

African American Studies

Faculty: Dickinson, *Chair:* Fisher, Sow, Williams

African American Studies at TCNJ involves the study of persons of African descent in Africa, the USA, and the rest of the Diaspora. Courses explore questions of racial and ethnic difference in Africa, the United States, and globally, relying heavily upon recent scholarship in the arts, humanities and social sciences that place persons of African descent at the center of both theory and practice.

AAS student-scholars learn theoretical and applied skills central to a liberal arts education. The unique interdisciplinary and diasporic focus of our faculty provides a comprehensive understanding of global Africana culture and history, as well as US political, social, and cultural development.

Students and faculty continue the Black Studies commitment to community outreach through various types of curricular and/or co-curricular “community-engaged learning” activities.

Students who complete concentrations or minors in African American Studies can employ critical thinking, technological, writing and research skills and information learned in their courses to supplement and further their careers, and/or post-baccalaureate studies, in a wide range of fields including, but not limited to publishing, international business, marketing, librarianship, law, medicine, science, environmental studies, communications, interactive multi-media, education, history, literature, and the arts.

A minor consisting of five course units is currently offered.

Awards are presented annually to outstanding students in the department.

African American Studies Minor

Required Courses:

AAS 201/African and Diaspora Religious Traditions	1 course unit
AAS 205/African American History to 1865	1 course unit
AAS 206/African American History Since 1865	1 course unit
Options (by advisement)	2 course units
Total	5 course units

COURSES

AAS 201/African and Diaspora Religious Traditions **1 course unit**

(fall and spring)

This course chronicles the religious traditions of African, Caribbean, Latin American, and African American people by exploring the links among indigenous African religious beliefs, values, rituals, and worldview, and the practices extant throughout the African Diaspora. The ways in which African religions have informed global preservations of an African worldview and the worldview’s subsequent fusion with African, European, and American Islam and Christianity will be emphasized.

AAS 202/Global Perspectives: African Diaspora Arts and Culture **1 course unit**

(fall and spring)

This course chronicles the artistic expressions of African, Caribbean, Latin American, and African American people by exploring the links among indigenous African religious values, rituals and worldview, and the visual arts, musical, literary, and dramatic practices created throughout the African Diaspora. The ways in which African religions have informed global

artistic preservations of an African worldview and the worldview's fusion with European and American cultures will be emphasized.

AAS 205/African American History to 1865 **1 course unit**

(fall and spring)

same as HIS 379

An examination of the history of African Americans from their ancestral home in Africa to the end of the United States Civil War. The course encompasses introducing the cultures and civilizations of the African people prior to the opening up of the New World and exploring black contributions to America up to 1865.

AAS 206/African American History Since 1865 **1 course unit**

(annually)

same as HIS 380

An examination of the history of African Americans from the end of legal slavery in the United States to the civil rights revolution of the 1950s and 1960s. The course is designed to explore the history of African Americans since the Reconstruction and their contributions to the civil rights revolution of the present era.

AAS 220/Honors African Diaspora Religions and Culture **1 course unit**

(spring)

An introductory humanities survey that will explore the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America. The centrality of African religious values and worldview to the sacred and secular expressions of the four locales, African religion's fusion with the cultural norms of Europe and the Americas, and the interrelationship of these values to African people's "quest for freedom" will be stressed.

AAS 221/Early African American Literature **1 course unit**

(occasionally)

same as LIT 281

A survey of selected African American literature from the colonial period to the Harlem Renaissance, this course will build students' knowledge and confidence as readers and critics of African American culture and society in the United States. The course will also explore the canon of African American literature, its literary tradition, and the intersections with and diversions from the canon of American Letters.

AAS 222/Contemporary African American Literature **1 course unit**

(occasionally)

same as LIT 282

A study of literature in the African American tradition, focusing on the realist, naturalist, and modernist writings of the 1940s, the prose, poetry, essays, and speeches of the Black Arts Movement and contemporary African American literature. The course will also explore the canon of African American literature, its literary tradition, and the intersections with and diversions from the canon of American Letters.

AAS 223/Early African American Poetry **1 course unit**

(occasionally)

A survey of black poetry to the Harlem Renaissance era.

AAS 225/Contemporary African American Poetry **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A survey of black poetry from the Harlem Renaissance era to present. A continuation of Survey of African American Poetry I.

AAS 235/African American Film **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

A survey of the images of African Americans as presented in American film. Emphasizes the viewing of a selected number of works which depict various types of movie-myth African Americans.

AAS 240/History of Jazz **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

same as MUS 245

An introduction to the major innovators in various forms of African American music. The course will concentrate on jazz, sacred music, African American composers of classical music, and popular art forms. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 243/History of African American Theater **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

An analysis of the historical development of African American theater beginning in the 1820s and tracing its progress to the present; particular emphasis on contemporary innovations and the establishment of the relationship between Black/American theater and African culture. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 249/African American Folklore **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A survey of the roots and perpetuation of African American oral traditions. Folk heroes, music, orature, preaching, and other literary traditions will be examined.

AAS 251/Harlem Renaissance **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

A survey of the philosophical, political, literary, and artistic activities and celebrated figures from the Harlem Renaissance era, 1920 to 1935.

AAS 280/Africana Women in Historical Perspective **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

same as WGS 280

A global and cross-cultural survey of the lives and contributions of women of African ancestry. Emphasis will be placed upon the shared elements of African culture that, when impacted by colonialism and/or the Atlantic slave trade, resulted in similar types of resistance to oppression and analogous cultural expression among the women of four locales: Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Theoretical methodologies, historical narrative, literature, demographic data, material culture, representations of self, and representations by others will be explored to illuminate/explain these women's history, cultural artifacts, cultural retentions and, self concept.

AAS 282/History of Race Relations in the United States **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A socio-historical examination of race as a category in the United States. The course approaches the United States as a multiracial society and discusses how the various racial groups negotiate their differences politically, economically, intellectually, socially, and culturally.

AAS 310/Great Lives AFAM History I **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A biographical study of notable African Americans' contributions to and participation in the struggles for justice and freedom from Colonial times to the present.

AAS 311/Great Lives in Caribbean History **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A biographical study of eminent Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanophone, and Dutch contributors to Caribbean people's quest for freedom and democracy.

AAS 312/Great Lives in African History **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

Biographical explorations of persons key to ancient, medieval, colonial and modern African history.

AAS 321/Race, Gender, and the News **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

Same as JPW 321

Through interactive discussion, case study analysis, ongoing research, and "old-fashioned reporting," this class explores the role and influence of the news media as it covers stories related to race, gender, and religion.

AAS 335/Caribbean Women Writers **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

Same as LIT 335

Anglophone and English translations of Hispanophone and Lusophone writings by Caribbean women writers of African descent will be examined. Post Colonial and Africana feminist literary criticism will be used to explore the intersectionalities of race, gender, class, and sexuality on this literature as well as its connection to the writings African and other Diaspora women.

AAS 344/Workshop in African American Theater **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

Prerequisite: AAS 243

Students become actively involved in the mechanics of the theater. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 346/African Art History **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

The history of traditional arts in sub-Saharan Africa with emphasis upon how these arts were affected by colonialism and independence. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 347/African American Art History **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

An examination of the contributions of African Americans to the visual arts, with special references to the influence of social and political factors. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 348/African American Music **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A survey of African American music as a social document. The types of music discussed in the course include Negro spirituals, the work song, blues and jazz, various forms of religious music, and popular music. Field trips may be required at student expense.

AAS 351/Ancient and Medieval Africa **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

Same as HIS 351

This introductory course surveys ancient and medieval African history through the eyes of male and female royalty, archaeologists, peasants, religious leaders and storytellers. While the course reconstructs the great civilizations of ancient Africa including Egypt, Zimbabwe, Mali, and others, it is not primarily focused on kings and leaders. Rather, the course explores how ordinary Africans ate, relaxed, worshiped, and organized their personal and political lives.

AAS 352/Colonial and Modern Africa **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

Same as HIS 352

This course explores African history from 1800 up to the present. Using case studies, it will examine how wide-ranging social, political, and economic processes, the slave trade, colonial rule, African nationalism, independence, and new understandings of women's rights changed local people's lives.

AAS 353/African Folklore **1 course unit**
(occasionally)

A survey of African folklore with particular reference to the oral traditions of the people of Africa south of the Sahara.

AAS 370/Special Topics in Africana Studies **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

Focuses on different topics of significance to Africa and the African diasporas. May be repeated as topic/instructor varies.

AAS 375/Womanist Thought **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

(same as WGS 365/Womanist Thought)

Prerequisites: AAS 280, WGS 280/Africana Women in Historical Perspective, or WGS 375/Global Feminisms, or by permission of the instructor

This course traces the evolution of feminist consciousness among Africana women. Students will trace the thoughts, social and political activism and ideologies generated by women of African ancestry from the early 19th century free black "feminist abolitionists" to contemporary times. "Womanist," "Feminist," "Critical Race Feminist," and "Black Feminist" ideologies will be emphasized through course readings and assignments that explore the emergence and perpetuation of an Africana women's feminist consciousness.

AAS 390/Advanced Research in African Studies **1 course unit**
(fall and spring)

Seminar or lecture based format specific to interdisciplinary research in African and Diaspora studies.

- AAS 391/Independent Study** **variable course units**
 (fall and spring)
 Individual pursuit of topics in African and/or Diaspora studies that transcends the regularly available curriculum. Faculty direction and evaluation required but not intensive mentoring.
- AAS 392/Guided Study in Africana Studies** **1 course unit**
 (fall and spring)
 A faculty member leading a small group of students or assisting the students in leading themselves through a shared topic.
- AAS 393/Independent Research** **variable course units**
 (fall and spring)
 Intensively mentored undergraduate research in Africana studies.
- AAS 399/Africana Studies Internship** **variable course units**
 (fall and spring)
 This course seeks to develop occupational or professional competence in an actual work setting after competence in Africana studies has been developed in the theoretical aspect of the discipline.
- AAS 428/The Writings of W.E.B. Du Bois** **1 course unit**
 (fall and spring)
 (in some years may be the same as LIT 428)
 This is an interdisciplinary seminar on the life, publications, philosophy, and impact of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1869-1963). Particular attention will be accorded to Du Bois' methods and uses of scholarship and argumentation, which continue to inform debates about race, race relations, and the politics of knowledge formation and dissemination.
- AAS 470/Advanced Special Topics in African Studies** **1 course unit**
 (fall and spring)
- AAS 477/Honors in Africana Studies** **1 course unit**
 (occasionally)
Prerequisites: HON 220, HON 243, or by invitation
 Special projects for those in the Honors Program and for other highly qualified students. For more information, see the department chair.
- AAS 493/Independent Research II** **variable course units**
 Second semester of 393.
- AAS 495, 496/Senior Thesis/Projects I/II** **1 course unit each**
 (fall and spring)
 Culminating project or thesis in Africana studies for majors.
- SOC 315/Racism, Power, and Privilege** **1 course unit**
 (See Sociology and Anthropology for description.)