
African Diaspora Studies

Interdisciplinary

The African Diaspora Studies concentration has four central goals: (1) to offer students a structured program in the study of Africa and the African diaspora, (2) to help students explore the variety of cultural types and formations in the African diaspora, (3) to expose students to the connections between African studies and African American studies, and (4) to promote curricular and extracurricular interest in and awareness of the cultures of the African diaspora for the campus as a whole.

The Curriculum

The African Diaspora Studies Concentration consists of at least five courses:

- Four courses, in two departments:
 - At least one of which is African or non-U.S. Diasporic studies
 - At least one of which is in African American Studies
 - At least one of which is at the 300-level or above
- AFDS 310: "Exploring the African Diaspora"

Each spring, the director of the concentration, in consultation with the African Diaspora Studies Faculty Crossroads, the program's advisory committee, will determine the courses offered during the upcoming academic year that will fulfill the various program requirements. Courses counted toward a student's major may be counted toward concentration requirements. For a list of courses fulfilling the various requirements, students should consult the program website.

Students who wish to declare a concentration in African Diaspora Studies should consult with the program director.

For First-year and New Students

Our introductory course, AFDS 108: "The Crossroads Seminar," is designed to orient students to the interdisciplinary nature of African Diaspora Studies at Kenyon College. This course places a distinct emphasis upon critical thinking, oral presentation and critical writing as integral components of the learning experience. The objective of this course is to introduce students to the wide range of approaches which exist to develop a firm grasp of African Diaspora Studies as it currently exists, as informed by past events, and as history continues to unfold.

Transfer Credit Policy

Transfer credit may be applied toward fulfilling three of required advanced coursework. Students planning to study abroad should seek approval of transfer credits, in advance, from the director.

Students graduating in 2021 and 2022

If you were already in the process of working towards a concentration in African Diaspora Studies, you may complete the concentration under the old requirements or the new ones. If you have already taken AFDS 110, we will count it place of AFDS 310; you do not need to take both.

The old requirements are as follows:

- AFDS 110: "Introduction to Diaspora Studies"
- One (1) unit of foundation courses (0.5 unit in African studies and 0.5 unit in African American studies)
- One and a half (1.5) units of advanced courses (in no fewer than two departments)
- Half (0.5) unit senior-level seminar course

Courses in African Diaspora Studies

The Crossroads Seminar

AFDS 108 CREDITS: 0.5

The course is designed specifically with first-year students in mind. The seminar is taught by an interdisciplinary group of Kenyon faculty members who have interests in teaching, researching and engaging with others in the discussion of issues and concerns pertaining to African and African diaspora studies. The specific topic to be addressed each year is developed by the crossroads faculty at the end of the preceding spring semester. The seminar typically will be taught as a colloquium where several crossroads faculty offer a set of lectures serving as discrete modules. Within this format, students will explore the cultures of the African diaspora and their influences on the global culture. Students will also focus on analytical writing and public vocal expression. Enrollment is limited to 15 students. This counts toward 0.5 units in AFDS or AMST. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Generally offered every other year.

Exploring the African Diaspora

AFDS 310 CREDITS: 0.5

This discussion-based course introduces students to several of the most important approaches to the study of African diaspora experiences. Students taking this course will find themselves engaged with a variety of disciplines (e.g., anthropology, history, literary study, psychology, sociology and visual and performing arts). Though some of the texts may change extensively from year to year, the focus of this course will be to undertake a preliminary investigation into the connections and the relationship between Africa and several other parts of the world. No prerequisite. Generally offered every spring.

Black British Cultural Studies

AFDS 388 CREDITS: 0.5

One of the more important intellectual movements of the last decade, black British cultural studies offers us important intellectual tools that are used to think about race, ethnicity, gender, class and nationality in a rapidly changing world. This course begins with a brief consideration of cultural studies as a general proposition, then turns to the specifics of black British cultural studies. One of the central threads of the course will be a consideration of how the various terms of analysis that were developed in the study of Great Britain and its former colonies might be usefully applied to the United States. Authors to be considered will include Hazel Carby, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall and others. We also will read the work of thinkers who critically engage black British cultural studies, such as Aijaz Ahmad. English majors may count this course toward departmental major requirements. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Generally offered every two years.

Between Womanist and Feminist Theories

AFDS 410 CREDITS: 0.5

The objective of this interdisciplinary seminar is to offer a clear understanding of what womanist and feminist theory are, as well as how the two often overlap in history, social commentary and methodology. As such, the materials used in the course make explicit reference to the many academic and social contexts that have given rise to both feminist theory and womanist theory. During the course of the semester, we will trace several elements of the African American experience, predominantly pertaining to women, in order to understand how disparate voices have been informed by each theoretical paradigm. Fictional and academic texts, films, audio-clips, and several other examples of womanist and feminist discourses will be used to cement the understanding of these theoretical paradigms. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: AFDS 110 and one mid-level course that may be counted toward the AFDS concentration or permission of instructor.

Individual Study

AFDS 493 CREDITS: 0.5

The Individual Study course (IS) option within the African Diaspora Studies Program is a flexible concept to be negotiated between students, faculty members and the current program director. IS courses will typically be prompted by student initiative combined with faculty interest and availability. IS courses can sometimes be offered when students need to take a particular course within one of our faculty member's expertise in order to fulfill the requirements of the concentration. Even in this circumstance, however, the option for an IS depends upon faculty availability. While it is expected that students will broach the possibility of doing individual study, faculty will have the ultimate authority in determining how any individual study course is to be conducted during the course of the semester. This is viewed as an exceptional opportunity that we provide our students and, as such, we emphasize that this option is never to be expected as an ordinary course of events. As a matter of expedience and given the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of the AFDS Program from one year to the next, the program director reserves the right to decline requests for individual study. Individual study courses in the AFDS Program will typically be one semester in duration. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the end of the seventh class day of each semester, they should begin discussion of the proposed individual study preferably the semester before, so that there is time to devise the proposal and seek departmental approval before the registrar's deadline. An IS counts toward credit for the AFDS concentration but no student may take more than two IS courses toward satisfaction of the curriculum requirements for the concentration. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.

Concentration

Courses that meet the requirement for this concentration:

AMST 110 August Wilson and Black Pittsburgh
 ANTH 113 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
 ENGL 288 African-American Literature
 ENGL 366 African Fiction
 ENGL 386 Toni Morrison
 HIST 102D United States History, 1865– Present
 HIST 145 Early Africa
 HIST 146 Modern Africa
 HIST 175 Early Black History
 HIST 176 Contemporary Black History
 HIST 242 Americans in Africa
 HIST 310 The Civil War
 HIST 312 Blacks in the Age of Jim Crow
 HIST 313 Black Intellectuals

HIST 341 African Women in Film and Fiction
HIST 349 Contemporary West African History through Fiction and Film
HIST 350 Race, Resistance and Revolution in South Africa
HIST 373 Women of the Atlantic World
HIST 411 The Civil Rights Era
HIST 412 Race, Politics and Public Policy
HIST 444 Faith and Power in Africa
PSCI 332 African American Political Thought
PSYC 424 Advanced Research Methods in Cross-cultural Psychology
RLST 235 African Spirituality in the Americas
RLST 342 Religion and Popular Music in the African Diaspora
SOCY 232 Sexual Harassment: Normative Expectations and Legal Questions
SOCY 244 Race, Ethnicity and American Law
SOCY 250 Systems of Stratification
SOCY 421 Gender Stratification
SOCY 422 Topics in Social Stratification
SOCY 463 Intersectional Theory