

# The Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies

## Course Descriptions

### Fall 2020



#### ABD 100: Introduction to African and Black Diaspora Studies

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Julie Moody-Freeman

This interdisciplinary introductory course to the field of African and Black Diaspora Studies investigates the many ways in which African and diasporic peoples have created robust lives for themselves and contributed to the creation of the modern world. Our investigation will pay special attention to how social, economic, and political institutions, geographical factors, and the cultural forces of modernity have influenced African contributions to the modern world.

The course begins with an examination of the central concepts of the field: diaspora (pre-modern and modern) and Pan-Africanism. The investigation of the diaspora will enable the class to engage questions of geography, history, identity, migration, pedagogy, politics, gender, and power. **This class fulfills a requirement for the ABD major and minor.**

#### ABD 211: Africa to 1800: Age of Empires

Online

Instructor: Dr. Ogenga Otunnu

**Crosslisted with HST 131.** This class will focus on continental Africa with particular emphasis on the Age of Conquest, the origins of Afro-European relations and the political, economic and military causes of the European partition and occupation of the continent.

#### ABD 229: Race, Science and White Supremacy

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Lori Pierce

**Crosslisted with AMS 297.** This class explores the ways in which scientific thinking has shaped race and how racial thinking has shaped science. We will discuss how Black bodies in particular have been scrutinized by scientists and the ethical implications of, for example, using African Americans as medical test subjects.

Topics include the scientific origins of the concept of race, the historical application of that concept in various “pseudo-sciences” such as Phrenology and Eugenics, and contemporary examples of these ideas in, for example, commercial DNA testing.

#### ABD 234: Black Aesthetic Thought

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Evan Johnson

**Crosslisted with AMS 297.** How have black artists, thinkers, filmmakers, and writers used the artistic and performative traditions of various expressive disciplines as a means to create for other black people and the world a more cohesive and “genuine” representation of black people?

This course examines the historical and interdisciplinary idea of the black aesthetic by investigating some of the various political, philosophical, and ideological debates surrounding the roles of art in black life and blackness in artistic production. This course will focus on the development of and disagreements within sources of prominent black artistic and intellectual production such as: The Harlem Renaissance, The Black Arts Movement, The British Black Arts Movement, Blaxploitation, Hip Hop, and Black Digital Culture. We will explore the themes of authenticity, re-

Founded in 2003, African and Black Diaspora Studies is committed to a rigorous, interdisciplinary and socially-conscious approach to the study of the ideas, peoples, and cultures of African descent around the world.

**di·as·po·ra** [dī-as-per-uh]: referring to a group that has been dispersed outside of its traditional homeland, especially involuntarily.

spectability, and migration as they relate to black artistic objects and the ideas surrounding those objects. Figures of inquiry might include: Du Bois, Locke, Hurston, Larsen, Wright, Baldwin, Dash, hooks, Boyce, and McQueen.

#### ABD 240: Black Music in American Culture

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Amor Kohli

**Crosslisted with AMS 297.** This course will focus on the historical development, cultural significance, political commentary, and social effects of Black music in the U.S. from the 1960s to the 1980s. Beginning with the rise of R&B and Soul in the 1960s, the course will continue on to examine innovations such as funk, disco and the emergence of hip hop. It considers the aesthetics and themes of Black music and how they reflect the Black experience in the U.S. during the latter half of the 20th century, as well as the ways that the music, the themes, and the people evolved over that period.

#### ABD 246: Introduction to African Art

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Jody Berman

**Crosslisted with HAA 101.** This course serves as an introduction to the study of African art. Coverage of the artistic traditions of Africa will not be exhaustive. Africa is an enormous continent with an extraordinary diversity of cultures. It is impossible to represent the entire continent in one quarter. The course is based around a series of important concepts for the study of African art. The course will explore each of these concepts through a variety of artistic traditions from the continent. In this manner, students will gain basic theoretical tools which will enable them to work with art from across Africa.

The study of African art will also serve as an introduction to the basic concepts of the field of art history

more generally, albeit from the Africanist perspective. As such, there is no need to have taken prior art history or African studies courses. This course assumes no prior encounter with either.

### **ABD 251: World Refugee Crisis**

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Ogenya Otunnu

**Crosslisted with HST 241.** This course will raise questions and highlight debates about forced migration and the challenges of contemporary displacements. It will also analyze the causes and consequences of forced migration since 1500. With these objectives in mind, the course will examine some of the following themes and topics: refugee studies versus forced migration studies; international bill of human rights; causes of forced migration; regional and international human rights law and international refugee law; immigration, asylum and refugee policies; and internal displacements; among others.

### **ABD 256: African American History to 1800**

Online-Hybrid

TuTh 2:40PM-4:10PM (LPC)

Instructor: Dr. Authens Oppong Wadie

**Crosslisted with HST 246.** This course focuses primarily on the colonial era with an emphasis on topics such as the construction of race and gender, the Black Atlantic, the emergence of African diasporic cultures in the Americas, slavery, black political thought, resistance, and the Revolutionary War.

### **ABD 290: Special Topics: Catholicism In Africa**

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Stan Chu Ilo

**Crosslisted with CTH 276.** This course will study African Catholicism as a socio-cultural and religious movement.

It will locate African Catholicism in three main streams: 1. As a religious heritage which goes back to the first century, reaching its climax in the conquest of Alexandria and the entrenchment of the Roman Empire in Africa. 2. As a cross-cultural and socio-political movement which has affected and changed Africa through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Colonialism, Western Missionary activities in Africa, Western education and the integration of Africa into global Christianity and World Catholicism; 3. As a unique African Christian religious movement with its own identity, mission, and character which is now redefining the future of Catholicism as the center of gravity of World Christianity shifts Southward in the twilight of a post-

Western Christianity and post-Christian Western cultures and civilizations.

### **ABD 290: Special Topics: Law, Politics and Mass Incarceration**

Online-Sync

Fr 8:00 AM-3:10PM (LPC)

Instructor: Dr. Christina Rivers

**Crosslisted with PSC 266.** This course is about the nexus/intersection, of law, politics, and the carceral state. The overarching contexts of this course will be 1) the relationship of trauma and exposure to the criminal justice system, and 2) restorative justice approaches to wrongdoing. The course will cover key concepts such as federalism, checks and balances, judicial review, and modes of constitutional interpretation. It will focus on our constitutional rights when accused, and the political contexts that have affected those rights.

The dynamics between law and politics illustrate the dynamics between political institutions and us, i.e. “we the people”, even those who don’t or can’t vote. We often demand that “there should be a law against that!”. But how often do we even know what we’re asking for when we make such demands? The truth is that we often don’t fully understand what we’re asking for in these moments.

### **ABD 365: Voting, Representation, and The Law**

Online-Sync

TuTh 2:40PM - 4:10PM (LPC)

Instructor: Dr. Christina Rivers

**Crosslisted with PSC 365.** This course explores the struggles of African Americans and women, as individuals who were excluded from the franchise on the basis of their being an African American, a woman, or both, to gain access to the ballot. The relation of women and African Americans to the ballot is worthy of investigation for two reasons. First, with the exception of 18 year olds, women and Black Americans are the two groups who have required amendments to the Constitution to secure their right to vote. Second, they share a history, often contentious, of political struggle. In addition, the course will investigate what this history of political struggle

can tell us about American law, politics, and society.

### **ABD 375: Race, Media and Representation**

Online-Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Evan Johnson

**Crosslisted with CES 410 and AMS 386.** This course examines signal representations of blackness in American media from the 19th century to the present. Students will probe the media's influence on perceptions of and possibilities afforded black people in the United States as well as black media makers attempts to proffer new visions. This class will explore strategies of representation in film, radio, television and the new frontier of social media. This course explores strategies of representation from a variety of perspectives.

### **ABD 382: Topics in African Diaspora Studies: Theories of Religion, Culture, and Race.**

Online-Hybrid

Tu 6:00PM-9:15PM (LPC)

Instructor: Dr. Chernoh Sesay, Jr.

**Crosslisted with REL 300.** This seminar focuses on theoretical approaches to the study of religion, culture, and race. Moreover, it defines religion as a product and source of culture and race. Analysis of the complex relationships between religion, culture and race requires interdisciplinary approaches. To this end, this course will guide students in how to read advanced interdisciplinary writing that examines and reflects the profound and complicated relationships between religion, culture and race. The readings also represent a variety of disciplinary and theoretical approaches that grapple with the meaning of power and that examine how religion, culture, and race reflect and generate various systems of power. The readings will introduce and explore interdisciplinary questions. What do we mean when we use the terms religion, culture, and race? What are the ways in which ideas and systems of race frame our understanding of different religions and cultures? How do individuals come to imagine and locate themselves in relationship to specific realms of religion, culture and race? How are religious, cultural, and racial subjectivities constructed in local and global worlds integrated by colonialism and transnational imaginaries? Furthermore, as we discuss these big questions, we will also pay close attention to how and why intersectional orien-

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tations, experiences, and expressions of gender, class, sex, and nationalism further complicate our understandings of religion, culture, and race.