

# African and African American Studies

---

- Minor in African and African American Studies (<http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/african-african-american-studies/minor-african-african-american-studies/>)

Adam M. Messinger, Ph.D., Professor of Justice Studies, Chair

Sharon L. Bethea, Ph.D., Professor, Program Coordinator

## Core Faculty

Russell Benjamin, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science

Alvin David Farmer, Jr., Ph.D., Associate Professor, Psychology

Courtney Francis, M.A., Instructor, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Nicole Holland, Ph.D., Professor, Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies

Aissetu Ibrahima, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Social Work

Job Ngwe, Ph.D., Professor, Social Work

Jeanine Nthirageza, Ph.D., Professor, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Donald Waddel, M.A., Instructor, Social Work

Durene Wheeler, Ph.D., Professor, Educational Inquiry and Curriculum Studies

## AFAM-109. First Year Experience: Exploring Africa In Chicago. 3 Hours.

The Exploring Africa in Chicago course is designed to provide first year students with a brief overview of the African continent, and an opportunity to understand the rich and varied diversity of Africa and its peoples. Using Chicago as a lab, students will use standard research methods, library databases, websites, readings, speakers, films, and field experiences to discuss the rich heritage of African culture, music and arts, the continent's geography, pre-colonial and colonial history, oral and written history, its languages and ethnicity, the family systems, and political, economic, and democratic systems. Students will be encouraged to get out of the classroom and into various communities and institutions in the Chicagoland area, seek out individuals of African descent in academia, healthcare, business, industry and other professions, and use standard interview techniques to critically examine their contributions to the city of Chicago, to the United States, and to the world.

## AFAM-200. Introduction To African And African American Studies. 3 Hours.

Introduction to African and African American Studies is an interdisciplinary and foundational course that introduces students to the field of African and African American Studies through an overview of the socio-economic, historical, psychological, political and cultural experiences of African peoples on the continent of Africa and throughout the Diaspora. Selected teachings are designed to give students a concise understanding of the heritage of African people in America and a framework to analyze the culture and institutional arrangements which both shaped the African Diaspora and was shaped by people of African descent throughout different parts of the world. Emphasizing an African-Centered philosophy and framework of analysis, the course content and emphasis includes a focus on students' acquisition of both an analytic ability and interdisciplinary skills of investigation and research and their development of a critical and comprehensive approach to challenging traditional Western orthodoxy, intellectual hegemony, and misinformation about Africa and its peoples. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of race, class, and gender in assessing similarities and differences in the African experience throughout the Diaspora.

## AFAM-224. Contemporary African Culture. 3 Hours.

This course introduces students to the diversity of contemporary African cultural life as it has been addressed by cultural anthropologists. In Africa, one can find unique cultural practices and ways of living, as well as evidence that Africa is very much integrated into global economic and cultural flows. In this course students learn about Africans' experiences, both the patterns and the particularities, and gain a greater appreciation for the roles that Africans and African culture play in the world, including in the U.S. This course is cross-listed in the Anthropology Program (ANTH-224).

## AFAM-301. Foundations Of African Civilizations. 3 Hours.

This is an interdisciplinary course examining African civilizations from the prehistoric past to contemporary periods utilizing an African centered perspective. The course uniquely employs a variety of multidisciplinary perspectives and materials from history, geography, anthropology, political science, art, sociology, linguistics and other disciplines. Course content and emphasis is placed on correcting misperceptions and stereotypes of Africa while exploring the rich and varied diversity of Africa, its rich history, the fundamental cultural commonalities shared by African peoples despite the diversity, and the significance and place of African civilizations on the world scene.

## AFAM-302. Foundations Of Africans In The Diaspora. 3 Hours.

Foundations of Africans in the Diaspora is an interdisciplinary course that focuses on the history, culture and experiences of African descendents in North America, South America and the Caribbean utilizing the research and writings from history, sociology, and anthropology conducted on and by the descendents of African peoples in these geographic areas. The objectives that form the foundation of the content for this course represent several topical areas that are in keeping with the overall goals of the minor in African and African American Studies. The topical areas are aligned into units of study and include: The African Diaspora, Africans in North America, The African American experience, Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Afro-Brazilian, Mexican, Columbian, Jamaican, French, Cuban experiences. Course objectives will be achieved through individual readings and study, and class activities and lectures. The methods used in this course include lectures, open discussions, seminar discussions, structured activities, and media and are designed to accommodate diverse learning styles.

**AFAM-303. Global Collaborations-Ghana. 4 Hours.**

AFAM-303 provides students with an intensive, yet short-term cross-cultural exchange program that also provides significant experience in research and creative practices. Students travel to Ghana, West Africa, visit key cultural and historical sites, and engage in collaborative research and/or creative projects with students at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), guided by faculty from both NEIU and KNUST. Course sessions at NEIU before and after travel will frame the experience.

**AFAM-319. Prehistory of Africa. 3 Hours.**

Africa is the sole source of evidence for the origins of human culture. Many significant cultural developments and technological innovations occurred first in Africa. This course surveys the archaeological evidence for the origins of human behavioral patterns from the earliest hominins to the eve of European colonization of this diverse continent. Principal course themes include: the origins of human culture; the Early, Middle, and Late Stone Ages; the origins of food production and complex societies; the history of ancient kingdoms including internal growth and external influences; the impact of Islam and the European contact with Africa. This course is cross-listed in the Anthropology Program (ANTH-319).

**AFAM-320. Religion And Healing In Africa and the African Diaspora. 3 Hours.**

In numerous contexts throughout Africa and the African Diaspora there are cultural institutions that bring together healing, religious practices, spirit possession, and expressive culture (including music, dance, and costume) and direct them toward resolving the bodily and social misfortunes of participants. This course will investigate variations and continuities amongst a range of examples of this cultural institution, including African independent Christian churches, Candomble, Santeria, Vodou, and the "cults of affliction" or "ngoma" of Africa, in order to understand the resilience and relevance of an institution by means of which participants both analyze and respond to the world around them. This course is cross-listed in the Anthropology Program (ANTH-320).

**AFAM-324. Black Girlhood Studies. 3 Hours.**

This course examines the complexities of Black girlhood, particularly from the perspectives of Black girls and women. From an examination of adultification to hypersexualization, this course offers a critical analysis of the various aspects and dynamics of Black girlhood, and how race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and ability specifically impact Black girls' lived experiences. This course spans a wide range of topics, from schooling experiences and representation of Black girlhood in popular culture, to the ways in which Black girls exert radical and humanizing agency — as artists, scholars, activists, and more, reframing dominant narratives about themselves and their communities.

**Prerequisite:** AFAM-200 with a minimum grade of C or WGS-101 with a minimum grade of C or SOC-100 with a minimum grade of C or SOC-105 with a minimum grade of C.