

# BLACK STUDIES

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The Black Studies major examines, from numerous disciplinary perspectives, questions of race, culture, and modern struggles for equality centering on the experiences of people of African descent in Black Atlantic societies including the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, and Africa, and the global impact of those experiences. Students in the department explore the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social development of Black Atlantic societies. Majors work to become informed thinkers who are intellectually prepared to offer clarity and insight to ongoing academic and public debates centered in questions concerning race and inequality.

Black Studies majors become knowledgeable about the history, primary methodologies, and interdisciplinary breadth of the field. Students learn to critique, articulate, analyze, and interpret universal themes concerning both individuals in society and group interactions as they relate to the work of scholars, scientists, writers, artists, musicians, economists, and entrepreneurs.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Black Studies can be taken either as a stand-alone major or as one of two majors in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). Pertinent regulations can be found in Academic Regulations, section L, Special Academic Arrangements, "Two Majors."

The major in Black Studies requires twelve term courses, including seven core courses and five electives in a focus area. The seven core courses include the history sequence BLST 1160 and BLST 1162, which can be taken in either order; one humanities course in Black Studies literature; one course in the social sciences relevant to Black Studies; the junior seminar (BLST 4310); the senior colloquium (BLST 4380) and senior essay (BLST 4391).

**Area of focus** Students majoring in Black Studies are required to choose an area of focus comprised of five courses. This cluster of interrelated courses is intended to ground the student's learning experience in one area of investigation. Often students choose an area of focus in a traditional discipline such as political science, art history, economics, sociology, American studies, history, or English language and literature. Students can also construct interdisciplinary areas of focus that span traditional departments and encompass broader theoretical frameworks such as race and ethnicity, cultural studies, black arts, or feminism and gender studies. All majors are encouraged to take upper-level courses as part of their focus, especially those courses centering on research and methodology. None of the seven core courses may be counted among the required electives in the area of focus.

**Junior seminar** In their junior year students must take the junior seminar, BLST 4310. This course provides majors with theoretical and methodological bases for the work they will do during their research-oriented senior year.

**Credit/D/Fail** No more than one course taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

**Outside credit** Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

#### SENIOR REQUIREMENT

Senior majors participate in a colloquium in BLST 4380 that provides them an opportunity to exchange ideas with each other and with more advanced scholars. Students in BLST 4380 submit a prospectus, compile a working bibliography, begin or continue research, and write the first twenty pages of the senior essay. After completing the colloquium, each student carries out the remaining research and writing of a senior essay in BLST 4391 under the guidance of a faculty member in the chosen discipline or area of focus.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the summer between the junior and senior years for research directly related to the senior essay. For example, field or documentary research might be undertaken in urban or rural communities in America and throughout the diaspora. The particular research topic and design are to be worked out in each case with a faculty adviser.

#### ADVISING

Students considering a program of study in Black Studies should consult the DUS as early as possible. Areas of focus and schedules for majors must be approved by the DUS.

**Two majors** The requirements for double majoring often depend on the other department or discipline in which the student is planning to major. Students interested in double majoring should initially make an appointment with the DUS in Black Studies to discuss their plans and the courses they have already taken toward the Black Studies major. The student should, then, plan a meeting with both the DUS in Black Studies as well as the DUS in the other department to ensure clarity on the requirements for both departments. During this meeting, the student may explore the possibility of writing a joint thesis instead of two separate theses.

**Graduate work** Black Studies offers training of special interest to those considering admission to graduate or professional schools and careers in education, journalism, law, the arts, business management, city planning, international relations, politics, psychology, publishing, public health, or social work. The interdisciplinary structure of the department offers students an opportunity to satisfy the increasingly rigorous expectations of admissions committees and prospective employers.

#### STUDY ABROAD

A limited number of courses taken during sophomore or junior semesters abroad can be counted toward the major with DUS approval.

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisites** None

**Number of courses** 12 term courses, incl 7 core courses (incl sen req), and 5 electives in a focus area

**Specific courses required** BLST 1160, 1162, 4310

**Distribution of courses** 1 humanities course in AFAM lit and 1 relevant social science course, both approved by DUS; 5 courses in focus area

**Senior requirement** Senior colloquium (BLST 4380) and senior essay (BLST 4391)

## Courses

### **AFAM 1986a / LAST 1214a / PLSC 2417a / SOCY 1704a, Contesting Injustice**

Elisabeth Wood

Exploration of why, when, and how people organize collectively to challenge political, social, and economic injustice. Cross-national comparison of the extent, causes, and consequences of inequality. Analysis of mobilizations for social justice in both U.S. and international settings. Intended primarily for first years and sophomores. so  
o Course cr

### \* **AFAM 3165b / BLST 3165a / HIST 3169a or b, What is Racial Capitalism?** Destin Jenkins

This seminar starts from the position that the historical movement, settlement, and hierarchical arrangements of the racial subaltern and even those deemed 'white' are inseparable from regimes of capital accumulation. But is that all there is to racial capitalism? What more can be said about these regimes? And what of the varied responses to racial capitalism, from accommodation to the Black Radical Tradition to other forms of subterfuge? Major topics and themes include: war, money, ecology, crime and punishment. The course also exposes students to the various sources, archives, methods, theoretical frameworks, and narrative strategies employed by scholars in the field. WR, HU

\* **AFAM 3372b / HSAR 4372b, Post Black Art and Beyond** Nana Adusei-Poku  
In 2001, "Freestyle", a survey exhibition curated by Thelma Golden at the Studio Museum in Harlem, introduced a young generation of artists of African descent and the ambitious yet knowingly opaque term post-black to a pre-9-11 pre-Obama world. This seminar utilizes the term post-black as a starting point to investigate the different ways Black Artists identified themselves through the lens of their historical contexts, writings, and politics while engaging with key debates around Black Aesthetics in exhibitions and theory. Consequently, we discuss changes in artistic styles and Black identity discourses from the beginning of the 20th century into the present. Post-black stirred much controversy 22 years ago because it was used by a generation of artists who seemed to distance themselves from previous generations, who utilized the term Black to define their practices as a form of political resistance. However, the claims that the post-black generation made, and the influence of their work is part of an ongoing debate in African Diasporic Art, which has refreshed and posed new questions for art-historical research as well as curation. Topics include Representation, Black Exhibition Histories, Black Aesthetics, Afrotropes, Afro-politanism, Abstraction vs. Figuration, Curation as an Art-Historical tool, The Black Radical Tradition and Racial Uplift, post-race vs. post-black and historical consistencies. Knowledge in the fields of History of Art and African American Studies is desirable. HU

### \* **AFAM 3375a / AMST 4465a / CPLT 3770a / FREN 3650a / HIST 2578a, Haiti in the Age of Revolutions** Marlene Daut

The Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) was an event of monumental world-historical significance. This class studies the collection of slave revolts and military strikes

beginning in August of 1791 that resulted in the eventual abolition of slavery in the French colony of Saint-Domingue and its subsequent independence and rebirth in January of 1804 as Haiti, the first independent and slavery-free nation of the American hemisphere. Considering Haiti's war of independence in the broader context of the Age of Revolutions, we cover topics such as enlightenment thought, natural history, the workings and politics of the printing press, and representations of the Haitian Revolution in art, literature, music, and in various kinds of historical writings and archival documents. Students develop an understanding of the relevant scholarship on the Haitian Revolution as they consider the relationship of this important event to the way it was written about both as it unfolded and in its long wake leading up to the present day. WR, HU

\* **AFAM 3820a / AMST 2286a / ENGL 3820a / HUMS 2410a, James Baldwin's American Scene** Staff

In-depth examination of James Baldwin's canon, tracking his work as an American artist, citizen, and witness to United States society, politics, and culture during the Cold War, the Civil Rights era, and the Black Arts Movement. HU o Course cr

\* **AFAM 4249a / AFST 4449a / ENGL 4835a, Challenges to Realism in Contemporary African Fiction** Stephanie Newell

Introduction to experimental African novels that challenge realist and documentary modes of representation. Topics include mythology, gender subversion, politics, the city, migration, and the self. Ways of reading African and postcolonial literature through the lenses of identity, history, and nation. Formerly ENGL 449. WR, HU