

African American Studies

The African American Studies graduate program focuses on life, culture, and social organization (broadly defined) of persons of African descent. Africa, North America, and the Caribbean are central components of the program. Students are expected to apply a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the international and national divisions of race as they pertain to persons of African descent, wherever they may find themselves. Such an approach is to be employed for the study and understanding of development and underdevelopment, domination and power, self-determination, cooperation, and aesthetic and creative expression. Issues of identity construction, marginality, territoriality, and the universal role of race in the organization of political economy and in class formation are critical to the program's intellectual agenda.

Applications are accepted for the PhD program only.

Admission to the University

Minimum Requirements for Admission

The following minimum requirements apply to all graduate programs and will be verified by the Graduate Division:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A grade point average of B or better (3.0);
3. If the applicant has completed a basic degree from a country or political entity (e.g., Quebec) where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by a TOEFL score of at least 90 on the iBT test, 570 on the paper-and-pencil test, or an IELTS Band score of at least 7 on a 9-point scale (note that individual programs may set higher levels for any of these); and
4. Sufficient undergraduate training to do graduate work in the given field.

Applicants Who Already Hold a Graduate Degree

The Graduate Council views academic degrees not as vocational training certificates, but as evidence of broad training in research methods, independent study, and articulation of learning. Therefore, applicants who already have academic graduate degrees should be able to pursue new subject matter at an advanced level without the need to enroll in a related or similar graduate program.

Programs may consider students for an additional academic master's or professional master's degree only if the additional degree is in a distinctly different field.

Applicants admitted to a doctoral program that requires a master's degree to be earned at Berkeley as a prerequisite (even though the applicant already has a master's degree from another institution in the same or a closely allied field of study) will be permitted to undertake the second master's degree, despite the overlap in field.

The Graduate Division will admit students for a second doctoral degree only if they meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants with doctoral degrees may be admitted for an additional doctoral degree only if that degree program is in a general area of

knowledge distinctly different from the field in which they earned their original degree. For example, a physics PhD could be admitted to a doctoral degree program in music or history; however, a student with a doctoral degree in mathematics would not be permitted to add a PhD in statistics.

2. Applicants who hold the PhD degree may be admitted to a professional doctorate or professional master's degree program if there is no duplication of training involved.

Applicants may apply only to one single degree program or one concurrent degree program per admission cycle.

Required Documents for Applications

1. **Transcripts:** Applicants may upload *unofficial* transcripts with your application for the departmental initial review. *If the applicant is admitted*, then *official* transcripts of all college-level work will be required. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) attended. If you have attended Berkeley, upload your unofficial transcript with your application for the departmental initial review. *If you are admitted*, an official transcript with evidence of degree conferral *will not* be required.
2. **Letters of recommendation:** Applicants may request online letters of recommendation through the online application system. Hard copies of recommendation letters must be sent directly to the program, not the Graduate Division.
3. **Evidence of English language proficiency:** All applicants who have completed a basic degree from a country or political entity in which the official language is not English are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency. This applies to institutions from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, most European countries, and Quebec (Canada). However, applicants who, at the time of application, have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a US university may submit an official transcript from the US university to fulfill this requirement. The following courses will not fulfill this requirement:

- courses in English as a Second Language,
- courses conducted in a language other than English,
- courses that will be completed after the application is submitted, and
- courses of a non-academic nature.

If applicants have previously been denied admission to Berkeley on the basis of their English language proficiency, they must submit new test scores that meet the current minimum from one of the standardized tests. Official TOEFL score reports must be sent directly from Educational Test Services (ETS). The institution code for Berkeley is 4833. Official IELTS score reports must be sent electronically from the testing center to University of California, Berkeley, Graduate Division, Sproul Hall, Rm 318 MC 5900, Berkeley, CA 94720. TOEFL and IELTS score reports are only valid for two years.

Where to Apply

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/>).

Admission to the Program

Applicants must have completed an undergraduate degree and should demonstrate a general knowledge of African American history and an understanding of the disciplinary bases for the study of the African diaspora. Demonstrated knowledge in the field should include understanding relations among social, economic, and political structures and culture in African American life.

Students are admitted to graduate studies in the fall semester only. Applicants must file:

1. A University of California, Berkeley graduate application.
2. Two official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended.
3. Three letters of recommendation.
4. Writing sample (no more than 15 pages) that best reflects their program/research interests.
5. TOEFL (required for all international students).

Students who have been accepted to this program and have earned a master's degree in another program will be evaluated based on requirements for the pre-qualifying examinations.

Program Requirements

A minimum of two years or four semesters of academic residence is required by the university for all PhD programs. Academic residence is defined as enrollment in at least 12 units in the 200 series of courses. Thus, every graduate student must enroll in and complete a minimum of 12 units of graduate course work per required semester of academic residency. After successful completion of course work with a minimum GPA of 3.30, a pre-qualifying examination based upon general knowledge in the field of African American Studies will be administered by the department.

Academic Preparation

Applicants must have completed an undergraduate degree and should demonstrate a general knowledge of African American history and an understanding of the disciplinary bases for the study of the African diaspora. Demonstrated knowledge in the field should include understanding relations among social, economic, and political structures and culture in African American life. Applicant records must also demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language at the undergraduate level comparable to this university's language requirement.

Curriculum

Courses per individualized approved study list

Doctoral students are required to be a GSI (Graduate Student Instructor) at least once before they take their Qualifying Examination. However, most students serve as a GSI for a minimum of four semesters as part of a multi-year fellowship and departmental funding packages. We have many large lecture courses that students work with and the Department offers American Cultures courses that serve the larger campus community and create teaching opportunities for our students. Additionally, graduate students can apply to teach their own course in the Summer terms after they are advanced to candidacy. This allows graduate students to begin working with their own ideas and interests and create syllabi and lectures for future courses. Other opportunities after advancing to candidacy include teaching Reading and Composition courses (R1A and R1B) specializing in your own areas of expertise.

The Department of African American Studies offers numerous Professional Development opportunities for our graduate students. For example, each year, graduate students in residence are required to take part in departmental service work that helps create professional development skills. Some students plan our annual symposium, others mentor undergraduates in our research institute, others help with admissions and recruiting, and some choose to help with our colloquium series and other public talks that bring out conversations and dialogue about new research and ideas in our field. In addition to service work that mirror what faculty do, we also offer workshops on topics such as writing cover letters, putting together panels for conferences, how to write a lecture, how to apply for external grants, putting together a job talk, and other topics that are critical to students' success on the market and with obtaining funding.

African American Studies

Expand all course descriptions [+] Collapse all course descriptions [-]

AFRICAM 201A Interdisciplinary Research Methods 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019

This seminar will provide a detailed introduction and working knowledge of the various methodological techniques appropriate for interdisciplinary research on the African Diaspora.

Interdisciplinary Research Methods: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Interdisciplinary Research Methods: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 201B Qualitative Research Methods for African American Studies 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2018, Spring 2017, Spring 2016

A review of competing epistemologies in qualitative research of African Americans.

Qualitative Research Methods for African American Studies: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Small

Qualitative Research Methods for African American Studies: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 201D Theories of the African Diaspora 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2017, Fall 2016, Fall 2013

This course is intended to provide students with an initial background for the composition of the position paper discussing the concept and study of African Diaspora necessary for passing department qualifying exams. It will introduce some of the theoretical frameworks for, and approaches to, scholarship concerning the African Diaspora.

Theories of the African Diaspora: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Scott

Theories of the African Diaspora: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 240 Special Topics in Cultural Studies of the Diaspora 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2022, Spring 2021, Fall 2020

One hour of lecture per week per unit. Topics will vary from term to term depending on student demand and faculty availability.

Special Topics in Cultural Studies of the Diaspora: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Special Topics in Cultural Studies of the Diaspora: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 241 Special Topics in Development Studies of the Diaspora 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2020, Spring 2019, Fall 2018

One hour of lecture per week per unit. Topics will vary from term to term depending on student demand and faculty availability.

Special Topics in Development Studies of the Diaspora: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Special Topics in Development Studies of the Diaspora: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 242 Special Topics in African Linguistics 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2015, Fall 2014, Spring 2012

Topics will vary to suit student demand or interest. The seminar will require solid grounding in linguistic theory.

Special Topics in African Linguistics: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Mchombo

Special Topics in African Linguistics: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 250 Black Intellectuals: Social and Cultural Roles 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2021, Fall 2011, Spring 2001

The course will examine the development of an intellectual group in African American life from the 18th century to the present. Implicit in the examination is consideration of the social and cultural roles, writers, scholars, artists, and other thinkers have played in American and African American culture.

Black Intellectuals: Social and Cultural Roles: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Black Intellectuals: Social and Cultural Roles: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 252 Researching Race, Gender and Justice 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

This course is designed to encourage the development of an intersectional sensibility among scholars working in the area of race, gender and justice, broadly defined. In addition to providing a theoretical and methodological introduction to sociological literature on the practice of intersectionality in research and writing, we will also use a cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary set of readings, along with discussions and assignments, to examine historical and contemporary trends in how Black women and girls experience institutional and interpersonal threats of violence, policing and punishment; from the convict lease system to the crisis of mass incarceration and ending with a consideration of the experiences of Black women and girls.

Researching Race, Gender and Justice: [Read More \[+\]](#)

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Researching Race, Gender and Justice: [Read Less \[-\]](#)

AFRICAM 256B Diaspora, Citizenship, and Transnationality 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2010, Spring 2010, Fall 2008

This seminar analyzes the social construction and reproduction of diasporic communities in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. It examines the relations of the diaspora to the homeland in the context of the globalization process. The role of transnational migration and deterritorialization in the production of bipolar, fragmented, and multiple identities will be analyzed. Postnational models of citizenship--differentiated, transnational, and multicultural--will be assessed in light of poststructuralist theories.

Diaspora, Citizenship, and Transnationality: [Read More \[+\]](#)

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Laguerre

Diaspora, Citizenship, and Transnationality: [Read Less \[-\]](#)

AFRICAM 257A Identity Politics in the Caribbean and Africa 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2010, Spring 2008, Spring 2006

An exhaustive examination of the conditions under which identity constructs (race, ethnicity, nation, religion, language, region, etc.) come to occupy the symbolic center in the organization of mass political movements in non-industrialized Third World societies. The course will be comparative in scope using case histories from Africa and the Caribbean. It will focus on the relationship between the "politics of identity," national economic decision making, and the distribution of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital.

Identity Politics in the Caribbean and Africa: [Read More \[+\]](#)

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Hintzen

Identity Politics in the Caribbean and Africa: [Read Less \[-\]](#)

AFRICAM 257B Power, Domination, and Ideology 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2012, Spring 2011, Spring 2009

This course will focus on theories and realities of power, domination, and ideology as they pertain to issues of identity in the post-World War II political economies of Africa and the African diaspora.

Power, Domination, and Ideology: [Read More \[+\]](#)

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Hintzen

Power, Domination, and Ideology: [Read Less \[-\]](#)

AFRICAM 262 Black Feminist Criticism 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2009, Fall 2007, Fall 2006

This course will focus on the development of a black feminist criticism(s). We will be specifically concerned with the writings of significant black women critics of the 19th and 20th centuries who have used intersections of class, race, and gender to analyze major issues of their time.

Black Feminist Criticism: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Black Feminist Criticism: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM C265 Research Advances in Race, Diversity, and Educational Policy 3 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018

This introductory graduate seminar will engage the research literature on race, diversity, and educational policy to provide a foundation for examining contemporary issues in American public schooling. We will examine research on race, culture, and learning alongside more policy driven research on school structures, governance, finance, politics, and policy. In doing so, we will blend micro level examinations of teaching and learning with macro level considerations of politics and policy.

Research Advances in Race, Diversity, and Educational Policy: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructors: Nasir, Perry, Scott, J.

Also listed as: EDUC C265C

Research Advances in Race, Diversity, and Educational Policy: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM C286 The Education of African-American Students 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2012, Fall 2010, Spring 2010

This seminar will examine a wide range of perspectives on the education of African American children and adolescents in the United States. Readings will support students in understanding some of the key issues and tensions in African American education and school achievement, including the roles that culture, identity, parents, families, and communities play in the education and schooling of African American students; systemic issues in educational improvement and the perpetuation of "achievement gaps"; and language and power.

The Education of African-American Students: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Suad-Bakari

Also listed as: EDUC C286

The Education of African-American Students: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 296 Directed Dissertation Research 1 - 13 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Open to qualified students who have been advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree and are directly engaged in doctoral dissertation research.

Directed Dissertation Research: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Advancement to Ph.D. candidacy

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-8 hours of independent study per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 2.5-20 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Directed Dissertation Research: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 298 Master's Examination Preparation Course 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2017

This class is designed to prepare second year graduate students for the spring Master's Examination in African Diaspora Studies. Basing our syllabus upon the established reading list, we will meet weekly to discuss individual texts, methods of interpreting and critiquing works across disciplines, strategies for reading, studying, and ultimately taking the exam itself.

Master's Examination Preparation Course: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Master's Examination Preparation Course: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 299 Individual Study or Research 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Summer 2022 First 6 Week Session, Fall 2021, Summer 2021 First 6 Week Session

Individual study or research program to be worked out with sponsoring faculty before approval by department chair. Regular meetings arranged with faculty sponsor.

Individual Study or Research: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of independent study per week

10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Individual Study or Research: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM C375 Critical Pedagogy: Instructor Training 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Fall 2018

The seminar provides a systemic approach to theories and practices of critical pedagogy at the university level. Examines the arts of teaching and learning and current disciplinary and cross-disciplinary issues in African/diaspora and Ethnic Studies. Participation two hours per week as practicum in 39, "Introduction to the University: African American Perspectives" is mandatory. The course is required for students expecting to serve as graduate student instructors in the department.

Critical Pedagogy: Instructor Training: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Letter grade.

Formerly known as: Ethnic Studies Graduate Group C375/African American Studies C375

Also listed as: ETH STD C375

Critical Pedagogy: Instructor Training: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 601 Individual Study for Master's Students 1 - 8 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2022, Spring 2021, Spring 2020

Individual study for the master's requirements in consultation with the adviser. Units may not be used to meet either unit or residency requirements for the master's degree.

Individual Study for Master's Students: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0-0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Individual Study for Master's Students: Read Less [-]

AFRICAM 602 Individual Study for Doctoral Students 2 - 12 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Individual study, in consultation with group faculty, to prepare students for the doctoral oral examinations. A student will be permitted to accumulate a maximum of 8 units toward examination preparation. Units earned in this course may not be used to meet academic residence or unit requirements for the master's or doctoral degree.

Individual Study for Doctoral Students: [Read More \[+\]](#)

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: 201A-201B

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2-8 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 5-20 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 3.5-15 hours of independent study per week

10 weeks - 3-12 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: African American Studies/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Individual Study for Doctoral Students: [Read Less \[-\]](#)