African American Studies

Chair
• Venise T. Berry

Undergraduate major: African American studies (B.A.)
Undergraduate minor: African American studies
Graduate degree: M.A. in African American world studies
Graduate certificate: African American studies
Faculty: https://clas.uiowa.edu/afam/people/faculty
Website: https://clas.uiowa.edu/afam/

African American studies (AAS) examines the unique experiences of African-descended people throughout the diaspora drawing on a rich tradition of civic engagement, scholarship, and teaching. The faculty introduce students to the foundations of African American studies and collaborate with them to understand new intellectual perspectives. Courses and research revolve around three core areas of study: history, religion, and the diaspora; literature and performing arts; and media, politics, and society. Within these areas, students carefully consider the construction of race, ethnicity, and identity and the performance of class, gender, and sexuality. Students who take courses in African American studies acquire a special skill set that enables them to critically interrogate their own culture and other cultures in the world around them.

Cocurricular Activities

African American Cultural Center
African American studies encourages students to use the African American Cultural Center (Afro-House). The center serves as a museum housing educational artifacts. Offering enrichment for the University of Iowa and promoting diversity among all members of the Iowa City community, the center also provides a cultural hub for African American students.

African American Studies Student Association
The African American Studies Student Association aims to promote knowledge about Black life in the United States by hosting speakers, publicizing artistic performances, and sponsoring relevant programs with various campus collaborators. The association is primarily designed for AAS majors and minors; however, any University of Iowa student interested in African American studies is eligible to become a member.

Seminar and Lecture Series
The African American Studies Seminar Series and the Darwin Turner Lecture bring important scholars and creative artists to the University of Iowa campus. Guests of the lecture and seminar series have included Amiri Baraka, Trudier Harris, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Michelle Wallace, Mary Patillo, J. Lorand Matory, Portia Maultsby, Paul Butler, Gabrielle Forman, and Valerie Smith.

Graduate Advanced Readings in African American Culture/Historic and Contemporary Debates
Graduate students from a range of disciplines in the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Law, Public Health, and Education, and the Tippie School of Business, as well as elsewhere are encouraged to participate in the program's interdisciplinary graduate course AFAM:5900 Advanced Readings in African American Culture, which is dedicated to research methods and advanced readings in African American studies.

African American Studies Annual Awards Program
Each spring, the African American studies program honors AAS majors and minors, along with exceptional University of Iowa students and organizations. Scholarships are awarded by the Marie Nesbitt Foundation, the African American Studies Program, the National Association of Black Journalists, and the Iowa Black Alumni Association. Awards are offered that recognize student efforts in community service, leadership, creative arts, graduate research, cultural appreciation, and academic achievement.

Graduate Student Mentoring and Advising
The African American Studies Program sponsors several intellectual and social gatherings for graduate students across multiple disciplines. During these events, students connect with others interested in African American studies and receive advice about becoming faculty members, being productive members of the academic profession, and career options outside of academia.

Iowa Black Alumni Association
The Iowa Black Alumni Association (IBAA) promotes the general mission of the University of Iowa. The group enhances the career connections of prospective, current, and former Black University of Iowa students. It also recognizes these individuals for their service.

Programs

Undergraduate Programs of Study
Major
• Major in African American Studies (Bachelor of Arts)

Minor
• Minor in African American Studies

Graduate Programs of Study
Major
• Master of Arts in African American World Studies

The African American Studies Program is not accepting graduate students at this time.

Certificate
• Certificate in African American Studies
African American Studies Courses

**AFAM:1000 First-Year Seminar**
1 s.h.
Small discussion class; topics chosen by instructor. Requirements: first-year standing.

**AFAM:1020 Introduction to African American Culture**
3 s.h.
Examination of Black cultural experiences in the United States and the African diaspora; focus on literature, music, film, comics, anime, popular culture, and visual/performing arts. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as AMST:1030.

**AFAM:1030 Introduction to African American Society**
3 s.h.
Examination of black social and historical institutions in the United States and the African diaspora; focus on education, sports, political science, religion, health, criminal justice, history, sociology, and other disciplines. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

**AFAM:1130 The History of African American Film**
3 s.h.
History of African American cinema; examination of various cycles of Black movie fare between 1912-1999.

**AFAM:1240 The Art of Listening to Jazz**
3 s.h.
What is jazz and its importance; guided introduction to jazz music, anatomy of jazz music, cultural context; development of skills to become an informed listener; process of performing jazz music, its connection with Black culture; focused listening/analysis of prominent jazz artists' work from past and present, including intersection between jazz and hip hop; formal music experience or training not required. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts. Same as MUS:1740.

**AFAM:1241 The Soundtrack of Black America**
3 s.h.
Linkage of African American culture and music; Black musical innovations that shaped mainstream American musical tastes over the last century; exploration of relationships between Black music and culture; examples of blues, jazz, gospel, hip hop; artists including Bebop Smith (blues), Mahalia Jackson (gospel), Miles Davis (jazz), Nas and Talib Kweli (hip hop). GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as MUS:1741.

**AFAM:1250 Introduction to African American Religions**
3 s.h.
GE: Values and Culture. Same as RELS:1350.

**AFAM:1275 Black Chicago: The Past, Present, and Future of an American Community**
3 s.h.
Students explore the history of Chicago's Black communities; modern issues impacting Chicago's Black neighborhoods; cultural, social, and political contributions of Black Chicagoans to city and nation; consideration of what strategies might be deployed to shape a better future for Black Chicago. Same as HIST:1275.

**AFAM:1630 The Racial Wealth Gap: Black Debt, White Debt**
3 s.h.
Exploration of extent, historical origins, and contemporary factors of the racial wealth gap with special attention to role of debt in U.S. race relations; potential topics include education debt, monetary sanctions in criminal justice, redlining, recession, bankruptcy, and reparations. Same as SOC:1630.

**AFAM:1830 Music of the African American Diaspora**
3 s.h.
History and characteristics of music styles emerging from African American culture from time of slavery to present; beginning with Negro spiritual, exploration of origins and musical anatomy of relevant music styles (blues, gospel, jazz, rhythm and blues, funk); ubiquitous role music plays in civil, cultural, and political unrest amongst African American community throughout 20th century.

**AFAM:2014 Giants of Jazz: Miles, Trane, and Duke**
3 s.h.
Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Duke Ellington as figureheads of the Jazz music style; how they changed the trajectory of modern music along with sidemen (B. Strayhorn and H. Hancock); Ellington's resolute defiance of stereotypical views of African Americans; Miles' brazen protests against civil injustices; how these icons are much more than mere musicians; cultural impact of landmark albums including 'Kind of Blue,' 'A Love Supreme,' and 'The Birth of the Cool'; focus on their life, music and sociopolitical impact. Same as MUS:2014.

**AFAM:2064 Racial Inequity and the Experiences of African American Families in the U.S.**
3 s.h.
Racial inequality and experiences of African American families in the U.S. during 20th and 21st centuries; historical context for contemporary research on African American family; relative impact of structural and cultural factors on various aspects of African American family life, declining marriage rates, family formation patterns; intersections of race and class in family life; research methods used to examine dynamics of African American family life, including quantitative analysis, structured qualitative interviews, and ethnography. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as SOC:2064.

**AFAM:2070 Black Television Culture**
3 s.h.
Social and political impact of television dramas featuring people of African descent in the West; examination of production, reception, representation, and industry as it relates to the African American images that are granted tenure on television screens. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as COMM:2069.

**AFAM:2072 African American Popular Culture**
3 s.h.
Examination of global popularity and impact of African American popular culture. Same as COMM:2072.

**AFAM:2076 Race, Ethnicity, and Media**
3 s.h.
Introduction to debates about media portrayals of race and ethnicity; focus primarily on entertainment media; use of general analytic perspectives (stereotype analysis, aesthetic analysis, history) applied to real-world examples; address one or more racial/ethnic groups in the United States. Same as COMM:2076.

**AFAM:2079 Race and Ethnicity in Sport**
3 s.h.
Structural and ideological barriers to racial and ethnic equality in sport, with focus on African American sport experiences; historical and contemporary issues, media representations. Same as SPST:2079.

**AFAM:2266 Civil War and Emancipation**
3 s.h.
150 years later, what can we learn about American history from studying a war that both killed and liberated a remarkable and an unprecedented number of people? Why did it take a war to end slavery? How did emancipation occur and how did enslaved people accelerate the destruction of U.S. slavery during the war? Same as HIST:2266.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAM:2267</td>
<td>African American History to 1877: From Slave Cabin to Senate Floor</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2268</td>
<td>African American History Since the Civil War</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2465</td>
<td>Selected African American Authors</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2500</td>
<td>Black Culture and Experience: Contemporary Issues</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2700</td>
<td>The Black Image in Sequential Art: Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2770</td>
<td>Environmental Racism: Black and White Community Politics</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2800</td>
<td>African American Women, Health, Hair, and Sexuality</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:2853</td>
<td>The Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3010</td>
<td>Critical Race Theory: Culture, Power, and Society</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3110</td>
<td>Race, Organizations, and Workplace</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3130</td>
<td>Black American Film</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3245</td>
<td>Twentieth-Century African American Religion: Civil Rights to Hip Hop</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3260</td>
<td>Violence in Black America</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3275</td>
<td>History of Slavery in the U.S.A.</td>
<td>3-4 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:3459</td>
<td>African American Literature Before 1900</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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AFAM:3460 African American Literature After 1900 3 s.h.
English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: American Literature and Culture. PERIOD: 20th/21st-Century Literature. English majors may apply this course to the Multiethnic American Literature and Culture requirement. Same as ENGL:3460.

AFAM:3461 Twenty-First Century African American Literature 3 s.h.
African American literature from 20th- and 21st-century writers; African American experience(s) of race, sexuality, gender, class, and privilege in contemporary era; various ways poets, rappers, authors tackle these themes within literary forms (i.e., fiction, creative nonfiction, autobiography, poems, songs); societal structures of power. English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: American Literature and Culture. PERIOD: 20th/21st-Century Literature. English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the Multiethnic American Literature and Culture requirement. Same as ENGL:3461.

AFAM:3462 African American Drama 3 s.h.
English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: American Literature and Culture. PERIOD: Varies by semester. English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the Multiethnic American Literature and Culture requirement. Same as ENGL:3462, THTR:3462.

AFAM:3465 African American Autobiography 3 s.h.
English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: American Literature and Culture. PERIOD: 20th/21st-Century Literature. English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the Multiethnic American Literature and Culture requirement. Same as ENGL:3465.

AFAM:3500 Malcolm X, King, and Human Rights 3 s.h.
Religion and politics of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the context of U.S. civil rights and international human rights in West Africa and the Muslim world; emphasis on civil rights connections to Gandhi, the Nobel Peace prize, and other international experiences that have impacted Pan Africanists, such as Stokely Carmichael, who worked on human rights. Recommendations: international studies major or undergraduate standing. Same as HIST:3160, RELS:3808.

AFAM:3550 African Literature 3 s.h.
English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: Transnational Literature and Postcolonial Studies. PERIOD: 20th/21st-Century Literature. Same as ENGL:3550.

AFAM:3555 Topics in African Cinema 3 s.h.
English majors and English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the following area and/or period requirement. AREA: Transnational Literature and Postcolonial Studies. PERIOD: 20th/21st-Century Literature. Same as ENGL:3555.

AFAM:3600 Digitizing Blackness 3 s.h.
Examination of Black cultural experiences in digital spheres, including digital humanities and new information technologies; focus on Afrofuturism, gaming, augmented reality, digital mapping, podcasting, social media, and digital cultures; exposure to digital tools and methods. Same as AMST:3600.

AFAM:3630 The Racial Wealth Gap: Black Debt, White Debt 3 s.h.
Exploration of extent, historical origins, and contemporary factors of the racial wealth gap with special attention to role of debt in U.S. race relations; potential topics include education debt, monetary sanctions in criminal justice, redlining, recession, bankruptcy, and reparations. Same as SOC:3630.

AFAM:3758 The Ancient African Past 3 s.h.
Africa to 1880; oral tradition and other sources; political development, ecological change, slavery and slave trade. Same as HIST:3758.

AFAM:3760 The Making of Modern Africa 3 s.h.
Africa in colonial and postcolonial period; economics, political structures of colonialism; social change, political life in the 20th century. Same as HIST:3760.

AFAM:3900 Topics in African American Studies arr.
Different topic each semester.

AFAM:3925 African Americans and the Media 3 s.h.
Same as JMC:3165.

AFAM:4770 Environmental Justice 3 s.h.
Introduction to the field of environmental justice; understanding and addressing the processes that lead poor and marginalized communities to face a disproportionate degree of environmental risks and hazards. Same as GEOG:4770, GHS:4770.

AFAM:4910 Special Topics 3 s.h.
Selected topics, issues, and debates about various components of African American culture including literature, sociology, psychology, media, history, rhetoric, theater, sports, health, and education.

AFAM:4980 Independent Study arr.
Topics vary.

AFAM:4990 Honors Project arr.
Independent research and writing on interdisciplinary topic.

AFAM:5900 Advanced Readings in African American Culture arr.
Textual, social, political analyses of works by Black authors.

AFAM:6500 Critical Readings in Cultural Studies: Stuart Hall's Legacy and Influences 3 s.h.
Exploration of the scholarship of Stuart Hall along with theories, methods, and history of cultural studies; focus on major areas of Hall's work including Marxist thought and the political economy, diasporas and globalization, cultural production and popular culture, film and cinema studies, race, ethnicity, identity, and difference; key theorists that influenced Stuart Hall (e.g., Marx, Foucault, Fanon, Gramsci, Althusser) and scholars in cultural studies that have made appropriate use of Hall's writings and theories in their own work; role of theory in everyday life and the critical role of public intellectuals. Same as AMST:6500.

AFAM:6635 Crossing Borders Seminar 2-3 s.h.

AFAM:7205 Gender and Race in Nineteenth-Century United States arr.
Same as GWSS:7205, HIST:7205.
AFAM:7210 The Long Civil Rights Movement arr.
Exploration of the history and historiography of the modern Black freedom struggle in the United States, with particular attention to how historians in recent years have reconsidered traditional framings of that struggle’s chronology, geography, gender politics, political aspirations, and achievements. Same as HIST:7210.

AFAM:7214 Readings: African American Women’s History arr.
Same as GWSS:7214, HIST:7214.

Interpretations and methods applied by historians in various world regions to different forms of oral history, from old oral traditions to contemporary autobiographical testimony. Same as HIST:7710.