



The Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies

WINTER 2025 Course Descriptions

ABD 200

AFRICA: PEOPLES, CULTURES, IDEAS, MOVEMENTS

Dr. Xorla Ocloo

TTH // 2:40PM - 4:10PM (LPC)

This interdisciplinary course introduces Africa in all its beauty, diversity, and complexity. This course will offer an overview of the history, social, economic, political, environmental conditions of Africa. It will begin by exploring the creation of cultures and empires that emerged in Africa before European colonial invasion and how colonialism has affected those sociocultural forms. We will take a close look at contemporary African societies focusing on topics in economic development.

natural resource extraction political power, gender relations, urbanization, the physical geography, environmental sustainability, climate change, and food security. Lastly, we will focus on modern African culture, where we will explore popular music (e.g. afrobeats to amapiano), the arts, and the belief systems in selected societies.

SCBI Learning Domain // Crosslisted with INT 383

di.as.po.ra [dī-as-per-uh]:

referring to a group that has been dispersed outside of its traditional homeland, especially involuntarily.

Questions? Email us at abd@depaul.edu

ABD 208

AFRICAN AMERICA: PEOPLES, CULTURES, IDEAS AND MOVEMENTS

Dr. Symone Johnson

MW // 1:00PM - 2:30PM (LPC)

This course is intended to acquaint the student with a range of texts that illustrate some of the major themes in African American studies while emphasizing the development of students' critical reading, writing, and analytical skills. The course will act as an introduction to African American historical, literary, political, and cultural study. It is not meant to be the final word, but rather is meant to introduce you the student—through lecture, discussion, small-group work, and films—to some of the complexities, debates, and questions that have shaped the study and development of African America. Writers to be studied include W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Carter Woodson, Audre Lorde, and Black Lives Matter Activists among others.

SCBI Learning Domain // Crosslisted with AMS 297

ABD 214

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Dr. Symone Johnson

MW // 4:20PM - 5:50PM (LPC)

Africans have been on the move since the dawn of humanity. Anthropology is one discipline that can inform us about the presence and influence of Africans throughout the world. Topics include: the history of anthropology and its role in the construction of race and modernity; patterns of migration and displacement of African peoples across the world and their socio-cultural implications; and the evolution of the Black anthropological tradition. **SCBI Learning Domain // Crosslisted with AMS 297 / ANT 215 / INT 348**

ABD 232

MIXED-RACE AMERICAN IDENTITY

Dr. Lori Pierce

TTH // 1:00PM - 2:30PM (LPC)

Although the US has always been culturally heterogeneous, it was not until the last decades of the 20th century that "mixed race" people – the children of parents from distinct ethnic backgrounds – began to assert an independent identity. In the wake of the Civil rights movement, greater social mobility and a global economic and political expansion, more Americans chose to accept, identify with or actively pursue relationships that crossed traditional racialized social barriers. Mixed race or bi-cultural identity emerged in the late 20th century as a means by which children of diverse cultural heritages could positively identify with the full range of their cultural experiences.

Racial mixing is not, of course, new. The idea presumes that ethnic purity or social homogeneity ever existed or was ever possible. This course will explore the idea of "mixing" by examining the lives of mixed race people, the laws, social institutions and cultural expressions that constitute mixed race identity. We will problematize the idea of race and the concept of race mixing and how the social and political contexts of racial identity is supported, undermined or confounded by the existence of those who are considered to be "mixed." The course will also consider other forms of cultural and social mixing such as "passing," "war brides," "orientalism," trans-racial adoption, and "colorism."

SCBI Learning Domain // Crosslisted with AMS 297

ABD 235

HARLEM RENAISSANCE AND NÉGRITUDE

Dr. Amor Kohli

MW // 11:20AM - 12:50PM (LPC)

This course will examine the literary and cultural movements known as the Harlem (a/k/a the "New Negro") Renaissance and the Négritude Movement. The U.S.-based Harlem Renaissance was the foundation and inspiration for the African and West Indian Négritude movement developed in France in the 1930s.

Both movements powerfully addressed the renovation of Blacks' political, social, and psychological status through artistic creation. Through close attention to essays, novels, and poetry this course will encourage students to reflect on the connections between these two movements and their contributions to the development of a global Black political and cultural consciousness.

The topics the course focuses on include: the debates surrounding constructions of Black identity; diasporic relationships with the African continent; the effects of racism, slavery and colonialism on identity as well as literary form; and questions of literary and cultural values.

Arts and Literature Learning Domain //

Crosslisted with AMS 298 / ENG 271 / INT 360

ABD 236

BLACK FREEDOM MOVEMENTS

Dr. Samantha Davis

TTH // 9:40AM - 11:10AM (LPC)

This course examines the movement for freedom by Black people in the US and throughout the African diaspora. Students will analyze the struggle for liberation in cultural, historical, and political contexts through the study of as anti-slavery and abolition movements, the Civil Rights movement, anti-colonial struggles, the Black Power movement, Black Lives Matter/Movement for Black Lives and the work of activists and scholars throughout the diaspora.

SCBI Learning Domain // Crosslisted with PAX 290 / PSC 219

ABD 246

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN ART

Dr. Mark DeLancey

MW // 11:20AM - 12:50PM (LPC)

This course is based on a series of important issues in the study of African art, such as medium and color, portraiture, the artist and innovation, relationships with language, royal patronage, divination, gender, aesthetics, Othering, and authenticity. 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.

Arts and Literature Learning Domain // Crosslisted with HAA 101

Only 6 courses to minor in ABD!
Only 13 courses to major!

ABD 252

POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN ART

Dr. Mark DeLancey

MW // 2:40PM - 4:10PM (LPC)

This course is a survey of contemporary African art and architecture, defined as extending from approximately 1960 until the present. 1960 is the year in which seventeen African countries gained their independence, a process that began in 1957 with Ghana becoming the first African country to do so. In general the first decades after independence represent a period of introspection in the arts as newly independent countries sought to define themselves. Much of the art of these first decades looks to the past as a source for the present. In the last several decades, African artists have engaged with the contemporary art world in increasingly diverse ways, yet have often complained of lack of access or being held to separate standards. To this point, some have recently refused to be associated with Africa at all for fear of being ghettoized, arguing that they should be considered as artists who happen to be African.

The course will alternate between considering the art of countries which have gained prominence in the field and examining particular concepts which are of great importance across the continent. The material is arranged largely in a geographical manner: North Africa and the western Sahara, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and finally southern Africa. Readings are selected to present major themes explored in relation to each class's particular country or subject matter. In general, students will gain an understanding of the relationships between contemporary art, history, and culture in Africa and in relation to the global art world.

Arts and Literature Learning Domain // Crosslisted with HAA 203

ABD 257

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY, 1800-1900

Dr. Authens Oppong Wadie

TTH // 1:00PM - 2:30PM (LPC)

The African experience in America beginning in the colonial era and lasting through the present day. This course will focus on a portion of that history—that spanning the 19th century. The course is organized thematically, with an emphasis on topics such as resistance, the construction of race, slavery and the law, gender and slavery, the nature of antebellum free black life, abolition, the Civil War, Reconstruction.

Historical Inquiry Learning Domain // Crosslisted with HST 247

ABD 262

WHAT IS BLACK CINEMA?

Dr. Taurean Webb

MW // 2:40PM-4:10PM (LPC)

What makes a black film a black film? Is a black film one made by a black director with a majority black cast and made for black audiences? What if the director of the film is non-black or it is made for a multicultural audience? Are these films still "black films?" Is black film a genre, a mode, or something else entirely? Do black filmmakers make films that are different than non-black filmmakers? These questions guide this course's investment in the idea black film from the 1960s to the present.

Throughout the course, students will consider the formal, cultural, historical, industrial, and political ramifications at stake when we assume the existence and relevance of the idea of the black film. We will address topics such as genre, class, gender, sexuality, authorship, spectatorship, both individually and intersectionally. Students will watch, discuss, and write about films by notable filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Cheryl Dunye, Ava DuVernay, Dee Rees, and Quentin Tarantino.

Arts and Literature Learning Domain // Crosslisted with AMS 297 / HAA 297



ABD 290 Section 201

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ART: 1800-PRESENT

Dr. Jody Berman

ASYNCH/ONLINE

This course surveys the work of African American artists, from the nineteenth century to the present. Lectures will cover a wide range of visual media, including painting, sculpture, photography, art criticism and performances.

Arts and Literature Learning Domain // Crosslisted with HAA 210

ABD 290 Section 203

SLAVERY, RACE, AND RELIGION (Special Topics)

Dr. Chernoh Sesay, Jr.

MW // 1:00PM - 2:30PM (LPC)

This class addresses three basic questions: 1) How do we understand and explain the shift from defining slavery as a natural, but oppressive, condition to defining slavery as unnatural and evil?; 2) How has religion been used both to legitimate and to criticize slavery?; and 3) What is the significance of the changing relationship between Christianity and slavery for thinking about various modes of contemporary oppression?

While the class will briefly introduce students to the long historical relationship between slavery and religion, the class will focus on the historical relationship between racial slavery, evangelical religion, and Christian abolitionism in the Atlantic world. Students will examine religious arguments for and against slavery. Students will also gain an introduction to and think about the relationship between slavery, evangelicalism, capitalism, and Enlightenment moral philosophy.

Religious Inquiry Learning Domain // Crosslisted with REL 219

ABD 379

BLACK FEMINIST THEORY

Dr. Julie Moody-Freeman

TTH // 11:20AM - 12:50PM (LPC)

This course engages with the multiple versions of woman-centered theory and practice developed in the writings, activism, and other creative work of Black, particularly African American women, from the mid-nineteenth century to the twenty-first century. While not all of these theorists would use the word feminist, all have in common the aim of empowering women's lives and advocating for women's equal economic, political, and cultural access.

Crosslisted with CES 410 / WGS 375 / WGS 475

ABD 380

JAMES BALDWIN (Special Topics)

Dr. Billy Johnson Gonzalez

MW // 2:40PM - 4:10PM (LPC)

James Baldwin wrote with breathtaking insight and great lyrical elegance about questions of race, gender, and sexuality at a time when it was mostly unheard of to discuss such topics openly. Throughout his career as a novelist, essayist, playwright, and public intellectual, Baldwin launched a fierce critique of American society that anticipated the racial reckoning of contemporary American culture. This course will explore the range of Baldwin's written works to build an understanding of Baldwin's critiques of white supremacy and his call for fundamental structural, spiritual and cultural transformation.

Crosslisted with ENG 382

ABD 382

THE FANON CANON (Special Topics)

Dr. Shiera Malik

MW // 2:40PM - 4:10PM (LPC)

This course investigates the relationship between culture and inequality using 'Africa' as a nodal point. As Ferguson notes, 'the question of cultural difference itself is...tightly bound up with questions of inequality, aspiration, and rank in an imagined "world"' (2006, 19). Using Frantz Fanon's writings on culture and politics alongside other classic texts in the area of African Studies, students will examine how the notion of culture gives form to the way we understand world politics. We will ask: how can we make sense of the way in which people's intimate engagements, interventions, and navigations in the world impact the relationship between culture and inequality? And, with what kinds of reflexive engagement can we critically evaluate categories of analysis?

Crosslisted with INT 305