AFRICANA STUDIES

Overview and Contact Information
As a field of inquiry, Africana studies, describes and analyzes the origins and experiences of people of African descent wherever they live or have lived. This field is informed by the intellectual traditions of African American, African, and African Diasporic studies. While it has a renewed focus on the connections and movements of African-descended people from different sites of Africa and the diaspora, it also values in depth study of black people in discrete local, regional and national contexts. This field is inherently comparative, international, and interdisciplinary in approach, embracing the range of fields in the humanities and social sciences and including the performing arts.

The major prepares students for a number of careers: government, politics, international affairs, law, education, journalism, public health, religious studies, literature and the arts, and business management, to name only a few.

See Also
• African Studies (http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/african-studies/)

Contact Information
Holly Sharac, Academic Department Coordinator
309/312 Skinner Hall
413-538-2377
https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/africana-studies (https://www.mtholyoke.edu/academics/find-your-program/africana-studies/)

Learning Goals
All of our majors and minors should:

• Be aware of important events and themes in African American, African Diaspora and African histories.
• Have exposure to the broad array of theoretical perspectives on black life and experience, including an understanding of the constructedness of race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity in the study of black conditions, progress and social change.
• Have considered the roles of cultural forms (literature, art, religion, music, etc.) in the lives of peoples of African descent in Africa and the diaspora, and how cultural forms create links among those peoples.
• Develop an awareness of the political economy of race and power in national and transnational contexts.
• Have the ability to read, write, and argue with rigor and discipline.
• Have the ability to critically appreciate and analyze texts.
• Have the ability to conduct independent primary research.
• Have an understanding and capacity to employ various research methodologies.

Faculty
This area of study is administered by the Africana Studies Committee:
Patricia Banks, Professor of Sociology
Amber Douglas, Professor of Psychology and Education
Satyananda Gabriel, Professor of Economics
Samba Gadjigo, Helen Day Gould Professor of French
Dorothy Mosby, Mary E. Woolley Professor of Spanish, On Leave 2022-2023
Olabode Omojola, Hammond-Douglass Five College Professor of Music
Preston Smith II, Class of 1926 Professor of Politics
Lucas Wilson, Professor of Africana Studies and Economics
Meredith Coleman-Tobias, Assistant Professor of Religion, Teaching Fall Only
Rachel Ansong, Mount Holyoke Fellow and Visiting Lecturer in Africana Studies

Requirements for the Major
A minimum of 40 credits:

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFCNA-200</td>
<td>Foundations of Africana Studies</td>
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<td>CBL requirement: Select at least one of the following courses:</td>
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<td>EDUC-205</td>
<td>Social Justice in Education</td>
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<td>From the courses approved for the Africana Studies program, at least 16 credits at the 300 level, in at least two different disciplines, of which only 4 credits may be AFCNA-395</td>
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<td>From the courses approved for the Africana Studies program, 16 credits of additional courses in Africana Studies (^1)</td>
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<td>Total Credits</td>
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\(^1\) Courses to be counted (p. 2) for the major are drawn from departmental and College offerings, as approved for the Africana Studies program. Students may also count courses taken at the other Five College institutions, subject to approval by the chair.

Other Requirements
• Concentration statement. Students who major in Africana studies will construct their own concentrations with the guidance and advice of a faculty advisor who is affiliated with the program. The concentration statement must be approved by the program. The concentration statement will include a description of the concentration, which disciplines it draws on, a discussion of its intellectual merits and an explanation by the student of why the concentration has been constructed in the particular ways proposed. The student needs to list courses pertinent to the concentration, as well as any relevant experiential learning opportunities including Community-Based Learning (CBL) classes, community service, and internships.

Additional Specifications
• When declaring a major, each student chooses an advisor from the committee. In addition, the student must have the approval of the program chair.
• Students who declare an Africana studies major automatically fulfill the College’s "outside the major" requirement.

Requirements for the Minor
A minimum of 20 credits:
Course Offerings

**AFCNA-141 Introduction to Modern African History**
*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*
This course provides an introduction to African history over the past three centuries. Venturing beyond the stereotypes, we will explore the complex histories that constitute a diverse continent. Special attention is given to spotlighting the voices of African people through a range of primary and secondary sources, including memoirs, film, music, cartoons, speeches, and photography. Students will gain knowledge of African geographies and histories, develop the skill of primary source analysis, and be able to connect events in – and narratives of – present-day Africa to a deeper historical past.
*Crosstalked as: HIST-141*
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department

**AFCNA-142 Introduction to Pre-colonial African History**
*Fall. Credits: 4*
This course surveys the social, political and economic history of Africa from earliest times to 1750. We will consider developments in early significant units of the continent such as Ethiopia, Kush, Zimbabwe, and Egypt. We will focus on themes such as human origins, agriculture, migration, Islam, gender, slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. By the end of the course, students will have a sound understanding of key developments in African history from ancient times to the eve of European expansion in Africa.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Abdulraham

**AFCNA-181 Introduction to African Diaspora Religions**
*Fall. Credits: 4*
Over the last century, religious scholars have labored to discover the meaning of African dispersal beyond the continent and its accompanying spiritual lineages. What theories of encounter sufficiently adjudicate the synthetic religious cultures of African-descended persons in North America, South America, and the Caribbean? What are the cross-disciplinary methodologies that scholars utilize to understand African religious cultures in the Western hemisphere? Firstly, this course will introduce the field of Africana religious studies. This background will inform the second and primary objective of the course: thematizing and exploring West and Central African religious traditions housed in the Americas.
*Crosstalked as: RELIG-181, CST-149AD*
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Coleman-Tobias

**AFCNA-200 Foundations of Africana Studies**
*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*
This reading- and writing-intensive course draws upon the intellectual traditions of African American, African, and African diasporic studies in order to explore the connections and disjunctures among people of African descent. While the course pays attention to national, regional, and historical contexts, it asks this question: what do African descended people have in common and when and how are their experiences and interests different? What can we glean from contemporary discourses grounded in the consideration of global black lives?
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
The department

**AFCNA-208 Introduction to Twentieth-Century Critical Race Theory**
*Fall. Credits: 4*
This course examines the discursive relationship between race, power, and law in contemporary U.S. society. Readings examine the ways in which racial bodies are constituted in the cultural economy of American society where citizens of African descent dwell. We explore the rules and social practices that govern the relationship of race to gender, nationality, sexuality, and class in U.S. courts and other cultural institutions. Thinkers covered include W.E.B. DuBois, Kimberle Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado, among others.
*Crosstalked as: CST-253*
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Wilson
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
Advisory: Critical Social Thought 248, 249, or 250 recommended but not required

**AFCNA-221 Engaging Ghana: Inquiry and Action**
*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 2*
This course prepares students to pursue curated internships in Ghana. It provides the historical, social, economic, political and cultural context crucial for powerful student learning experiences and ethical engagement with Ghanaian organizations and communities. Guest lectures, readings, and class discussion will provide an intellectual orientation to the country, as well as contextualize student work in curated internships across a range of fields and sites. The course begins a journey of reflection on personal and internship organizations goals that will continue when instructor and students are on site in Ghana in the summer.
Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement
Instructor permission required.

**AFCNA-234 Black Metropolis: From MLK to Obama**
*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*
Black Metropolis* refers to the more than half a million black people jammed into a South Side ghetto in Chicago at mid-twentieth century that featured an entrenched black political machine, a prosperous black middle class, and a thriving black cultural scene in the midst of massive poverty and systemic inequality. This course will follow the political, economic, and cultural developments of what scholars considered to be the typical urban community in postwar United States. We will examine such topics as Martin Luther King’s failed desegregation campaign; Harold Washington, first black mayor; William Julius Wilson’s urban underclass thesis; and the rise of Barack Obama.
*Crosstalked as: POLIT-234*
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
P. Smith
AFCNA-241 Topics in Africana Studies

AFCNA-241EU Topics in Africana Studies: 'European Expansion in Africa'
Fall. Credits: 4
Between the 1870s and 1910s, Africa was conquered by and divided among European powers. Why were European powers interested in informal and formal control of Africa? Why were they in competition with one another? How did Africans respond to European conquest and rule? What were the impacts of colonial rule in Africa? This course answers these and many other questions. The course is divided into two phases. The first focuses on the activities of the European powers in the late nineteenth century. The second examines the post-conquest period and examines African responses to the European conquests and rules in the early twentieth century.
Crosslisted as: HIST-245EU
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
A. Abdulrahman

AFCNA-241HS Topics in Africana Studies: 'African American History, Precolonial to Emancipation'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course will examine the cultural, social, political, and economic history of African Americans through the Civil War. Topics covered include the African background to the African American experience, the Atlantic slave trade, introduction and development of slavery, master-slave relationships, the establishment of black communities, slave revolts, the political economy of slavery, women in slavery, the experiences of free blacks, the crisis of the nineteenth century, and the effect of the Civil War.
Crosslisted as: HIST-281
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department

AFCNA-241PT Topics in Africana Studies: 'Introduction to Poetry of the African Diaspora'
Fall. Credits: 4
What is African poetry and how has it evolved over time from oral to written literature? In this course, we will read and respond creatively and critically to poetry by people of the African diaspora with a focus on people with ties to the Sub-Saharan region. We will explore both oral and written poetry as well as themes of identity, nationhood, and spirituality. By the end of the semester, students will create a chapbook with (20-30) poems and will be encouraged to submit their poems to journals for publication.
Crosslisted as: ENGL-216
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Abdulrahman

AFCNA-241SV Topics in Africana Studies: 'Slavery and Emancipation in Africa'
Fall. Credits: 4
Slavery and emancipation is a broad theme in the history of the modern world. The study of this theme has usually been centered on the Atlantic world and the focus has always been on the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. Yet, slavery was a global phenomenon. Slavery has been one of the most common historical settings in all regions of the world. This course focuses on Africa and examines the meanings and nature of slavery, methods of enslavement, slave use in Africa, internal and external slave trades, the place of women, slave resistance, abolition, and the persistence of slavery in Africa during the colonial rule. We will compare slavery in Africa and other regions of the World.
Crosslisted as: HIST-245SV
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive
A. Abdulrahman

AFCNA-246 Womanist Religious Thought
Spring. Credits: 4
As a conceptual framework which reconsiders the rituals, scriptures, and allegiances of religious black women, womanist thought has expanded the interdisciplinary canon of black and feminist religious studies. This course is a survey of womanist religious scholars from multiple religious traditions: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Yoruba-Ifa — as well as theorists who understand womanism as a "spiritual but not religious" orientation. Course participants will use the interpretive touchstones of cross-culturalism, erotics, earthcare, and health — among others — to examine contemporary womanist religious thought.
Crosslisted as: RELIG-246, GNDST-210WR
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Coleman-Tobias
AFCNA-251 Contemporary African American Literature II
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course will examine African American literature and culture in the postwar period as American identities are coalescing around the concept of the US as a world power. Specifically, our task during the semester will be to discuss the myriad ways black authors and artists attempt to interrogate the structure of racial hegemony by creating poetry and prose meant to expand notions of culture and form. We will also examine music, visual art, and advertisements from this era to have a greater sense of the black experience through various cultural representations. Writers will include James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Ralph Ellison, Michael S. Harper and bell hooks.
Crosslisted as: ENGL-251
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department

AFCNA-257 African American Literature
Fall. Credits: 4
This course surveys Black literary production with special attention to the idea of genre as a choice of form made by Black writers from the antebellum era through the present to communicate critique, effect political change, and render new worlds. Structured around debates about the genre status of Black writing, this course introduces students to slave era texts by Harriet E. Wilson, David Walker, Phillis Wheatley; 20th century works by Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston, Amos Tutuola, Chester Himes, Bill Gunn, James Baldwin, Toni Cade Bambara; and contemporary work by Saidiya Hartman, Octavia Butler, Jeremy O. Harris, and Rita Dove. Reading, writing, and critical viewership will be central to the course.
Crosslisted as: ENGL-257
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
K. Maye

AFCNA-282 African American History from Emancipation to the Present
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course will examine the social, cultural, political, and economic history of African Americans from emancipation and Reconstruction through the present. Emphasis will fall on postwar southern social and economic developments, the rise of segregation, northern migrations, black class stratification, nationalism, the twentieth-century civil rights movement, and current trends in African American political, social, and economic life.
Crosslisted as: HIST-282
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department

AFCNA-295 Independent Study
Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4
The department
Instructor permission required.

AFCNA-308 Luminous Darkness: African American Social Thought After DuBois
Spring. Credits: 4
Examines the life, work, and legacies of WEB DuBois. Drawing on domestic and diasporic fictional and nonfictional meditations on black life and progress in and beyond the 'DuBoisian century,' the course considers the changing meanings of and movements for global racial justice for people of African descent. The course also confronts the globalization of the color line in the post-Civil Rights/Black Power era. Due to increasing precarity for the masses, emphasis is given to more recent ideas like afro-pessimism, racial capitalism, and afro-futurism, as contemporary responses to DuBois's 1903 question, 'How does it feel to be a problem?' Readings by Jemisin, Gyasi, Robinson, Fields, Butler, Davis, Ransby, Hartman, Wilderson, Fanon, YamahttaTaylor, among others form the core of the course.
Crosslisted as: CST-349LD
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Wilson
Prereq: 8 credits in Africana Studies or Critical Social Thought.

AFCNA-341 Topics in Africana Studies
AFCNA-341AE Topics in Africana Studies: 'Race, Gender and Sexual Aesthetics in the Global Era' Justice'
Fall. Credits: 4
Reading across a spectrum of disciplinary focuses (e.g. philosophies of aesthetics, post-structural feminisms, Black cultural studies, and queer of color critique) this course asks the question what is the nature of aesthetics when it negotiates modes of difference? This course explores the history and debates on aesthetics as it relates to race, gender, and sexuality with particular emphasis on Black diaspora theory and cultural production. Drawing on sensation, exhibitions, active discussion, observation, and experimentation, emphasis will be placed on developing a fine-tuned approach to aesthetic inquiry and appreciation.
Crosslisted as: GNDST-333AE, CST-349AE, ARTST-380AE
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
S. Smith
Prereq: 8 credits in Gender Studies.

AFCNA-341AF Topics in Africana Studies: 'African American Spiritualities of Dissent'
Fall. Credits: 4
This course seeks to understand how protest fuels the creation and sustenance of black religious movements and novel spiritual systems in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We will examine the dissentive qualities of selected African American activists, community workers, scholars, spiritual/religious leaders and creative writers. By the end of this course, students will be able to thoughtfully respond to the questions, "What is spirituality?"; "What is dissent?"; and "Has blackness required resistive spiritual communities?
Crosslisted as: RELIG-331AF, CST-349AF
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Coleman-Tobias

AFCNA-341 Topics in Africana Studies
AFCNA-341AT Topics in Africana Studies: 'African Theater'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course introduces the oral traditions, important playwrights, and aesthetic innovations in postcolonial literary theatre in some African societies. The oral theatre traditions of Africa are an example of the innate human quest to perform and will eventually be the basis for understanding some of the innovations made in African literary theatre. We shall also focus on writings by African writers and writers of African descent who deal with the post-colonial conditions of Black Africa and the African Diaspora. This class is designed to serve as a window into the continent of Africa: its people, its ideas, triumphs, struggles, and the complex histories emerging from its vastness and diversity.
Crosslisted as: FMT-330AT
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Ofori
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 8 credits in Africana Studies or Film, Media, Theater.

AFCNA-341DE Topics in Africana Studies: 'Development in Africa: A Critical History'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
How and why has Africa become synonymous with “development”? This course traces the historical construction of an idea so pervasive that it has become almost invisible. Moving through 200 years of history, we interrogate the ways that different projects for “developing” Africa have been envisioned, challenged, planned, implemented and lived. Throughout, we return to key questions. Why and how have the lives of African people become entangled with various ideologies of “progress”? What visions of African “development” have been articulated in the West, in the African diaspora, on the continent itself? And, fundamentally, is “development” still a useful concept today?
Crosslisted as: HIST-341DE
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
E. Prosperetti
Prereq: 8 credits in History.

AFCNA-341EM Topics in Africana Studies: 'The Age of Emancipation'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This colloquium examines the causes and the course of the Civil War, its social, economic, and political results during Reconstruction, and the early roots of both de jure segregation and the civil rights movement. It will examine the process of emancipation from the perspective of social history. Violent conflicts over free labor, the establishment of sharecropping, and the political and economic policies pursued by various groups–freethepeople, ex-masters, northern policymakers, wage laborers, and African American women, for example—will be covered. African American viewpoints and histories will receive particular emphasis.
Crosslisted as: HIST-301EM
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
The department
Prereq: 4 credits in History.

AFCNA-341SE Topics in Africana Studies: 'Black Sexual Economies'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
At once viewed as a dysfunction of normative ideas about sexuality, the family, and the nation, Black sexualities are intimately linked to and regulated by political and socioeconomic discourses. Slavery studies scholars remind us of how it has proven foundational for modern notions of race and sex by making explicit links between labor and exploitation. Thus, this course moves through themes such as slavery historicity, intersections between Black feminisms and Black sexualities, sexual labor/work, pleasure, and the erotic, in order to consider the stakes of our current critical approaches to Black sexual economies and interrogate its silences and possibilities.
Crosslisted as: GNDST-333SE, CST-349SE
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
S. Smith
Prereq: Two courses in Gender Studies or Africana Studies.

AFCNA-341TM Topics in Africana Studies: 'Toni Morrison'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course will examine the work and the centralized black world of the last American Nobel laureate in literature, Toni Morrison. Morrison is the author of eleven novels and multiple other works, including nonfiction and criticism. In a career that has spanned over forty years and has informed countless artists and writers, Morrison’s expansive cultural reach can hardly be measured accurately. In this course we will endeavor to critically analyze the arc and the import of many of Morrison’s writings. Readings include: The Bluest Eye, Sula, Song of Solomon, Jazz, Playing in the Dark, Paradise, and A Mercy.
Crosslisted as: ENGL-350TM
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department
Prereq: 4 credits in English or Africana Studies.

AFCNA-349CB Topics in Africana Studies: 'Contemporary Black Memoir'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course traces the formation of the Black public intellectual in the internet age. All memoirs read in this class have been published within the last decade, and include works by luminaries such as Kiese Laymon, Tressie McMillan Cottom, Roxane Gay, Hari Ziyad, and Da’Shaun Harrison. Students will examine the elasticity of memoir as a category, and assignments will compare and contrast authors’ online personas to their published work.
Crosslisted as: ENGL-350CB
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
K. Wright
Prereq: 8 credits in English or Africana Studies.

AFCNA-361 The Aquatic Life of Black Devotion
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Water informs religious and spiritual worldviews the world over; commonplace rituals from baptism to libation underwrite its prescience. The religious cultures of West and Central Africa, along with its multiple diasporas, theorize, encounter, and engage water centrally. Seminar participants will dive deeply into the water-based epistemologies of African and African diaspora religions, probing liturgical language, ritual performance and spiritual entities for aquatic common threads. Seminar participants will analyze the historical realities that have made water such a contested yet indispensable feature of black religious life.
Crosslisted as: RELIG-361
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Coleman-Tobias
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors.
AFCNA-363 Rastafari
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
From its counterhegemonic beginning as a nexus of Garveyism, Ethiopia, and Pan-Africanism, Rastafari has shifted from a Caribbean theological movement to a new religious and socio-political movement globally. What were the epistemological tenets that enabled Rastafari to boast such a multi-sited diaspora? What was the role of reggae music in spreading the religious culture? How have women negotiated their roles within its textured prescriptions? Seminar participants will explore these questions, among others. Beyond understanding the diverse beliefs and practices of global Rastafari, seminar participants will consider some of the enduring motifs of black, dissentive religions as iterated through Rastafari.
Crosslisted as: RELIG-363
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
M. Coleman-Tobias

AFCNA-395 Independent Study
Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8
The department
Instructor permission required.

Courses in Other Departments Counting toward the Major and Minor in Africana Studies

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Anthropology
ANTHR-216BD | Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Sex and Gender in the Black Diaspora' | 4 |
ANTHR-216CF | Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora' | 4 |
ANTHR-216HR | Special Topics in Anthropology: 'Anthropology and Human Rights' | 4 |

Art History
ARTH-290SW | Issues in Art History: 'Here +54: From the Smithsonian to Soweto, Arts of the African Americas and Africa' | 4 |

Art Studio
ARTST-380AE | Advanced Topics in Studio Art: 'Race, Gender and Sexual Aesthetics in the Global Era' Justice | 4 |

Critical Social Thought
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