African and African-American Studies (AFST)

AFST 150 Introduction to African and African American Studies (4)
An introduction to how historical and contemporary analyses of cultural, political, and social forces in America, the Atlantic world (Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean), and Africa have influenced the experiences of people of color. To illuminate those life experiences, the course employs the concept of race (as a theoretical, historical, and critical category), historiography, social analysis, and cultural critique.

AFST 160 Introduction to Black Women's Studies (4)
This introductory course explores the interlocking forms of oppression circumscribing Black women's lives in the United States, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which their lived experiences and social realities are influenced by constructions of race, gender, class, sexuality, and other markers of difference. It contextualizes Black women's struggles for social justice historically within the broader narratives of Black freedom struggles and the Women's Rights Movement. It underscores the ways in which despite their marginalized status, Black women have used their agency within both the private and public realms to interrogate, challenge, and resist their subordination and subvert the status quo, particularly as it is reinforced in negative constructions of Black female identity.

AFST 210 Blackness in American Popular Culture (4)
This course interrogates representations of blackness in American popular culture. Using an interdisciplinary lens that considers the social, political, cultural, and historical realities that inform popular culture, students investigate how blackness is constructed and its implications.

AFST 290 Special Topics (4)

AFST 320 Black Autobiography in the United States (4)
Examining the life writings of African Americans from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries, this course considers the Black experience from the vantage point of men and women who struggled to negotiate their racialized and gendered identities in a society that often denigrated both. This course illuminates what Henry Louis Gates describes in *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* as the struggle of Blacks historically to write themselves into being, that is, to accord legitimacy to their racialized selves. Students investigate the nuanced ways in which the autobiographical writings of Black men and women not only facilitated freedom of expression but served as a form of resistance by challenging the status quo.

AFST 330 Black Women Activists Writing Change (4)
This course is designed to enrich students' knowledge of Black women's activism during the twentieth century. Relying upon the perspectives expressed by Black women in their writings as a primary lens, students will have the opportunity to investigate some of the primary struggles for social justice waged by African and African-American women activists. In conjunction with a sustained emphasis upon Black women's perspectives as articulated in their writings, we will consider some of the different dimensions of Black women's resistance along with relevant scholarship.

AFST 351 Toni Morrison (4)
This course explores selected fiction by Toni Morrison and some of the literary criticism that surrounds her work. It examines Morrison's treatment of race, class, gender, and sexuality in her fiction, and also considers some of her nonfiction, interviews, and speeches to gain a clearer understanding of her contributions to the American literary canon and the African American literary tradition.

AFST 450 Africa and the Diaspora: Texts and Contexts (4)
This comparative and interdisciplinary course investigates the social, economic, intellectual, cultural, and political achievements of people of African descent as well as the challenges faced by them. It considers the Black experience globally and analyzes the ways in which intersections of race, gender, class, and other markers of difference complicate that experience. The course examines concepts, theories, and themes central to the African Diaspora and engenders a critique of the ways in which knowledge is disseminated and produced. Through exploration of the seminal texts in the Black literary tradition, the course promotes a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline, its core concerns, and its methodologies. *Open only to seniors pursuing minors in african and african american studies. Prerequisite: AFST 150.*