African and African-American Studies

The Department of African and African-American Studies offers opportunities for students to explore the social, political and intellectual history as well as the literature, culture and artistic life of various peoples in the world who are African or of African descent.

The department examines a wide spectrum of experiences and issues and is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in its approach. Courses are offered in the humanities, the social sciences and the performing arts. The program ensures that students are aware of the diversity of the continent of Africa and African peoples and that they understand the distinct perspective and influence of people of African descent on American, Caribbean, and global societies. In addition to producing majors who graduate with methods for approaching and solving problems both in the context of Africana studies and in the world at large, we are equally committed to building a vibrant extracurricular intellectual and social community by sponsoring programs, events and trips to give majors and minors a shared sense of purpose and identity.

Students who major in the program are encouraged to design a course of study that focuses on either a particular area of interest or a more comprehensive examination of Black culture and life. Our summer programs in Kenya and Senegal as well as study abroad options in other African countries can further enrich the student experience.

Courses in the program are numbered to assist students with progressing from introductory courses (100 and 200 level) to intermediate courses (300 level or higher) to advanced courses (400 level).

**Departmental Prizes:** The program also sponsors writing competitions that include monetary awards. These competitions include the following:

- The Undergraduate Essay Prize for the best essay written by an undergraduate student on any subject related to the culture and life of Africans or African-descended people anywhere in the diaspora;
- The Graduate Essay Prize for the best essay written by a graduate student on any subject related to the culture and life of Africans or African-descended people anywhere in the diaspora; and
- The prize for the best Student Essay in a Foreign Language, which honors the best essay written by a student in a language other than English on any subject related to the culture and life of Africans or African-descended people anywhere in the diaspora.

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