

# AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES (AFAM)

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AFAM 501: Seminar in African American Studies

3 Credits

A survey of the academic field of African American Studies.

AFAM 502: Blacks and African Diaspora

3 Credits

Seminar in the theory and history of Blacks in the African Diaspora.

AFAM 503: Sexual and Gender Politics in the African Diaspora

3 Credits

A seminar in the theory and history of sexual and gender politics in the Black Diaspora from the Colonial Era forward.

**Prerequisite:** AF AM501

AFAM 520: Readings in African History

3 Credits

AFR 520 is a graduate seminar that gives students an overview of key literatures, methodologies, and debates in recent scholarship concerning various areas of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial African history. Its broad temporal framing reflects the long, diverse histories of African peoples and their relations to Europe, the Americas, and Asia, while also allowing for examination of more recent and localized histories. Beginning in the era of transatlantic slavery and continuing to the present day, the selected texts constitute a sweeping examination of African history. In addition to covering a wide geographic scope—with works situated in North, East, South, and West Africa—the books engage with themes including slavery, health and healing, gender, religion, colonialism, nationalism, postcolonialism, and China's work on the continent. In addition to covering more recent additions to African historiography, course readings and assignments will encourage students to refine their research questions, interrogate the craft of history, strengthen their analytical writing, and expand the contours of their own fields. Graduate students will be prepared to: teach on the most recent studies of North and Sub-Saharan African history; more efficiently read and review academic texts; and carefully consider how they would frame, market, and detail their prospective dissertations as a potential book. This course is open to graduate student across departments.

Cross-listed with: AFR 520

AFAM 525: Trans of Color Critique

3 Credits

A history of transgender struggle has fomented intellectual formations that interrogate racial and gendered logics and proffer alternative structures of engagement, but commitment to any conceptualization of trans critique has often fallen back on assumptive ascriptions to non-racial analysis. Gathered at the concomitant study of race, gender, sexuality, class, and socio-spatiality, Trans of Color Critique provides an opportunity to (re)consider the analytical and material possibilities and tensions tendered by the articulation of transgender and non-white.

Engaging with trans (and queer) of color theory as a particular approach to the political and as its own mode of knowledge production, we will not only take up the mutual constitution of race and gender, but center how whiteness has come to construct the burgeoning field of trans studies. In this graduate seminar we will consider the ways in which these multiply marginalized knowledges aim a critical challenge at our Western knowledge traditions. The course considers how race as a modality of analysis and trans of color critique as a praxis can in turn amplify, extend, and complicate the framework and analytical interventions offered by trans studies. Rather than attempt to be exhaustive, we will focus on the urgent interventions offered by trans of color critical theory, especially as it relates to foundational disruptions of Western epistemologies, medicalization, humanism, movement and displacement, decolonial critique, carcerality, violence and death, and futurity.

**Recommended Preparation:** Prior coursework in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is recommended as well as familiarity with critical cultural and social theory.

Cross-listed with: WMNST 525

AFAM 544: Race and American Politics

3 Credits

In this seminar, we will explore what race is, why it matters, and how it shapes attitudes, behaviors, policies, and institutions. While this is a political science course, the seminar draws ideas and insights from a broad array of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. It demonstrates that an explicit consideration of race is needed to fully comprehend American politics. Students emerge from the course with an understanding of the scholarly approaches and key substantive debates.

Cross-listed with: PLSC 544

AFAM 553: Comparative Racial and Ethnic Politics

3 Credits

Since its founding, the United States has had to balance the American creed of equality for all, on one hand, with racial inequality, on the other hand. Is this challenge something exclusive to the United States? This course will provide students the opportunity to analyze how race and ethnicity are constructed across the globe as well as how race and politics interact across state borders. Students will examine how race is constructed and racial ideologies are developed in several countries including the U.S., South Africa, France, Australia and Brazil. By the end of the semester, students should be able to fully engage and contribute to broad literatures on the politics and policy of race and racism. They should readily be able to answer questions such as: What role do countries and their institutions play in developing racial ideologies and racial hierarchies? What political purpose do ideologies such as "racial democracy" serve? How might social scientists best compare notions such as U.S.'s "race problem," Latin America's "shade problem" and Europe's "immigrant problem"? What are the perils of cross-border comparisons, and how, if possible, can social scientists account for state differences in their analyses? The major objectives of the course are to: (1) analyze the effects of historical, social, economic, cultural and global forces on the development of racial and ethnic politics in various countries; (2) define and critically analyze concepts relevant to the study of racial and ethnic politics; (3) identify, critique and apply major academic theories and debates regarding issues of race, ethnicity, inequality and reconciliation; (4) build analytical skills so that students will be able to effectively engage and communicate in public and scholarly discourse about race and ethnic politics; (5)

improve writing skills, especially as they relate to manuscript and book reviews; (6) become cognizant of the difficulties that scholars must navigate as they approach topics related to the politics, race, ethnicity as well as comparative/cross-state analysis; and (7) develop a series of best practices to address methodological and theoretical challenges to studying race comparatively.

Cross-listed with: PLSC 553, PPOL 553

AFAM 596: Individual Studies

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Creative projects, including nonthesis research, that are supervised on an individual basis and which fall outside the scope of formal courses.

AFAM 597: Special Topics

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Formal courses given on a topical or special interest subject which may be offered infrequently.