



The Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies

SPRING 2025 Course Descriptions

ABD 100 INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORA STUDIES

Dr. Taurean Webb

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

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.

This introductory course to the field of African and Black Diaspora Studies investigates the many ways in which African and Black peoples across the globe 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 and Black contributions to the modern world. The course examines the global African diaspora (pre-modern and modern) while engaging questions of geography, history, identity, migration, pedagogy, politics, gender, and power.

Learning Domain: Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry

ABD 226 THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT: THEN AND NOW

Dr. Samantha Davis

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

This course introduces students to the concept of abolition, through an examination of the 19th century Abolitionist Movement and contemporary movements of abolition (police, prison, and debt, to name a few) in the United States. We will focus on how Black political thinkers and activists have sought to shape the American polity and respond to central political questions and shared experiences in the American context. This course will familiarize students with debates and conflicts in African American political thought and the historical context of African American social movements.

Learning Domain: Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry // Crosslisted with AMS 297 / PAX 290

ABD 233 SURVEY OF AFRICAN DIASPORIC INTELLECTUAL THOUGHT

Dr. Chernoh Sesay, Jr.

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

This course does not assume that an intellectual is an educated and secular elite person who thinks about the world more deeply and more insightfully than a broad and less educated religious populace. Instead this course defines an intellectual and an intellectual tradition in much broader terms. This class illustrates how Black/African American religious traditions are, in fact, intellectual traditions because they represent deeply serious, reflective, and meaningful expressions of social, spiritual and political philosophy by both well-known and unknown folks of color. Hence, this course makes the argument that we should not think of Black religious traditions as ideas, beliefs, and practices that are or that should be separate from Black intellectual traditions.

This class invites students to examine the intersection of identity creation, community formation and political activism through the prism of religious expression and thought. Moreover, this class demonstrates that African American religious experience is represented as much by the Black mind as it is by the Black body. This course will help students think about the relationship of African American religious traditions to American culture, Black culture and Black political thought. We will focus our attention on the relationship between political thought and theology as Black people in America confronted racism. We will also study the relationships between Black identity formation, race, gender, liberation theology, and evangelical thought. Not only will we follow the development of an intellectual tradition within Black Christianity, but we will also pay attention to intellectual traditions within Black Islam.

Learning Domain: Religious Dimensions // Crosslisted with REL 218.

ABD 240 BLACK MUSIC IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Dr. Amor Kohli

ONLINE/ASYNCH

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 beginning 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 evolve over that period.

Learning Domain: Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry // Crosslisted with AMS 297

ABD 206 AFRO-CARIBBEAN AND AFRO-LATIN AMERICA: PEOPLES, CULTURES, IDEAS, MOVEMENTS

Dr. Jacqueline Lazu

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

This course examines historical and cultural constructions of Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean. This class will explore the way racial projects intersect with gender, sexuality, and class issues via case studies of diverse communities and countries in the region through both historical and contemporary perspectives. Students will learn how racial identities are constructed and interpreted in the Americas and the ways these identities have shaped Latin American and Caribbean cultures, politics, and societies. The course will situate race and Blackness amongst social, cultural, economic and political transformations in the region and the comparative dimensions of these processes in order to illustrate the diversity and complexity of the region's development.

Learning Domain: Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry // Crosslisted with LST 207

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

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

ABD 246

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN ART

Dr. Jody Berman

ONLINE/ASYNCR

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.

Learning Domain: Arts and Literature // Crosslisted with HAA 101

ABD 255

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Dr. Xorla Ocloo

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

Low-income communities of color have historically been disproportionately exposed to fumes, toxic waste, and contamination. As a result, they have faced an increased risk of health problems such as cancer, respiratory illnesses, and shorter life expectancy. In this course, we will explore the multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks of environmental racism and trace the uneven distribution of environmental hazards across communities of color. This course will have a strong focus on the experiences of people of African descent. Using a broad range of historical and current case studies, we will analyze how environmental problems exacerbate social inequality and the impacts of failed government responses following an environmental crisis. In addition, we will also survey environmental racism as a global phenomenon by investigating diverse topics such as the impacts of climate change and the illegal exportation of plastic waste to the Global South. Lastly, we will explore the emergence of the environmental justice movement and how it's seeking to protect all people from environmental hazards.

Learning Domain: Scientific Inquiry // Crosslisted with AMS 297 / ENV 390 / PAX 290

ABD 259

THE GREAT MIGRATION AND BLACK IDENTITY

Dr. Lori Pierce

ONLINE/ASYNCR

The focus of this course is the migration of African Americans out of the south in the early 20th century. Between 1910 and the 1970s, as many as 6 million African Americans left the Southern states in order to escape the brutality, dehumanization and poverty of the Jim Crow South. These migrants crowded into urban centers of New York and Chicago where they faced new challenges; better educational and employment opportunities, but new forms of discrimination and racism. We will explore the social, cultural, economic and intellectual motivations for migration in order to understand the development of African American identity.

The course will place this movement in a global context by examining multiple sites of migration, considering African American migration in an era of mass European and Asian emigration and immigration, and discuss the relationship between migration and citizenship for African Americans. We will:

- Learn how race and ethnicity were shaped by the process of global migration in and through the US
- Consider how African Americans, Whites and Asians were all shaped by racial narratives
- Compare the social and economic conditions of the urban North and the rural South
- Examine the personal experiences of African American migrants through autobiography, ethnography and literature.

Learning Domain: Historical Inquiry // Crosslisted with AMS 297



ABD SPRING 2025 COURSES

continued

ABD 275

BLACK FEMINIST THEORIES IN A US CONTEXT

Dr. Symone Johnson

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

"I continue to wonder whether the Black community would have distanced itself as much from the women's liberation struggle in the 1970s if we had read the wise words – words of fire- of our sister-ancestors..."

This course serves as an introduction to Black feminist thought in the United States. It introduces the major figures, statements, and movements that shape Black feminist thinking, writing and activism in the United States. As Beverly Guy Sheftall's comment above suggests, it is important to grasp the historical development of Black feminist thinking and its changes in philosophy and ideology over time in order to fully understand the stakes of current conversations. Therefore, it will survey Black feminist thought in the U.S. in the past leading up to the present.

Learning Domain: Social, Cultural, Behavioral Inquiry // Crosslisted with AMS 297 / WGS 275

ABD 310

ZORA NEALE HURSTON: FOLKLORE, FICTION, FEMINISM

Dr. Symone Johnson

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

Zora Neale Hurston is one of the most influential and celebrated voices across disciplines including Anthropology and Folklore Studies, Black Studies, Women and Gender Studies, and Literature. Through critical reading and engagement with her works such as *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Mules and Men*, and essays on race, gender, and politics, this course will introduce students to the rich tradition of Black Folklore Studies while underscoring the contemporary relevance of the field through Hurston's approach to the study and practice of everyday life, writing, love and community, sovereignty and self-governance, and spirituality.

Learning Domain: Arts and Literature // Crosslisted with AMS 397 / ANT 390 / ENG 371

ABD 336

AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Dr. Samantha Davis

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

This course emphasizes the way that Black activists, scholars, and writers have responded to eternal questions in political thought about freedom, oppression, resistance, citizenship, democracy, etc., from the standpoint of Blackness in the United States. Moreover, the course is not just African American Political Thought, it is also American Political Thought, insofar as Black theorizations and experiences of America provides a vital framework for interrogating American-ness, citizenship and non-citizenship, American slavery and its afterlives, inclusion and exclusion, liberation and domination, and ultimately what "America" is and what it does (and perhaps could) mean to be American, and more. We will focus on how Black political thinkers and activists have sought to shape the American polity and respond to central political questions and shared experiences in the American context. Ultimately, we ask the questions: What does it mean to do political theory? What counts as political theory and the production of knowledge? The course will thus explore major ideological trends and political philosophies as they have been applied and interpreted by African Americans. These include: liberalism, Marxism, feminism, nationalism, and conservatism.

At the conclusion of this course students will be familiar with debates and conflicts in Black Political Thought, the historical context of African American social movements and the relationship between Black Political Thought and major trends in Western thought.

Crosslisted with AMS 397 / PSC 336