

AFRICAN STUDIES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The major in African studies is a multidisciplinary program designed to offer students the opportunity to develop their understanding of various aspects of the African continent, including its socioeconomic conditions and global relations. The program utilizes historical, cultural, geographical, economic, and political approaches to equip students with skills to undertake research on issues pertinent to Africa and to prepare themselves for careers in a range of professions as well for post-graduate studies.

What is African Studies?

Africa is a vast continent that is now transforming politically and economically at an unprecedented pace. Its rich history, resources and spirit of creativity makes it more than ever the continent of hope and opportunity that will see rapid development in the years to come! African Studies will help students develop their understanding of various aspects of the African continent, including topics such as Africa in World History, Africa and the Global Political Economy, Africa and International Relations, Africa and International Development, peace studies, and conflict resolution. We also have courses that emphasize the diversities of culture, race, ethnicity, and religion on the continent. The program utilizes historical, cultural, geographical, economic, and political approaches to equip students with skills to undertake research on issues pertinent to Africa and to prepare themselves for careers in a range of professions as well for post-graduate studies.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You're passionate about gaining skills to think critically, and speak and write articulately about Africa and its peoples.
- You'd like to explore the world through study-abroad opportunities to countries such as South Africa, Morocco, Ghana and Tanzania.
- You'd like to learn more from our faculty who actively teach, conduct research and publish in such topics as African history, politics, art, literature, economics, geography, linguistics, African feminism, demography and health.

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 at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in African Studies, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	9-18
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	45

0-9 credits of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits of GA courses; 3 credits of GS courses; and 3 credits of GH courses.

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

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 Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

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 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
AFR 105	African Biodiversity and Conservation	3
AFR 110		3
AFR 191	Early African History	3
AFR 192	Modern African History	3
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 15 credits of the following (100-300 level courses):		15
AFAM 100N	Black Freedom Struggles	
AFAM 211	Slavery and Freedom in the Black Atlantic	
AFAM 302	Diversity and Health	
AFR 150	Africa in Cinema	
AFR 197	Special Topics	
AFR 199	Foreign Studies	
AFR 202N	Women, Gender, and Feminisms in Africa	
AFR 294	Research Project	
AFR 297	Special Topics	
AFR 299	Foreign Studies	
AFR 395	Internship	
AFR 399	Foreign Studies	
ARTH 335	African Art	
ECON 102	Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy	
ECON 104	Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy	
Select 18 credits with at least 12 from AFR or AFR cross-listed courses of the following:		18
AFR 403	South Africa Today	

AFR 405	African Studies Methodologies
AFR/PLSC 434	War and Development in Africa
AFR/PLSC/IB 440	Globalization and Its Implications
AFR/PLSC 443	Ethnic Conflict in Africa
AFR/PLSC 454	Government and Politics of Africa
AFR/PLSC 459	
AFR 464	Extractive Industries in Africa
AFR 494	Research Project
AFR 495	Internship
AFR 496	Independent Studies
AFR 497	Special Topics
AFR 499	Foreign Studies
GEOG 436	Ecology, Economy, and Society
GEOG 444	Resource Governance in Africa
GEOG/LER 475	
PLSC 481	Global Political Economy

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 (<https://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 and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

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 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World 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 University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to critically reflect on and think about historical and contemporary materials and events throughout the African diaspora.
- Students will be able to identify and synthesize national and global influences on people of African descent.
- Students will be able to be sensitive to and appreciate the perspectives, cultures, institutions, and intellectual agency of people of African descent.
- Students will be able to articulate clear and compelling perspectives using strong research, critical thinking, analytical skills, academic writing, and public speaking.
- Students will develop an intersectional analytical framework, understanding the connectedness between race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, nationality, and age.
- 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 needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

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

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

African Studies, B.A. at University Park Campus

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

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15, 30H, ESL 15, ENGL 137H, or CAS 137H [‡]	3 CAS 100, ENGL 138T, or CAS 138T [‡]	3
AFR 110*	3 AFR 105*	3
First Year Seminar	3 General Education Quantification Course [‡]	3
World Language Level 1	4 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 World Language Level 2	4
16		16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
AFR 191 or HIST 191*	3 General Education Quantification Course [‡]	3
World Language Level 3	4 Major Course from Additional Course List*	3
Major Course from Additional Course List*	3 AFR 192 or HIST 192*	3
Elective	3 BA Knowledge Domain Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
16		15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Major Course from Additional Course List*	3 Major Course from Additional Course List*	3
General Education Course	3 Major Course from Additional Course List*	3
General Education Course	3 BA Knowledge Domain Course	3
General Education Course	3 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡]	3
Major Course from Additional Course List*	3 General Education Course	3
15		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Major Course from Additional Course List*	3 Major Course from Additional Course List AFR 4XX*	3
Major Course from Additional Course List AFR 4XX*	3 Major Course from Additional Course List AFR 4XX*	3
BA Knowledge Domain Course	3 General Education Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
AFR 4XX	3 Elective	3

General Education Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5	
	16.5	13.5

Total Credits 123

- * 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 Cultural Diversity 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.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. 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 (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-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

Students with Liberal Arts degrees and minors in African Studies have found careers in a wide array of fields. These include US government, international business firms, international think tanks, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations that operate in a wide array of activities in Africa including primary and secondary education, the arts, religion, drought mitigation, wildlife management, and community development. Some students continue on to Graduate School, so our program also aims to help train graduate students, who will have a comparative advantage for African Studies-related employment in academia, bilateral and multilateral agencies.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://africanstudies.la.psu.edu/graduate/>)

Professional Resources

- African Studies Association (ASA) (<https://africanstudies.org>)
- Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) (<https://www.aswadiaspora.org>)
- National Model African Union (<https://modelafricanunion.org>)

Contact

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