# 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://africanamericanstudies.uiowa.edu/people](https://africanamericanstudies.uiowa.edu/people)
**Website:** [https://africanamericanstudies.uiowa.edu/](https://africanamericanstudies.uiowa.edu/)

## Courses

**African American Studies Courses**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1000</td>
<td>First-Year Seminar</td>
<td>1 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1020</td>
<td>Introduction to African American Culture</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:1030</td>
<td>Introduction to African American Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1041</td>
<td>African American Religion and Popular Culture</td>
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<td>AFAM:1041</td>
<td>The History of African American Film</td>
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<td>AFAM:1140</td>
<td>Introduction to African American Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1240</td>
<td>The Art of Listening to Jazz</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1241</td>
<td>The Soundtrack of Black America</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1275</td>
<td>Black Chicago: The Past, Present, and Future of an American Community</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>AFAM:1830</td>
<td>Music of the African American Diaspora</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1870</td>
<td>Black Television Culture</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1872</td>
<td>American Popular Culture</td>
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<td>AFAM:1876</td>
<td>Race, Ethnicity, and Media</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:1879</td>
<td>African American Families: Urban and Suburban</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:2064</td>
<td>Racial inequality and experiences of African American families in the United States during the 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.</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:2070</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:2072</td>
<td>African American Popular Culture</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:2076</td>
<td>Race, Ethnicity, and Media</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM:2079</td>
<td>Race and Ethnicity in Sport</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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AFAM:2267 African American History to 1877: From Slave Cabin to Senate Floor 3 s.h.
Experiences of African and African American people in the American colonies and the states of the new nation; history of Africans and African Americans as early settlers, enslaved and free, in places such as Detroit, Chicago, New York, and New Orleans; interactions with Indigenous people; role in the war for American independence; long history of resistance to slavery and racial discrimination; exploration of the rich history of community building, creation of significant Black social and cultural institutions, and formation of Black political thought and political activism. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as HIST:2266.

AFAM:2268 African American History Since the Civil War 3 s.h.
Exploration of racial oppression of African Americans and multiracial struggles against that oppression since the Civil War era; students examine the history of racism at individualized and systematic levels; historical efforts made by individuals and collective movements in service of the long Black freedom struggle; and the ways these twinned histories have shaped modern America. GE: Diversity and Inclusion. Same as HIST:2267.

AFAM:2465 Selected African American Authors 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:2465.

AFAM:2467 Topics in African American 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: 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:2467.

AFAM:2700 The Black Image in Sequential Art: Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime 3 s.h.
Provides a foundation to critically interpret the representation of people of African descent in sequential art; primary focus on serial comic strips, gags, hip hop cinema, womanist films, 21st-century developments in film (e.g., theatre to film adaptions of Tyler Perry), new media's effect on film and cinema; particular attention given to gender, sexualities, region, ethnicity, and class. Same as AMST:2700.

AFAM:2900, 3000 African American Women, Health, and Sexuality 3 s.h.
From the exotic to the erotic, African American Women's bodies have been constructed to fulfill a variety of personal and cultural fantasies as well as social functions that are “killing us softly”; how cultural icons and myths of Black women—Jezebel, Mammy, Tragic Mulatto, Aunt Jemima, Sapphire, Matriarch, Welfare Queen, and more recently, the overarching Black woman—shape and create restrictions and visions of the self that contribute to health disparities; engaging Black feminist/womanist theory to explore how larger images influence everyday acts of self-care and pleasure, such as hair and sexuality, on the health of African American women. Same as GWSS:2900.

AFAM:2910 Critical Race Theory: Culture, Power, and Society 3 s.h.
Examination of the historical context of race and racism in U.S. history; focus on how social structures perpetuate longstanding patterns of racial inequality. Same as AMST:3910, HIST:3910.
AFAM:3275 History of Slavery in the U.S.A. 3-4 s.h.
Beginning, expansion, and ending of American slavery; how our national memory of slavery in popular culture (in high school history, in historical landmarks and museums) helps or hinders our understanding of history of slavery in the U.S. Same as HIST:3275.

AFAM:3459 African American Literature Before 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: 18th/19th-Century Literature. English and Creative Writing majors may apply this course to the Multiethnic American Literature and Culture requirement. Same as ENGL:3459.

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 Afrotuturism, 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 3 s.h.
Topics vary. Different topic each semester.

AFAM:3925 African Americans and the Media 3 s.h.
Exploration of the theoretical notion of racialism in various genres of mass communication (i.e., music, print media, television/cable, film, social media); analysis and discussion of contemporary images and messages in media related to African American culture with close attention to impact of stereotypes, historical myths, stigmas, problematic representations, biased framing, and traditional racism. 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 3 s.h.
Topics vary.

AFAM:4990 Honors Project 3 s.h.
Independent research and writing on interdisciplinary topic.
Weekly readings and discussions of scholarly book chapters and articles related to key topics; students synthesize, debate, and critically evaluate all course material; topic areas include African American history, culture, politics, Black feminist criticism, critical race theory, intersectionality, and more; introduction to current research of African American studies faculty members; for students interested in conducting research about African American culture.

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.