

**African American and African Studies 201:
Major Readings in African American and African Studies
Rationale/Assessment Plan
February 9, 2010**

Description:

AAAS 201 introduces students interested in the field or discipline of Black Studies to authors and texts which have captured the attention of the Africana intelligentsia across disciplinary borders and have contributed to the discourses that have shaped and defined the Black academy. This course offers the opportunity for students to explore important themes and perspectives about people of African descent. The texts selected for the class represent a broad range of subjects. **Topics such as slavery, the African Diaspora, race, gender, class, politics, literature, sociology, and psychology will be examined in this course.**

Rationale: The Department of African American and African Studies (AAAS) plans to offer **AAAS 101:** Introduction to African American and African Studies as a 100-level gateway course to the field of African American and African Studies and to the department's major and minor programs. AAAS 201, formerly titled Introduction to African American and African Studies will be renamed "Major Readings in African American and African Studies." A course change request and a new 201 syllabus are provided. The proposed AAAS 201 course will enroll 35 - 45 students. The course will be taught in a lecture format with one professor. The class will meet twice per week, for 1 hour and 48 minutes per meeting. AAAS 201 is an interdisciplinary examination of African and African-American cultures and societies as seen from the perspective of Black intellectuals whose readings have provided important contributions to discourses on people of African descent. African American and African Studies 201 is ideally suited for inclusion in the GEC Category 2. Social Science, Individuals and Groups Courses and, Category 4: Social Diversity in the United States, which have the following Goals/Rationale and Learning Objectives:

Goals

- will help students understand human behavior and cognition, and the structures of human societies, cultures, and institutions.
- will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and mastery of substantive information relevant to one area of concentration, African American, African or Diaspora studies, and their interrelationships.
- will demonstrate college-level competency in conceptualization and critical thinking as well as interpretative, analytic, oral and written skills.
- will foster students' understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- Students understand the relevant theories and research methods especially as they apply to African American and African Studies.
- Students comprehend human differences and similarities in various psychological, social, cultural, economic, geographic, and political contexts through the reading of specific texts significant to the development of the different discourses in the discipline.
- Students examine, evaluate and assess individual and social values, and recognize their importance in social problem-solving and policy-making.
- Students develop an in-depth knowledge of and familiarity with the diverse geography, people, and cultures of Africa.
- Students describe the roles of such categories as race, gender, class, ethnicity and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.

- Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others

Assessment Plan

An examination of the work students are required to complete for the course will serve as the assessment of whether the course objectives have been effectively executed.

Students' development as enlightened readers and observers of African American, African, and African Diaspora cultures and societies, students' ability to discern the interdependent relationship between Black people worldwide, and their knowledge of the historical experience of the Black world will be assessed through essay exams.

This course will be assessed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Undergraduate Studies Committee, who will consult with the instructors of the course annually for input on how the course is performing and meeting expected course goals.

Sampling should provide the department with an adequate assessment of whether or not this course is fulfilling set goals. Specific exams from a portion of the class will be randomly sampled and duplicated. The AAAS Undergraduate Studies Committee or its representatives, in conjunction with the course instructor(s) will evaluate the sampling to gauge how well the goals of the course seem to be reflected and communicate the findings to the department chair, the Undergraduate Studies committee, and faculty. The AAAS Undergraduate Studies Committee or its representatives, in conjunction with the course instructor(s) will also assess improvements over time, comparing selected students' performance on examinations earlier in the term to their performance on the final exam to see if improvement has in fact occurred. Their findings will be communicated to appropriate departmental personnel and committees.

We will also get the students' assessment of the course and of their self-evaluation in for different aspects of the course. To that end, instructors of 201 will ask students to complete discursive evaluations that invite comments on both the course instruction and on their performance in relation to the learning objectives of the course.

Note on the assessment criteria for sampled exams and papers

The criteria that we will use in the assessment will be similar to those the instructor will have used in grading course assignments. We will, however, pay somewhat less attention to the factual specifics of the students' work than to what it reveals about whether they understood the nature of the assignment/task and the learning objectives it entails. As far as possible, the Undergraduate Studies Committee will try to determine whether shortcomings in this area are correlated to the individual student's poor attendance in class, or whether they result from miscommunication on the part of the instructor. Although we are most concerned with the latter case, we will also work on various strategies for increasing attendance if that seems to be a problem. When necessary, the Undergraduate Studies Committee will work with individual instructors to improve communication of the course expectations and content.

Timeline for assessment

Each quarter, every time the course is taught, we will follow the same schedule:

Weeks 5	Sampling of Mid-term Exam
Weeks 9-10	Student assessment of course and their performance in it
	Sampling of Final Exam
Week 11	Samples read and evaluated by Undergraduate Studies Committee

The Undergraduate Studies Committee will be responsible for making sure that instructors and students' overall evaluations of the course have improved or, at least, remained steady. If that proves not to be the case, we will attempt to use the information we have collected to make what seems to be the appropriate adjustments to the course's content and structure.