

African American and African Studies

The Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS) provides an intellectual home for the exploration, critical examination, analysis and interpretation of the experiences, traditions and dynamics of people of African descent in the United States and Africa and its diaspora. The department offers a broad selection of courses addressing historical, cultural, sociological, political and psychological factors that affect the lives of African peoples from disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and comparative perspectives.

The AAAS undergraduate curriculum stresses the skills necessary to think critically and deeply, argue persuasively, problem solve effectively, and write clearly. Students are exposed to theory and research in a variety of subject matter and are encouraged to engage in active research and service beyond the classroom.

Pursuing African American & African Studies at Ohio State

All freshman applicants are considered within a competitive admission process; find admissions criteria at go.osu.edu/admissions. Upon admission to the university, students can declare a major in African American and African studies within the College of Arts and Sciences. Interested students should contact the undergraduate advisor in the Department of African American and African Studies and the Arts and Sciences.

African American & African Studies Requirements

The Department of African American and African Studies is committed to providing students with a thorough and unique opportunity to study the transnational Black experience in a variety of disciplines. The department offers both a major and a minor.

AAAS major

The major informs students about the social, political, psychological, historical and intellectual experiences of Africans and their descendants throughout the world. This study prepares students for graduate-level work in AAAS, history, sociology, political science, English, international affairs and other academic disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. In addition to graduate school, recent undergraduate majors have been admitted into law and other professional schools. They have also been employed in any number of industries, including city and state government, secondary education, civil service, African American student services at colleges and universities, community relations, and journalism.

Students electing the major may choose to specialize in one of the following four areas of concentration:

- Representation and Performance
- Social Issues, Community Development and Public Service

- Histories, Cultures, Languages and Literatures
- Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality

The major requires 36 semester hours:

- Core requirements (9 hours from 2201, 3310, and 3440 or 4921)
- Capstone/senior research seminar (3 hours)
- 18 hours in a cognate area
- Breadth requirement (6 hours in areas other than chosen concentration)

To insure that students are knowledgeable about the full interpretive, conceptual and geographic scope of AAAS, they are required to take a minimum of 12 hours at the 4000-level or above in the chosen area of concentration and six hours from the other areas.

In addition, the capstone/senior research seminar and our distribution requirement—which requires majors to take a total of 18 hours in courses at the 4000-level and above—will insure a rigorous program of study. Graduates will be competitive when applying for graduate or professional school and for job opportunities.

AAAS minor

The department also offers a minor for those students who desire a structured program of study in African American and African studies even as they elect to major in other fields.

The minor consists of 15 semester hours: six hours in core requirements (2201 and 3310) and nine hours from among all four areas of concentration, all of which must be at the 3000-level or above.

Minor in African Languages

Students may also take classes to fulfill a minor in Somali language and culture or Swahili language and culture. Each minor has a prerequisite of 12 semester hours in elementary Somali or Swahili (1101–1103 respectively) and 3 semester hours in African Civilizations (1121 or 1122). The minor in Somali/Swahili requires a 3-hour core requirement (3310). Students must also complete 9 hours at the intermediary level: Somali/Swahili 2201, Somali/Swahili 2241, Somali/Swahili 3301, and an additional 3 hours at the 4000- or 5000-level in an African language, literature or culture course.

For more information, check these websites:

African American and African Studies: aaas.osu.edu
Arts and Sciences: artsandsciences.osu.edu
Ohio State: osu.edu

Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu
Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.osu.edu
First Year Experience: fye.osu.edu

Curriculum Sample

This is a sample list of classes a student may take to pursue a degree in African American and African Studies with a concentration in Histories, Cultures, Languages and Literatures. Since university students need more than specific education in a narrow field, they also will take classes to complete General Education (GE) requirements. Because GE courses come from a variety of academic areas of study, this course work helps students develop fundamental skills essential to collegiate success and allows them to tailor these courses toward their interests. Note: This sample represents one of four concentrations leading to a degree in African American and African Studies. Visit aaas.osu.edu for details.

Freshman Year:

Introduction to African American and African Studies	3
African Civilizations I	3
Major Readings in African American and African Studies	3
GE courses	21
Total hours	30

Sophomore Year:

Global Perspectives on the African Diaspora	3
Black Urban Experience	3
Black Women in Slavery and Freedom	3
GE courses	21
Total hours	30

Junior Year:

Theorizing Race	3
Pan-Africanism and Nationalism	3
Topics in African Diaspora Studies	3
Topics in Black Masculinity	3
GE courses	18
Total hours	30

Senior Year:

Capstone/Senior Research Seminar	3
Studies in African American Literature	3
Introduction to Caribbean Literature	3
Black Visual Culture and Popular Media	3
GE courses and other university requirements	18
Total hours	30

Co-Curricular Opportunities

AAAS offers exciting study and travel abroad programs to Southern Africa and West Africa (up to 12 credit hours) which provide an innovative mix of classroom learning before the trip and additional faculty guided instruction in Africa. In addition, students interested in giving back to the black community may enroll in a service-learning course and earn up to 10 credit hours while volunteering at a local service agency and taking a weekly seminar focused on urban programs and solutions.

Honors & Scholars Programs

Ohio State offers the Honors and Scholars programs to create an environment of intellectual support and stimulation within a close-knit community of high-ability undergraduate students. Through these programs, students have access to smaller classes, undergraduate research opportunities, close working relationships with faculty, priority scheduling and unique housing options.

Honors and Scholars programs represent great opportunities to be part of a smaller community within a large university. Learn more at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in African American & African Studies

Graduates of the African American and African studies program are prepared for further study and for employment in such areas as state and local government, social agencies, teaching, business, and the arts.

Past students have become college and university professors, lawyers, business executives and public school teachers. AAAS graduates have chosen such jobs as habilitation supervisor with the Cuyahoga County Board of MR/DD, associate publisher with Writer's Digest, coordinator of the Ohio Arts Council and director of the Columbus Urban League.

Beginning salaries depend on industry variables and on candidates' skills and experience. African American and African studies graduates find their marketable skills considerably enriched by their education.

Career Counseling and Job Placement

Students can explore career options in AAAS by utilizing Career Connection as well as the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office. Providing complimentary services, Career Connection focuses on helping students establish a career direction while the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office assists students with finding internships—experiences that are essential to testing the suitability of career fields under consideration. Located in 48 Townshend Hall, the Arts and Sciences Career Services Office also assists seniors and recent graduates with finding entry-level career employment.

More information about both offices is found at ascareerservices.osu.edu and careerconnection.osu.edu.

Revised September 2011. Information subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on the African American and African studies program, visit aaas.osu.edu.

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