

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND DIASPORA STUDIES

Graduate Program Head	Kathryn Belle
Program Code	AFAMD
Campus(es)	University Park
Degrees Conferred	Dual-Title
The Graduate Faculty	View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&prog=AFAMD)

Students electing this program through participating departments will earn a degree with a dual-title at the Ph.D. level, i.e., Ph.D. in (graduate program name) and African American and Diaspora Studies.

The following graduate programs offer a dual-title Ph.D. degree in African American and Diaspora Studies: Art Education, Communication Arts and Sciences, English, History, Philosophy.

The primary objective of the dual-title degree program in African American Studies is to expand teaching, research, and scholarship on the nearly one billion people of African descent scattered across several regions of the world. As a program committed to integrating knowledge produced across disciplines and to crediting the importance of historical considerations, it will reinforce and broaden the knowledge that students acquire and that scholars typically cultivate in the traditional disciplines. This is accomplished through partnerships with allied disciplines, such as History, Political Science, Philosophy, English, Comparative Literature, and Art Education. Graduate students are trained to describe, analyze, and evaluate the practices, phenomena, and policies that both issue from and structure the experiences and possibilities of African-descended peoples in the Americas and in African diasporic populations around the world. Students in more traditional disciplines such as English or History who want to acquire formal knowledge about African Americans and the African Diaspora beyond what is offered by their home departments will be able to acquire that knowledge through the seminars offered in this program. The program aims to produce Penn State doctoral graduates with a competitive advantage for African American and Diaspora Studies-related employment in academia and elsewhere.

Admission Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

For admission to the dual-title Ph.D. degree under this program, a student must first apply and be admitted to an approved partnering graduate program. Once accepted by the partnering graduate program, the student can apply to the African American and Diaspora Studies Admissions Committee, which will be composed of Graduate Faculty in the Department of African American Studies. The application must include a statement of purpose that addresses how the student's research and professional goals intersect with the objectives of the dual-title graduate degree program in African American and Diaspora Studies. The Admissions Committee reviews applications and recommends students for admission to the dual-title PhD program in African American and Diaspora Studies.

Students may apply to the dual-title program when they request admission to the partner department, or at any time prior to taking the qualifying exam in the primary graduate program, provided that they secure the approval of the graduate director of the partner department. Practically speaking, this will likely mean applying to the dual-title program before completing the second year of study in the partner department. Students applying to the dual-title degree program should be aware that participating in a dual-title program may require additional time to complete the degree; students should plan ahead to secure sufficient funding.

The African American and Diaspora Studies dual-title graduate degree program will follow the timetable and admission requirements of its partnering graduate programs.

GPA and GRE Requirements

Applicants entering with only an undergraduate degree should have a junior/senior cumulative average of at least 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale), and, where applicable, a minimum GPA of 3.50 for all graduate work previously undertaken. Exceptions to the minimum GPA requirement may be made for students with special backgrounds, abilities, and interests. Each applicant must submit the scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) taken within five years previous to the date of application.

Degree Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

The minimum course requirements for this dual-title Ph.D. degree are as follows: 15 credits of course work related to African American and Diaspora Studies, all at the 500 level or above. Of these 15 credits, 9 must come from the required core course sequence in African American and Diaspora Studies, which comprises the following courses:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
AFAM 501	Seminar in African American Studies	3
AFAM 502	Blacks and African Diaspora	3
AFAM 503	Sexual and Gender Politics in the African Diaspora	3

Students must also take 6 elective credits, all of which must come either from the list below or otherwise have the prior approval of African American and Diaspora Studies supervising faculty. Over time, additional courses may be added to the list of acceptable electives. The director of graduate studies in the Department of African American Studies will maintain a comprehensive list of approved courses. Particular courses may simultaneously satisfy requirements in History and in African American and Diaspora Studies. Students who already hold a master's degree from another institution may petition to have up to 6 equivalent course credits recognized.

Code	Title	Credits
Electives		
Select 6 credits of the following electives:		6
AFR 501	Key Issues in African Studies	
PHIL 539	Critical Philosophy of Race	
HIST 547	Slavery in the Americas	
HIST 551	The African American Freedom Struggle	

HIST 572	Race and Nation in Modern Latin America
ENGL 565	Period Studies in African-American Literature
ENGL 566	Genre Studies in African-American Literature
ENGL 567	Thematic Studies in African-American Literature
ENGL 568	Gender Issues in African-American Literature

Language Requirements

Communication and foreign language requirements will be determined by the academic advisers from the primary department.

qualifying examination

The dual-title field must be fully integrated into the qualifying exam for the doctoral program. In addition, students in the dual-title Ph.D. in African American and Diaspora Studies will be required to present to their committee a portfolio of work in African American and Diaspora Studies which includes a statement of the student's interdisciplinary research interests, a program plan, and samples of writing that indicate the student's interest in questions taken up by scholars of African American and Diaspora Studies.

Ph.D. committee Composition

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), at least one member of the Ph.D. committee must be a member of the African American and Diaspora Studies Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair is not faculty in African American and Diaspora Studies, then the committee member representing African American and Diaspora Studies must be appointed as co-chair.

Comprehensive Exams

The African American and Diaspora Studies Graduate Faculty member on the student's committee is responsible for developing and administering the African American and Diaspora Studies portion of the student's comprehensive exams. The exam must incorporate written and oral components in African American and Diaspora Studies based on the student's thematic or regional area of interest and specialization in African American and Diaspora Studies. The African American and Diaspora Studies portion of the exam will include the following components: broad history of the field, contemporary theory and debates, and either sexual and gender politics or a topic related to the student's specific area of interest.

Dissertation

The candidate must complete a dissertation and pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) on a topic that reflects their original research and education in both the primary discipline and African American and Diaspora Studies in order to earn the dual-title Ph.D. degree.

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>) and GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/>)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/>)
- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/>)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/>)

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/>) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/>) set by The Graduate School.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

African American Studies (AFAM) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/afam/>)

Contact

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Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	Michael West
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