AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus
End Campus: University Park

Program Description
This major helps students achieve a critical understanding of the forms of knowledge, culture, and social organization that African-Americans have produced, and of the social conditions that have supported and constrained this work. Using interdisciplinary approaches as well as methods drawn from the traditional disciplines, the major exposes students to the ideas, institutions, movements, and practices that African-American peoples have used to survive and shape the modern world. The African American Studies curriculum promotes the critical faculties, cultural competencies, and historical sensibilities of its students, and thereby equips them for success in graduate school, professional school, and the workplace.

What is African American Studies?
African American Studies is an intellectual field of inquiry that examines the history of people of African descent from the colonial period through the present; how systems of racial inequality are produced through state policy, traditional western scholarly disciplines, and popular discourse; and the social, political and cultural movements that black people have developed to identify and resist the unequal material and political conditions that shape black social life in the African Diaspora. The undergraduate major and minor provides a strong foundation in the key theoretical concepts in the discipline, the historical formation of African American Studies as an interdisciplinary field of study, and prepares students to apply what they have learned in the classroom, in independent research and in internships with social justice/service organizations.

You Might Like This Program If...
• You are passionate about learning more about the history, cultures, and political struggles of people of African-descent in the West.
• You are interested in understanding how racism operates structurally and shapes the social experiences and life chances of black communities.
• You want to study social, cultural, and political movements throughout the African Diaspora.
• You are interested in pursuing independent research or internships with non-profit, research, and community-based organizations committed to racial equity and social justice.

Entrance to Major
In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:
1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have third-semester classification (http://www.registrar.psu.edu/registration/semester_classification.cfm).

Degree Requirements
For the Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies, a minimum of 125 credits is required:

<table>
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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
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<td>Electives</td>
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<td>Bachelor of Arts Degree</td>
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<td>Requirements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Recommended Academic Plan for your intended program.

General Education
Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)
• Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
• Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

Knowledge Domains
• Arts (GA): 6 credits
• Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
• Humanities (GH): 6 credits
• Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 6 credits
• Natural Sciences (GN): 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)
• Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses: 6 credits

4-10 of these 45 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major.

University Degree Requirements
First Year Engagement
All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3
credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

**Cultures Requirement**

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

**Writing Across the Curriculum**

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

**Total Minimum Credits**

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

**Quality of Work**

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

**Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition**

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 [http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44](http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

**B.A. Degree Requirements**

**Foreign Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/#advisingandplanningdegreeprogramtext).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

**Other Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

3 of these 24 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

### Requirements for the Major

This includes 3-9 credits of General Education courses: 0-6 credits of GS courses; and 3 credits of GH courses.

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 [http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44](http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAM 100</td>
<td>Living While Black: Themes in African American Thought and Experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFAM 197</td>
<td>Special Topics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 152</td>
<td>African American History</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Courses**

**Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better**

Select one of the following: 3 credits

- AFAM 101 The African American Woman
- AFAM 102 Women of Color: Cross-Cultural Perspective
- AFAM 103 Racism and Sexism

Select three credits of the following: 3 credits

- AFAM 197 Special Topics
- SOC 207 Research Methods in Sociology

Select one of the following: 3 credits

- AFAM 401 Afro-American Studies Seminar
- AFAM 494 Research Project
- AFAM 495 Internship

**Area of Concentration**

Select 12 credits from one of the following four areas of concentration, and 6 more credits from any of the other areas 18 credits

1. **Gender and Sexuality**

- AFAM 101 The African American Woman
- AFAM 102 Women of Color: Cross-Cultural Perspective
- AFAM 103 Racism and Sexism
- AFR 202
- AFAM 364 Black White Sexuality
- AFAM 410 Spirit, Space, Survival: Contemporary Black Women
- AFAM 416 Race, Gender and Science

Select 3 credits at the 400-level in consultation with your adviser

2. **Humanities**

- AFAM 147 The Life and Thought of Malcolm X
- AFAM 145 African American Religions and Spirituality
- AFAM 146 The Life and Thought of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- AFAM 208 Workshop: Theatre in Diverse Cultures
- AFAM 210 Freedom's First Generation: African American Life and Work, 1865 to World War II
- AFAM 212 African Americans in the New Jim Crow Era, 1968-present
- AFAM 235 From Folk Shouts and Songs to Hip Hop Poetry
- AFAM 412 African American Theatre
AFAM 422  Contemporary African American Communication  
AFAM 460  African American Philosophy  
AFAM 465  The Post-World War II Civil Rights Movement  
AFAM 469  Slavery and the Literary Imagination  

3. Social Sciences and Community Development  
SOC 119  Race and Ethnic Relations  
PLSC 123  Ethnic and Racial Politics  
AFAM 302  Diversity and Health  
AFAM 409  Racial and Ethnic Inequality in America  
AFAM 431  Black Liberation and American Foreign Policy  
AFAM 432  Between Nation and Empire: The Caribbean in the 20th Century  
AFAM 445Y  Politics of Affirmative Action  
AFR 459  Culture and World Politics  
ECON 436W  Economics of Discrimination  
EDTHP 447  Ethnic Minorities and Schools in the United States  
PLSC 490  Policy Making and Evaluation  

4. Migration and Diaspora  
AFAM 102  Women of Color: Cross-Cultural Perspective  
AFAM 132  Afro-Hispanic Civilization  
AFAM 211  Slavery and Freedom in the Black Atlantic  
AFAM 250  Introduction to the Modern Caribbean  
AFR 110  Introduction to Contemporary Africa  
AFR 192  Modern African History  
AFAM 431  Black Liberation and American Foreign Policy  
AFAM 432  Between Nation and Empire: The Caribbean in the 20th Century  
AFR 440  Globalization and Its Implications  
AFR 497  Special Topics  
PLSC 453  Political Processes in Underdeveloped Systems

1  SOC 207 is recommended for Political Science, Sociology and HHD-related double majors.  
2  A minimum of 12 credits should be AFAM courses, and at least 12 of these credits must be at the 400-level or above.  
3  If you wish to receive credit for courses other than the ones listed, you must seek permission from the AFAM undergraduate director.

Program Learning Objectives  
The African American Studies Department prepares students to meet the following learning objectives that are in the domains of cognitive, performance/skill, and affective:

1. Students will be able to critically reflect on and think about historical and contemporary materials and events throughout the African diaspora.  
2. Students will be able to identify and synthesize national and global influences on people of African descent.  
3. Students will be able to be sensitive to and appreciate the perspectives, cultures, institutions, and intellectual agency of people of African descent.  
4. Students will be able to articulate clear and compelling perspectives using strong research, critical thinking, analytical skills, academic writing, and public speaking.  
5. Students will develop an intersectional analytical framework, understanding the connectedness between race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, nationality, and age.  
6. Students will engage with campus, local, national, and global events in ways that encourages service and promotes their ability to be scholar-activists.

Academic Advising  
The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information need to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy)

University Park  
Liberal Arts Academic Advising  
814-865-2545  
http://starfish.psu.edu  
http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-students/advising/advisers-by-major

Suggested Academic Plan  
University Park  
The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year  

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 15, 30, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H†</td>
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<td>World Language Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFAM 152 or HIST 152*</td>
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<td>CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T†</td>
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<td>World Language Level 1</td>
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<td>AFAM 101 or WMNST 101*</td>
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<td>AFAM 102, WMNST 102, AFAM 103, WMNST 103, or SOC 103</td>
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<td>First Year Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Education Quantification Course‡</td>
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Second Year  

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<tr>
<td>World Language Level 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>General Education Quantification Course‡</td>
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</table>
in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and replace both ENGL 30 and CAS 100. Each course is 3 credits.

**Bachelor of Arts Requirements:**

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student’s primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures).

**Advising Note:**

All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.

**Career Paths**

**Careers**

Graduates in African American Studies go on to pursue a wide-range of career paths including public policy, the law, medicine, public health, social work, criminal justice, social justice advocacy, transnational human rights, community-based organizing, higher education, environmental justice, arts/entertainment, or scholarly research in the social sciences and the humanities.

**Opportunities for Graduate Studies**

Many students opt to pursue graduate degrees in African American Studies because they want to teach in African American Studies programs at the college or university-level or they want to teach from a critical race theory perspective in traditional disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, law, medicine or other professional programs.

MORE INFORMATION (http://www.afam.la.psu.edu/join-us/graduate)

**Professional Resources**

- National Council of Black Studies (NCBS) (http://www.ncbsonline.org)
- Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) (https://asalh.org)
- Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) (http://www.aswadiaspora.org)

**Contact**

University Park
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
133 Willard Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-4243

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>3 BA BA Knowledge Domain Course</td>
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<td>Concentration Course*</td>
<td>3 Concentration Course*</td>
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<td>BA Other Cultures</td>
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<td>General Education Course</td>
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<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentration Course*</td>
<td>3 Concentration Course*</td>
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<td>Concentration Course*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3 General Education Health and Wellness (GHW)</td>
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<td><strong>14.5</strong></td>
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* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

**University Requirements and General Education Notes:**

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

GWS, GQ, GH, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of ‘C’ or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL/CAS 137 in the fall semester and ENGL/CAS 138
jle1@psu.edu

http://www.afam.la.psu.edu