

African & African American Studies

Website: <https://afas.wustl.edu/>

Courses

AFAS 5000 Independent Work: Graduate Student

Prerequisite: Permission of the Director of the African and African American Studies Program and an African American Studies faculty member prior to registration. Maximum independent study credit in African and African American Studies is 6 units total.

Credit 6 units.

Typical periods offered: Fall, Spring

AFAS 5061 Sexual Health and the City: A StudioLab Course On the Politics of Reproduction

This StudioLab course creates an engaged space for students to learn about and develop projects with a community agency around the topic of the politics of reproduction. The politics of reproduction refers to the intersection between politics, gender, race, and reproduction. As a StudioLab course, student teams will partner with a St. Louis reproductive and sexual health agency to explore how agencies, communities, and individuals have been affected, adjusted, and reimagine strategies to allow men and women to pursue their reproductive agency and desires. Students will use an interdisciplinary approach to understand historical, medical, legal, racialized, and sociocultural issues surrounding reproductive choice, regulation of choice, abortion, pregnancy, sex education, new reproductive technologies, and reproductive justice movements. We consider the state's regulation of biological and social reproduction wherein increasing governance of private life, intimacy, and sexuality suggests the blurring of boundaries between public and private interests. Students will also examine the complex relationship between men's and women's life goals and constraints, on the one hand, and politics and public health management of sexual and reproductive health, on the other. In collaboration with their community partner, students will develop a project that addresses an identified need of the organization and the community it serves. Course readings will draw from the fields of history, legal studies, public health, feminist studies, Black Studies, policy, and anthropology.

Credit 3 units. Arch: HUM Art: HUM

AFAS 5090 Senegal: History, Politics and Culture

This course will study the history of Senegal in the modern period, beginning with the formation by French traders and Lebou/Wolof women of the Four Communes. It will then explore Senegal's unique position as the founding place of two major Islamic brotherhoods and the legacy of French assimilation policy. As the course moves into the contemporary period, it will give some attention to the Senegalese Diaspora, particularly in large urban centers such as New York, Detroit, Paris, and Milan. It will explore themes of caste, colonialism, assimilation and identity, negritude, Islam, gender relations, the 1960's arts movement, and the cultural life of Dakar, a major center of Francophone African culture. There will be an emphasis on the relationship between Islam and politics in contemporary society. THIS COURSE IS DESIGNED FOR STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE DAKAR SUMMER PROGRAM IN FRENCH AND AFRICAN STUDIES.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

AFAS 5104 Black Decolonial Thought: Conceptualizing Epistemic Violence From Frantz Fanon to Achille Mbembe

It is a truism that colonization has deeply impacted African societies, but we should also acknowledge the multiple ways of thinking and doing that are deployed on the continent. One of the goals of this course is to depart from the dominant epistemology of European and North American scholarship. We will consider African societies and cultures in the diversity of their practices, beliefs, worldviews, and experiences, by using an Afro-oriented canon of knowledge production. If decolonization is the end of political domination of a territory by European empires, the decolonial turn involves a way of thinking about the self, society, and cultures on their own terms (or their ipseity), instead of being always viewed through Eurocentric lenses of reflection and theory imposed by colonization. We will study prominent Black authors who fed the stream of decolonial thought.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SC BU: HUM EN: H

AFAS 5110 The Black South Atlantic

Since the transatlantic slave trade and the establishment of European colonial empires, Latin America and the African continent have remained culturally and geopolitically enmeshed. This course will therefore serve as an interdisciplinary expansion southward of the 'Black Atlantic,' a term made popular by black studies scholar Paul Gilroy. Our focus on the South Atlantic will be to reorient the debate toward black intellectual, cultural, and activist exchange between Africa and Latin America across history, politics, and cultural production.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SC, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM, IS EN: H

AFAS 5235 Blackness in Brazil

Brazil is the country with the largest population of people of African descent outside of the African continent. However, with its history of race mixture under colonialism and slavery, many have imagined Brazil as a racial paradise such that race minimally influences one's social, political, or economic quality of life. The main focus of this course will be to understand from an interdisciplinary approach, first, the historical and sociocultural conditions of the African diaspora in Brazil. Second, we will focus on how national ideologies of racial mixture employ a rhetoric of inclusion that incorporates selective aspects of black culture into Brazilian national identity while excluding black people from the protections and pleasures of full citizenship. Beginning with the experiences of enslaved Africans, we will engage how Afro-Brazilians have developed ideas and spaces of freedom and belonging through social movements, religion, the arts, and resistance well into the black consciousness movements of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the course, we will collaboratively read, view, and listen to a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to analyze and write about blackness and the lives of black people in Brazil across history, intersecting, most predominantly, with the social structures of gender, sexuality, class, and religion.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM, IS EN: H

AFAS 5350 Theorizing Blackness: A Genealogy of Radical Thought in the Black World

What are the discursive histories and futures of blackness? Taking as its point of departure this question, the advanced-level course sets out to investigate the genealogies of black critical studies and their theoretical implications on how we talk about race, gender, nationality, and political resistance. We will explore such topics as the formation of racism and blackness, the cartographies of black resistance, Afropessimism, and the critiques of historical constructions of blackness as an analytic of history. Our interlocutors include such

central figures to black studies as Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Lewis Gordon, Saidiya Hartman et al, but also more recent scholarship that aims to further complicate our study of blackness - Zakiyah Jackson, Kevin Quashie, and others.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC BU: BA, HUM

Typical periods offered: Spring

AFAS 5402 Intersectionality

This course explores and engages the intellectual and political genealogies of intersectionality, a theory, analytic, framework, metaphor, and approach primarily employed by Black feminists and other feminists of color. We will examine intersectionality as a theoretical framework with attendant analytics, as well as the socio/political projects out of which it emerges and influences. In so doing, the scholarly materials in this course, primarily, examine the ways in which structures and categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability create and maintain intersecting forms and experiences of difference that underpin overlapping social inequalities in U.S. society and abroad. Some of the other intersecting forms of social difference we will explore include, ethnicity, nation/migration, class, ability/disability, and indigeneity, reproduction, and HIV/disease status. Our approach to examining these categories/vectors of power will include feminisms of color, critical race theory/studies, queer theory/studies, queer of color critique, transgender theory/studies, and critical geography, all of which have shaped and been shaped by intersectionality.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SSC, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

AFAS 5450 Writing Black Lives: The Theory and Literary History of African American Autobiography

This course is an intensive overview of Black autobiographical writing. We begin with the premise that the autobiography has been one of the earliest forms--and the major foundation--of the Black American literary tradition. We will begin with selective slave narratives and then proceed to variety of autobiographies--some by literary people, some by celebrities, some by politicians, some by people of opposing political orientations. We will also read some of the significant critical studies that have been written about Black autobiography and autobiography in general. The aim of the course is simple: To Understand the aesthetic nature, political purpose, and cultural history of Black American autobiography and its relationship to and departure from the larger tradition of autobiographical writing in the United States. We will also devote a portion of the course to looking at one major Black biographer who wrote about Black subjects: Shirley Graham Du Bois, who wrote books on Black heroic figures for young readers.

Credit 3 units.

Typical periods offered: Fall

AFAS 5500 Graduate Seminar in Global Black Studies:

Approaches, Theories, and Methods

This graduate course is an interdisciplinary course in Global Black Studies for PhD or master's students enrolled in various programs throughout campus. The seminar offers an in-depth analysis and review of major themes in the interdisciplinary fields of Black Studies, African Diaspora Studies, Africana Studies, and the broader study of race. The course aims to expose students to the field of Black Studies and the analysis of Black lives, cultural productions, worlds, and histories. The class brings together classic, canonical texts of the black radical intellectual tradition with cutting-edge work published in the past two decades on blackness and race in the humanities and social sciences from the African continent and across the diaspora.

Credit 3 units.

Typical periods offered: Fall

AFAS 5510 Research Writing Seminar in Global Black Studies

This seminar will function as a writing workshop whose intention is to assist graduate students with incorporating a Black Studies lens into their dissertation prospectus. Further, this space will serve as a writing community through which we will conduct critical analysis of each other's work through a system of feedback and accountability. The seminar will focus on best practices for scholarly production, revision, crafting scholarly voice, and professional development, including abstracts, research proposals (e.g. a dissertation prospectus), grants, scholarly articles, and other professional writing. Students should use the seminar to ideally complete or workshop their prospectus, with the possibility of working on a grant application or journal article for publication.

Credit 3 units.

AFAS 5601 Historical Racial Violence: Legacies & Reckonings

There is growing awareness of the legacies of historical racial violence in the United States and a related increase in reckoning efforts.

Area histories of enslavement, lynching, and other racial terror and dispossession relate to inequality, conflict, and violence in the same places today. These 'haunting legacies' include heart disease and other health disparity, homicide rates, white supremacist mobilization, and corporal punishment in schools. Meanwhile, many communities and institutions are moving to acknowledge and address legacies of historical racial violence in various ways. This course combines seminar-style readings and writing on legacies of racial violence with a practicum component, where individual students or groups of students will conceptualize and develop interventions intended to clarify and disrupt legacies of racial violence, facilitating contemporary reckoning. The practicum will explore and support a broad range of interventive efforts, including public policy measures, original research projects, archival development, commemorative efforts, and a related array of mediums, including visual art, design, film, digital projects, and other creative approaches.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SSC, SC Art: SSC BU: BA, HUM EN: S

AFAS 5607 Education of Black Children and Youth

This course provides an overview of the education of Black children and youth in the United States. Covering both pre- and post-Brown eras, students in this course offers a deep examination of the research focused on Black education. The social, political, and historical contexts of education, as essential aspects of American and African-American culture and life, will be placed in the foreground of course inquiries. Prerequisite: Completion of any 1000, 2000, or 3000-level Education course, graduate standing, or permission of instructor. Enrollment Note: All students are enrolled onto the waitlist. Undergraduate students must enroll in Educ. 4607, and graduate students must enroll in Educ. 5607.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

AFAS 5611 Construction and Experience of Black Adolescence

This course examines the construct of black adolescence from the general perspectives of anthropology, sociology, and psychology. It begins by studying the construct of black adolescence as an invention of the social and behavioral sciences. The course then draws upon narrative data, autobiography, literature and multimedia sources authored by black youth to recast black adolescence as a complex social, psychological, cultural and political phenomenon. This course focuses on the meaning-making experiences of urban-dwelling black adolescents and highlights these relations within the contexts of class, gender, sexuality, and education.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S UColl: ACS, SSC

AFAS 5630 Mapping the World of Black Criminality

Ideas concerning the evolution of violence, crime, and criminal behavior have been framed around many different groups. Yet, what does a typical criminal look like? How does race - more specifically blackness - alter these conversations, inscribing greater fears about criminal behaviors? This course taps into this reality examining the varied ways people of African descent have been and continue to be particularly imagined as a distinctly criminal population. Taking a dual approach, students will consider the historical roots of the policing of black bodies alongside the social history of black crime while also foregrounding where and how black females fit into these critical conversations of crime and vice. Employing a panoramic approach, students will examine historical narratives, movies and documentaries, literature, popular culture through poetry and contemporary music, as well as the prison industrial complex system. The prerequisite for the course is L90 3880(Terror and Violence in the Black Atlantic) and/or permission from the instructor, which will be determined based on a student's past experience in courses that explore factors of race and identity. For AFAS majors, this course counts as Area Requirement 2. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

as both institution and religious practice, in a context of unfreedom and oppression? In what ways did enslaved people resist Catholic enslavement, drawing upon or rejecting the teachings of Catholicism in their resistance?

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SC, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM, IS EN: H

AFAS 5645 Look Here, Karen: The Politics of Black Digital Resistance to White Femininity

In this course, we will explore the ways in which Black online publics use resistance strategies, such as mimetic imagery and racial humor, to call attention to white femininity and its deployment of the police against African Americans. We will trace the relationship between the police state and white femininity through the historical lens of 'innocence' and protection of the U.S. nation as well as the similarities and differences of Black online publics' responses in relation to past resistance strategies. What does it mean to be a 'typical' Karen in Internet culture? What are the aesthetic boundaries of Karens? And, what do digital platforms afford to Black users who make Karens visible? While paying attention to race, gender and class, this course offers students the skills to be able to collect and analyze online data, such as 'Karen' memes, in order to make critical arguments and observations that are grounded in historical accuracy.

Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

AFAS 5652 Black Women Writers

When someone says, black woman writer, you may well think of Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison. But not long ago, to be a black woman writer meant to be considered an aberration. When Thomas Jefferson wrote that Phillis Wheatley's poems were beneath the dignity of criticism, he could hardly have imagined entire Modern Language Association sessions built around her verse, but such is now the case. In this class we will survey the range of Anglophone African American women authors. Writers likely to be covered include Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Wilson, Nella Larsen, Lorraine Hansberry, Octavia Butler, and Rita Dove, among others. Be prepared to read, explore, discuss, and debate the specific impact of race and gender on American literature. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, SC Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

AFAS 5890 Catholicism and Slavery

This course explores the role of Catholicism in the global history of slavery. Beginning with an assessment of how early Church theologians interpreted slavery in the Bible, the course will then grapple with how the Church justified taking a leading role in ending serfdom in Europe but endorsed the Atlantic slave trade, becoming one of its most invested participants. We will compare regional contexts of Catholicism & examining global continuities and regional particularities regarding the questions: What did it mean to be enslaved by the Catholic Church? How did enslavers and the enslaved approach Catholicism,