African and African-American Studies

The program in 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 program 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. Main areas of concentration are East, West and Central Africa; the United States; and the Caribbean.

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. Students also have opportunities to do research with faculty or to take internships with organizations such as the Missouri Historical Society. 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). The program also regularly sponsors lectures on topics of interest in all areas of the Black experience. In many cases, lecturers participate in courses by giving special lectures within the classroom setting.

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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