

African American Studies, BA

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- understand basic facts, principles, key figures, and events related to African American experience in American society, plus recognize the significant contributions of African Americans in the United States and abroad;
- become familiar with the foundations of the discipline of African American studies and the development of the field, specifically conceptual ideas that shape the academic study of African American life;
- acquire the tools for contextualizing and understanding the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation in an effort to identify relevant challenges and solve human problems related to the African American community;
- learn to critically analyze cultural issues shaping the lives and conditions of African Americans through curriculum, community service, and service learning as they confirm the value of diversity in the 21st century; and
- be prepared for potential careers or postbaccalaureate work in African American studies and related fields through the development of skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, and research.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in African American studies requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 30 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They also must complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core. Transfer credit is evaluated individually and is limited to a maximum of 9 s.h. Students may count up to 56 s.h. of African American studies coursework (prefix AFAM) toward credit required for the Bachelor of Arts degree.

The BA with a major in African American studies requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Introductory Courses	6
African American Studies Core	18
Electives	6

Introductory Courses

Students are required to complete the following introductory courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
AFAM:1020/ AMST:1030	Introduction to African American Culture	3
AFAM:1030	Introduction to African American Society	3

AFAM:1020 Introduction to African American Culture examines the evolution of cultural experiences and developments in the United States and the African diaspora (e.g. the Harlem Renaissance, graphic novels, blues, hip hop, soul, and gospel). The course includes readings in literature, music, film, comics,

anime, popular culture events, and the visual and performing arts.

AFAM:1030 Introduction to African American Society examines the construction of social and historical institutions in the United States and the African diaspora (e.g., Black church, Black family, Black traditions, and social movements). The course includes readings in education, sports, political science, religion, health, criminal justice, history, sociology, and other disciplines.

African American Studies Core

In addition to the two required introductory courses, all students must complete at least 6 s.h. from each of the three topical areas below (minimum of 18 s.h.). Other courses may be approved for the topical areas; consult with an African American studies advisor.

History, Religion, and the Diaspora

Course #	Title	Hours
At least 6 s.h. from these:		
AFAM:1041/ RELS:1041	African American Religion and Popular Culture	3
AFAM:1250/ RELS:1350	Introduction to African American Religions	3
AFAM:1900	Diverse Topics in African American Studies (when topic is history, religion, or the diaspora)	3
AFAM:2266/ HIST:2266	Civil War and Emancipation	3
AFAM:2267/ HIST:2267	African American History to 1877: From Slave Cabin to Senate Floor	3
AFAM:2268/ HIST:2268	African American History Since the Civil War	3
AFAM:2500	Black Culture and Experience: Contemporary Issues (when topic is history, religion, or the diaspora)	3
AFAM:3245/ RELS:3745	Twentieth- and Twenty-first-Century African American Religion: Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter	3
AFAM:3260/ HIST:3260	Violence in Black America	3
AFAM:3262/ HIST:3262	The Black Midwest: History, Literature, and Culture	3
AFAM:3275/ HIST:3275	History of Slavery in the U.S.A.	3-4
AFAM:3555/ ENGL:3555	Topics in African Cinema	3
AFAM:3758/ HIST:3758	The Ancient African Past	3
AFAM:3760/ HIST:3760	The Making of Modern Africa	3
AFAM:3900	Topics in African American Studies (when topic is history, religion, or the diaspora)	arr.
AFAM:7205/ GWSS:7205/ HIST:7205	New Histories: U.S. Slavery	arr.

EPLS:5126 Twentieth-Century Educational Movements 2-3

Literature and Performing Arts

Course #	Title	Hours
At least 6 s.h. from these:		
AFAM:1130	The History of African American Film	3
AFAM:1140/ ARTS:1140	Introduction to African American Art	3
AFAM:1240/ MUS:1740	The Art of Listening to Jazz	3
AFAM:1241/ MUS:1741	The Soundtrack of Black America	3
AFAM:1900	Diverse Topics in African American Studies (when topic is literature or performing arts)	3
AFAM:2463/ ENGL:2463	Topics in African American Literature	3
AFAM:2465/ ENGL:2465	Selected African American Authors	3
AFAM:2500	Black Culture and Experience: Contemporary Issues (when topic is literature or performing arts)	3
AFAM:2700/ AMST:2700	The Black Image in Sequential Art: Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime	3
AFAM:3459/ ENGL:3459	African American Literature Before 1900	3
AFAM:3460/ ENGL:3460	African American Literature After 1900	3
AFAM:3461/ ENGL:3461	Twenty-First Century African American Literature	3
AFAM:3462/ ENGL:3462/ THTR:3462	African American Drama	3
AFAM:3465/ ENGL:3465	African American Autobiography	3
AFAM:3900	Topics in African American Studies (when topic is literature or performing arts)	arr.

Media, Politics, and Social Institutions

Course #	Title	Hours
At least 6 s.h. from these:		
AFAM:1900	Diverse Topics in African American Studies (when topic is media, politics, or social institutions)	3
AFAM:2064/ SOC:2064	African American Families: Urban and Suburban	3
AFAM:2070/ COMM:2069	Black Television Culture	3
AFAM:2072/ COMM:2072	African American Popular Culture	3
AFAM:2076/ COMM:2076	Race, Ethnicity, and Media	3
AFAM:2079/ SPST:2079	Race and Ethnicity in Sport	3

AFAM:2500 Black Culture and Experience: Contemporary Issues (when topic is media, politics, or social institutions) 3

AFAM:2770/ GHS:2770/ SOC:2770	Black and White Community Politics	3
AFAM:3053/ AMST:3053/ HIST:3253	The Civil Rights Movement	3
AFAM:3100/ AMST:3100/ SOC:3100	Critical Race Theory: Culture, Power, and Society	3
AFAM:3110/ SOC:3110	Race, Organizations, and Workplace	3
AFAM:3500/ HIST:3160/ RELS:3808	Malcolm X, King, and Human Rights	3
AFAM:3600/ AMST:3600	Digitizing Blackness	3
AFAM:3630/ SOC:3630	The Racial Wealth Gap: Black Debt, White Debt	3
AFAM:3900	Topics in African American Studies (when topic is media, politics, or social institutions)	arr.
AFAM:3925/ JMC:3165	African Americans and the Media	3
AFAM:4250/ EPLS:4250	Education In Black America	3
AFAM:4770/ GEOG:4770/ GHS:4770	Environmental Justice	3

Electives

Students also must take two elective courses (minimum of 6 s.h.) selected from the three topical areas previously listed. One of the two elective courses may be substituted with AFAM:4980 Independent Study or AFAM:4990 Honors Project. With the approval of an African American studies advisor, students may also substitute relevant courses offered by other departments for one or both electives; the substituted courses may not be cross-referenced with African American studies. Students must gain the advisor's approval before enrolling in a substitute course.

Course #	Title	Hours
Two electives selected from the three topical areas or approved substitutes		6

Language Requirement

The language requirement for the African American studies major is the same as the World Languages requirement of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core. Students are encouraged, but not required, to take African language courses (Swahili is currently offered) or Spanish language courses to fulfill the World Languages requirement.

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in African American studies have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. Honors in the major offers students the opportunity to pursue special interests and individual in-depth research.

Honors students must complete all required coursework for the major while maintaining a University of Iowa grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.33 and a major GPA of at least 3.33 (30 s.h.). Students must register for up to 6 s.h. of AFAM:4990 Honors Project, which enhances a student's ability to complete honors projects under the guidance of the supervising faculty member. Students enroll in AFAM:4990 with the approval of an African American studies faculty member, who will supervise the course. They may count up to 6 s.h. earned in AFAM:4990 toward the 30 s.h. required for the major.

Under the guidance of the African American studies faculty member, an honors student defines a research project (thesis) using primary, secondary, or archival sources. Students submit a project proposal by the end of their junior year. They complete a thesis under the guidance of a supervising faculty member and present the results as a senior essay to a committee of three, including the supervising African American studies faculty member, one other African American studies faculty member, and the African American studies chair. A student's committee may choose to hear an oral defense of the honors thesis, usually during the student's last semester.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the university's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the African American studies major.

Career Advancement

The African American studies major provides valuable background for careers in a diverse society, in areas such as community work, public school teaching, religion, government, political science, and law. Some graduates go on to advanced study, many preparing for work as teachers and administrators at colleges and universities.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the university's Four-Year Graduation Plan. Courses in the major are those required to complete the major; they may be offered by departments other than the major department.

During the first year of study, students should focus on completing the GE CLAS Core, perhaps including Swahili or

Spanish coursework to begin satisfying the World Languages requirement.

Before the fifth semester begins: at least three courses in the major, including AFAM:1020 Introduction to African American Culture and AFAM:1030 Introduction to African American Society.

Before the seventh semester begins: at least seven courses in the major and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: at least nine courses in the major.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

African American Studies, BA

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
GE CLAS Core: Sustainability ^a		
	Hours	0
First Year		
Fall		
AFAM:1020 or AFAM:1030	Introduction to African American Culture ^b or Introduction to African American Society	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^c		3
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	2
	Hours	14-15
Spring		
AFAM:1030 or AFAM:1020	Introduction to African American Society ^b or Introduction to African American Culture	3
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Values and Culture ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab ^c		4
Elective course ^d		2
	Hours	15-16
Second Year		
Fall		
Major: history, religion, and the diaspora topical area course		3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^e		4 - 5

Elective course ^d	3
Hours	16-17
Spring	
Major: history, religion, and the diaspora topical area course	3
Major: media, politics, and social institutions topical area course	3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues ^c	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^e	4 - 5
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	16-17
Third Year	
Fall	
Major: literature and performing arts topical area course	3
Major: media, politics, and social institutions topical area course	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^e	4 - 5
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	16-17
Spring	
Major: literature and performing arts topical area course	3
GE CLAS Core: Social Sciences ^c	3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^e	4 - 5
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	16-17
Fourth Year	
Fall	
Major: elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	15
Spring	
Major: elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) ^g	
Hours	15
Total Hours	123-129

- b Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.
- c GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
- d Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
- e Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.
- f Students are required to complete 6 s.h. in electives selected from the three topical areas. With the approval of an African American studies advisor, students may substitute relevant courses offered by other departments for one or both electives.
- g Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.

a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative and Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Culture.