

African American Studies ***Assessment Report 2008-2009***

MISSION STATEMENT

African American Studies at The University of Montana connects African and African-American (including Latin America and the Caribbean) history, experiences, and perspectives with the 21st century. The goal of the African American Studies curriculum is to develop a basic knowledge of, and appreciation for, the diverse experiences of the African Diaspora, and their contributions to the nations into which they were incorporated. Through this study students will recognize that the African-American narrative connects to the core issues of nation formation, identity politics, social movements, and the liberal state. Those who take this minor will likewise be equipped to talk through the racial fracture lines that mark this nation as a country where the color of one's skin is socially significant. In all these efforts, we promote scholarship that is driven first and foremost by an interest in creating knowledge and furthering our understanding of the African-American experience. The interdisciplinary curriculum of African-American Studies includes course offerings from the following academic disciplines: anthropology, economics, English, geography, history, music, political science, and sociology. Some topics of study include: African heritage and cultural continuity among African-Americans; African-American identity issues and cultural variation; the history of African-American protest and resistance, including the abolitionist, anti-lynching, and civil rights movements; the Harlem Renaissance; the social dynamics of integration and segregation; and the various circumstances of, and prospects for, African-Americans in the 21st century.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To deepen students' knowledge about the history and contemporary experience of the African-American community.
2. To sharpen students' critical thinking skills about racial dynamics, social change movements, and religious practice.
3. To prepare students to speak about, respond to, and engage contemporary racial issues.
4. To create new knowledge about the African-American experience through faculty research and writing

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS

	Imbedded exam questions	Essay writing	Research paper writing	Exit Interviews
1. Students will identify the primary social, cultural, and political movements and actors in African-American history from the Maafa through to the present.	Summative assessments in parts I and II of the African American History Survey			Question included in oral exit interview
2. Students will identify the primary questions and methodologies employed by scholars of the African-American experience including literary, historical, sociological, anthropological, and religious studies analysis.	Final exam question in Intro to AfAm Studies			Question included in oral exit interview
3. Students will analyze the nature and extent of contributions made by African Americans to host nations through protest movements, physical labor, technical expertise, political negotiations, and cultural contributions.		Capstone paper written as part of the Black Radical Tradition course		Question included in oral exit interview
4. Students will identify the metaphor that best interprets the African American experience and defend their choice.				Question included in oral exit interview
5. [Honors designation] Students will develop an argument based on new research and synthesize of their class learning about a fundamental problem in the study of the African-American experience.			25-page research paper written as part of an Independent Study	

RESULTS AND MODIFICATIONS

Not applicable at this point as this is the first year that the AAS minor has developed program wide assessment guidelines.

APPENDICES (attached)

1. African American Studies minor requirements.

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

In the coming three years as we implement our newly revised curriculum and invite new students into the program, we will develop additional assessment techniques across the minor.

Appendix A – Minor Requirements
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The African-American studies minor is an interdisciplinary program requiring twenty-seven (27) credits drawn from a combination of disciplines – anthropology, economics, English, geography, history, music, political science, and sociology.

1. African-American Core Courses

12 credits required from the following:

- * AAS 161 Introduction to African American Studies
- * AAS 262 African American History to 1865
- * AAS 263 African American History Since 1865
- * AAS 373 The Black Radical Tradition (includes capstone paper)

6 credits required from the following:

- * AAS 195 Special Topics
- * AAS 208H Discovering Africa
- * AAS 265 Abolitionism: The First Civil Rights Movement
- * AAS 295 Special Topics
- * AAS 372 African American Identity
- * AAS 374 African American Religious Experience
- * AAS 395 Special Topics
- * AAS 450 Prayer and Civil Rights
- * AAS 493 Omnibus
- * AAS 495 Special Topics

2. Electives

9 credits required from at least two of the following fields:

Geography

- * 207S Africa

History

- * 283H Islamic Civilization: The Classical Age
- * 359 Topics in 20th Century U.S. History
- * 361H The American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights
- * 362 African American Struggle for Equality
- * 363H History of American Law
- * 388H Africa to 1880
- * 389H Africa since 1880
- * 409 History of Southern Africa
- * 470 Women and Slavery

- * 471 Southern Women in Black and White

Music

- * Mus 132L History of Jazz

Sociology

- * 220S Race, Gender and Class

- * 325 Social Stratification

- * 322 Sociology of Poverty

Political Science

- * 326H Politics of Africa

Economics

- * 350 Economic Development

English

- * 337 African-American Literature

- * 421 Race and Identity

Anthropology

- * 102S Race and Minorities

- * 329S Social Change in Non-Western Societies

- * 330 Peoples of Africa

3. Exit Interview

All minors must meet with the AAS coordinator to discuss their experience and primary learning from the program prior to graduation.

4. Honors Designation

Students may elect to achieve an honors designation by writing a twenty-five-page research paper in which they develop an argument based on their class learning about a fundamental problem in the study of the African-American experience as part of a three-credit independent study.

Appendix B – Minors' Exit Interview Guide
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The purpose of the exit interview is to assess students' learning in four areas: African-American historical movements, discipline-specific methodologies and inquiries, African Americans contributions, and prevailing interpretive metaphors. Although intended to be more of a conversation than a formal assessment, the exit interview nonetheless should reveal the student's summative experience. To that end, the program coordinator should discuss the following questions with graduating students and write a one-page summary of the conversation for department files. This information will help in the ongoing review of teaching effectiveness and student learning in the African American Studies Minor.

Discuss with the student the following questions:

- Based on your learning in the AAS minor, which metaphor(s) do you think most effectively frames the African-American experience: resistance, movement, accommodation, renewal, or a metaphor/theme of your choosing?
- How have African Americans contributed to their host nations? As needed, prompt the student to think in terms of involvement in protest movements, physical labor, technology, politics, culture and/or religion.
- Pretend I am a first year student considering a minor in African American Studies. I have just asked you to explain to me what kind of questions students in African American Studies classes study and how researchers have studied them. How do you respond?
- Based on your classes in the minor, what are the most influential movements in which African Americans have taken part? As needed, prompt the student to think in terms of social (i.e. racial uplift in the urban North during the Great Migration), cultural (i.e. Harlem Renaissance), political (i.e. the Civil Rights Movement).

In every case, use the students' initial responses to probe what they found to be especially important, what helped them learn about the topic, and any ways the departmental offerings could be improved to deepen future students' learning.

The follow-up report should describe the students' responses in general and note any areas that seem particularly clear or need further attention. Also include the students' ideas about areas in need of strengthening and those that are currently working well.