



Department/School/Program Name 2022 Assessment Report

All areas shaded in gray are to be completed by the department/program.
This document will be posted online and must be [accessible electronically](#) (including appendices).

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 ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

After listing each departmental objective, indicate which of the five [Priorities for Action](#) the objective supports. In this section, you may also briefly describe any innovative or noteworthy programs/initiatives that support the Priorities for Action.

1. To deepen students' knowledge about the history and contemporary experience of the African-American community. (**Priority 1: Place student success at the center of all we do**). Noteworthy Initiatives: We have sponsored public forums such as the highly successful and well-attended panel, "Humanities and Racial Justice" that we co-sponsored with UM's Humanities Institute on November 8, 2021.
2. To sharpen students' critical thinking skills about racial dynamics, social change movements, and religious practice. (**Priority 1: Place student success at the center of all we do**). Noteworthy Initiatives: We have proposed and are developing a new multi-disciplinary offering in Dismantling Racism that, with the current provost's support, is being developed as of this writing.
3. To prepare students to speak about, respond to, and engage contemporary racial issues. (**Priority 4: Partner with place**). Noteworthy Initiatives: We developed a new Hybrid (online and in person) course, "Dismantling Racism: From Theory to Practice," that we offered in collaboration with the Honors College Fall 2021 and led to numerous student-led diversity initiatives on campus and in the surrounding community.
4. To create new knowledge about the African-American experience through faculty research and writing. (**Priority 2: Drive excellence in teaching, learning, and research**). Noteworthy Initiatives: Faculty have

published a new book on *Religion and Social Protest Movements* another one on an *Anti-Racist Spirituality* and a major new study of “civil rights and protest movements.” In addition, faculty have been featured in more than a dozen podcasts and media interviews, given ten public lectures, published ten articles in popular press sources, consulted with more than one hundred individuals and organizations on racial justice concerns, led more than 65 public workshops, appeared on 18 scholarly and public panels, and given four national and international invited lectures. In addition faculty have garnered a prestigious NEH summer stipend for a new book on African-American scholar and activist Vincent Harding.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

Student Learning Outcomes	Embedded 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 African-American Studies/Black: From Africa to Hip-Hop.			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.		Research paper written in course of fulfilling upper-division course electives requirement.		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

Student Learning Outcomes results	Modifications made to enhance learning
<p>(We include here the results of our evaluation of exit interviews and upper division research papers.)</p> <p>Goal: Students will identify the primary social, cultural, and political movements and actors in African-American history from the Maafa through to the present.</p> <p>Results: We continued to see very high rates of success in this area. Even with the implementation of a more nuanced rubric of evaluation, one hundred percent of the students in the major and minor scored an 8, 9, or 10 – our target goals – in their exit interview on this question.</p>	<p>In this instance, we made a point of emphasizing this content in our introductory class through lectures, discussion, and assessment opportunities.</p> <p>That said, we have modified the set of new alternative final assessment options in our introductory class that allows students to do creative projects (board games, podcasts, etc.) to give more accurate and clear parameters on the assignments. The research on this kind of pedagogical innovation indicates higher levels of student engagement and retention.</p>
<p>Goal: 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.</p> <p>Results: For the fourth cycle in a row, 100% of students completing a degree in our program in the last two years successfully analyzed the nature and extent of contributions made by African Americans to host nations. This rate has continued successfully since the last report.</p> <p>We reviewed a sampling of nineteen advanced and intermediate writing papers for evidence of the ability to analyze the kind and content of contributions made by the African-American community. Fifteen of the nineteen sampled papers showed strong evidence of this analytical ability as evidenced in strength of thesis, use of credible evidence, sophistication of analysis, and identification of contributions. This is a reduction over last cycle's set of papers (down from 86% to 74% - a reduction in performance consistent with the effects of COVID on student performance).</p>	<p>Given the high rate of success in primary questions and methodologies, we have continued to make no modifications in classroom instruction other than to re-design out advanced writing classes to focus more on multiple iterations of the same paper. The sampled research papers, for example, all went through a three-draft iterative revision process that resulted in very strong final products. Due to this cycle's reduction in paper writing performance, we have also instituted additional classroom opportunities for problem-solving and thesis development so that students are not having to do as much of that work on their own.</p>
<p>Goal: Students will identify the metaphor that best interprets the African-American experience and defend their choice.</p> <p>Results: As above, even with the implementation of a more nuanced rubric of evaluation, one hundred percent of the students in the major and minor scored an 8, 9, or 10 – our target goals – in their exit interview on this question.</p>	<p>Given the high rate of success in this area, we have made no modifications. Again, our curriculum is working in this area.</p>

FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

Despite our program having been reduced to 50% of 1 FTE faculty line, we have continued to be innovative in building, developing, and assessing the African-American Studies course offerings. As a part of our proposal for a new multi-disciplinary offering in Dismantling Racism, we will be developing new measures and means of assessment for entering and exiting students building on the success of the assessment practices identified here. More immediately, course like White Supremacy: History/Defeat have been revamped to open the class up to three times as many students as previous offerings will continuing to employ high impact practices like small group projects, student-led discussions, student-developed rubrics, and overall learning community model. We also plan on building on the success of this year's innovation of hosting small groups of students for meals (six groups of ten/semester) in the program director's

home as part of the first-year introductory class experience, again building on the literature on teaching and learning that show the benefit of such small group learning communities.

APPENDICIES

1. Exit interview instrument.
2. Sample Responses from Student Exit Interviews [from notes taken during oral exit interviews]
3. Degree Map

AAST Exit Interview Instrument

Discuss the following questions:

Based on your learning in the AAS major or 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? Explain why.

How have blacks contributed to their host nations?

Pretend I am a first year student considering a major or 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 major or minor, what are the most influential movements in which African Americans have taken part?

What is the most important thing you learned?

AAS Exit Interview Instrument – Sample replies 2022

Discuss the following questions:

Based on your learning in the AAS major or 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? Explain why.

- Resistance. Major theme in many classes. Anya Jabour's classes with movement North. In deep south and antebellum south. In your classes as well. Because when you look at the Af-Am experience you see generational changes but resistance remains strong – slavery, Jim Crow laws, lesser individual by KKK and the US government. Takes form of slave revolts, political settings, social settings, such as in Harlem Renaissance.
- Resistance and movement. Movement with after the Civil War and the great migrations – by moving to those places, opened up cultural attitudes for the AAS community beyond period of enslavement. Need the movement. Resistance defines the AAS experience – from resistance to slavery, abolition movement, black entrepreneurs, how they opened their own businesses even when not welcome. Resistance is a huge defining movement in the AAS experience.
- I thought about this and I think would go with self-determination. There have been so many frameworks where AAS were not given agency or allowed to pursue that. It is complicated but what is self-determination vs. reform. So within political partners – running alternative candidates in that system. In the Black Panther party – culminates in them for self-determination.

How have blacks contributed to their host nations?

- History opened US to more thought outside the US perspective; movement of Africa to the US led to different religious beliefs; has challenged US centric idea of history; religious aspect – introduction of call and response in music; integrated religious practice; more responsive; explore as a community what you can do together.
- Literally in every way. They were a huge part of the economic system. A form of currency in a way. In today's society they opened our eyes to the abuse that colonists put them through. Definitely in 2021, the black community has opened the white community's eyes to cultural appropriate even with other minorities – Asians, Native Americans. Every piece of our society have in some way have contributed. Our history is deeply rooted in their experience.
- Political, social justice organizing – created the blueprint for what is effective and what it takes to build community and what resilience looks like. Even when not key leaders have made massive contributions. Vietnam war protest – not just white middle class college students – also black involvement there. In every area in the hegemonic group – medicine, innovation, education, HBCUs, recruitment,

enrollment, professional job placement. Timely example. Nothing else super in particular. Reproductive rights and reproductive rights came from black-led organization – Sister Song. Also environmental and economic justice. Offering the intersection where so many people have been siloed. The ways in which race has now become to the forefront.

Pretend I am a first-year student considering a major or 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?

- AAST explores not only the Af-Am experience in the US but the experience of African history as it is brought to the U.S. Diversity of culture. Bringing of culture here how that had adapted and changed US culture. We look at the idea of “the other” – more than just your own experience. Explore not only your own identity but another individual’s identities. Makes you more well rounded, open, to new teachings.
- What are the contributions of the community? How does their experience differ from the broader US history? We hadn’t learned about the black experience. We didn’t learn about black figures. Looking at both groups and individuals. How the black church and religion have been impacted? Also looking at how they contributed to the US in the 20th century post emancipation.
- With most most history it is about getting a better understanding of our past to understand our present and future. In part that is some of our blurriest or least acknowledged history. Questions of who, what, where with a bit focus on context. How were people influenced up to this point. And then with this history a severe focus on bias within historical documentation within evidence. And then you need do it.

Based on your classes in the major or minor, what are the most influential movements in which African Americans have taken part?

- Harlem renaissance, religious movements, movement north, involvement in WWI and WWII shaped jobs and unionization, movement of womanism and creating more rights for women as a whole, civil rights movement, slavery, reconstruction.
- Civil rights, black women in the suffrage movement, Black Lives Matter, movements around different wars like the Vietnam war, slave revolts, Harlem Renaissance. I could argue that the Civil War was movement.

What is the most important thing you learned?

- I grew up in a very racist home. I did not realize that I grew up in a racist home until I got to the University of Montana. My eyes were closed to what racism was. It came from film – a more blatant form. I didn’t think about the underlying forms of racism that took place on a daily life. A piece of contention in my family since I started attending here.

- There are a lot of classes in the field of study. You can get an actual broad education and go deep into different topics, but they all come together to give you an actual answer to what we're studying. Elsewhere you don't get to study an actual question.
- I think it is really important to listen to Black people and overwhelmingly people struggle with that. Very simple. But difficult. To read and listen to black scholars and books and instructors has been really important – shift from what people think is important to what actually has. I've learned a really intensive understanding of organizing – it has been very transferable. To get into the nitty gritty and embrace disagreement in social movements, examine different practices, reject the myth of a single black narrative.
- The most impactful was in Eliot's class – learning about racial inequality in education was fundamental for the work that I've done in college. Also Dr. Dowdy's Black Women. Also Black: from Africa to Hip – first time that I got to learn about my own history. Very personal to me.



University of Montana - Four-Year Academic Plan 2021-2022
College of Humanities and Sciences
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in African American Studies

This is an example of a four year graduation plan for African American Studies

This is a sample academic plan. Students should meet with an academic advisor prior to registration to formulate their own plan.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Fall		Fall		Fall		Fall	
AAST 141H: Black: Africa to Hip-Hop	3	AAST Elective course	3	AAST Elective Course UD	3	AAST Elective courses UD	6
ANTY 122S: Race and Minorities	3	SOCI 220S: Race, Gender and Class OR Elective course	3	Elective courses UD	9	Elective courses UD	6
Foreign Language 101-level	4	General Education Requirements	9	Elective course	3	Elective course	3
WRIT 101: College Writing	3						
M 105: Contemporary Math	3						
Credits	16	Credits	15	Credits	15	Credits	15
Spring		Spring		Spring		Spring	
AAST Elective course	3	AAST Elective Course	3	SOCI 325: Social Stratification	3	AAST 499: Capstone/Thesis	3
Elective course	3	HSTA 343H African American History Since 1865	3	Elective courses UD	9	Elective Courses	12
Foreign Language 102-level	4	General Education Requirements	9	Elective course	3		
General Education Requirements	6						
Credits	16	Credits	15	Credits	15	Credits	15
Summer		Summer		Summer		Summer	
Credits	0	Credits	0	Credits	0	Credits	0
Total Credits	32	Total Credits	62	Total Credits	92	Total Credits	122

Notes:
 This plan does not include General Education requirements that are fulfilled through major requirements.
 See Catalog or H&S Advising office for more details and course options.
 Students are highly encouraged to double major or minor in another subject area.
 For the most up-to-date list of electives for major, please contact the departmental advisor.