

History/AAAS 755.01-04  
Proposal Rationale

In an effort to cover the field of African-American history adequately, we have proposed four new courses for addition to the department/university curriculum. We have had the faculty to cover these areas for some time and formally created a major field in African-American history several years ago. We see these four courses (covering the colonial period, the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, and historiography) as the best way to prepare graduate students in African American history for their comprehensive examinations and for teaching in this field once they finish their degree. We see these courses as useful for American history and Atlantic World students as well. And we believe that having these courses in the books will also signal prospective graduate students that this is a real field in this department.

These courses will fill a unique role. We have, to date, been teaching everything African American under the number 752, which is a “topics” number. The number served us well when we didn’t have the faculty to teach many courses with the regularity necessary to keep them in the books. But we now have the faculty and can staff these courses. The 752 number will still be important to our program, but with these new courses, it will be possible to use that number as it was intended—for topics. We have, and will continue to, teach the topics courses. They (e.g., Civil Rights, Slavery, Urbanization of African America, etc.) have been important historiographic courses for our students and will remain so. But students can only receive 10 hours of credit toward the degree for these (752) courses, and so it is important that the courses focusing on time rather than topics, and the ontology and epistemology of the field, have their own numbers.

The demand for these courses has consistently been good. In the Fall of 2006, we taught 752 on Nineteenth-Century African American Life with an enrollment of 11. It did not draw away from actual “topics” courses being taught under the same number during the same school year. We obviously attract students from African and African-American Studies in both the Humanities and the Social Science tracts. But we also regularly attract students from Education, English, Sociology, and Political Science. We anticipate no difficulty in the enrollment for these courses.

The courses will be cross-listed with African American and African Studies.