcher Henderson, and others. A yearlong commitment to rehearsal of the compositions as well as listening and reading assignments will culminate in a second-semester public concert.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-MUSC
Identical With: MUSC458
Prereq: None

AFAM401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM403 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

AFAM404 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

AFAM407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

AFAM408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

AFAM409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM419 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

AFAM420 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

AFAM420A Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

AFAM420B Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

AFAM469 Education in the Field, Undergraduate
Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.

Offering: Host
AFAM470 Independent Study, Undergraduate
Credit may be earned for an independent study during a summer or authorized leave of absence provided that (1) plans have been approved in advance, and (2) all specified requirements have been satisfied.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: None
Prereq: None

AFAM491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

AFAM492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member's course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT