



Fall 2024 Courses

Fall 2024 African American Studies Required Classes

AAS 200: Introduction to African American Studies

MWF 9:00

Dr. Maxine Morgan

This course will provide students with the foundational knowledge needed to equip them with an understanding of the field of Black/African American Studies as well as chronicle and explore histories and cultures of people of African descent by examining the following major frameworks/topics: African American Studies as a Discipline, Historical and Impactful Moments/Movements, Cultural Practices and Development, the African Diaspora, and Contemporary Challenges and Issues relative to African diasporic experiences and the field. By covering such topics and a series of theories, methods, and cultural practices and customs, the students will be introduced to a comprehensive analysis of contributions and experiences of people of African descent locally and globally and will be encouraged to think critically—in writing, class discussions, an oral presentation, and a multidisciplinary & unconventional project—about the effects of dominant cultural narratives on various readings and understandings of people of African descent and their past, present, and future experiences. This course has a circular organization which allows us to discuss topics and experiences chronologically while always already considering their contemporary relevance and impact and emphasizing ideas of black social thought, political protest and resistance, and efforts to initiate social change.

Fall 2024 Approved African American Studies Electives

AAS 302: Black Popular Culture / Congo Square, New Orleans, and the Creation of African American Culture

MWF 10:00

Dr. Paul Mahaffey

During Louisiana's French and Spanish colonial era of the 18th century, enslaved Africans were commonly allowed Sundays off from their work. Although the 1724 *Code Noir* gave enslaved Africans the day off on Sundays, there were no other laws in place that gave them the right to congregate. Despite constant threats to these congregations, they often gathered in both remote and public places such as along levees, in public squares, in backyards, and anywhere they could find. On Bayou St. John at a clearing called "la place congo," the various Colonial Louisiana ethnic or cultural groups traded and socialized. It was not until 1817 that the New Orleans mayor issued a city ordinance restricting any kind of gathering of enslaved Africans to one location, Congo Square, also known as "Place des Nègres," "Place Publique," and later on as "Circus Square," or informally, "Place Congo" at the "back of town" (across Rampart Street from the French Quarter). Here, the enslaved would set up a market, cook, sing, dance, and play music. Over time, Congo Square became a site where "overt manifestations of Africanness" morphed into "a tremendous act of will, memory, and resistance" (*The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square*, 283). And in turn, the cultural artifacts produced from enslaved West Africans and African Americans eventually embedded themselves into the daily cultural life of New Orleans. This class will examine historical and literary representations of Congo Square and its importance not only to New Orleans cultural history but also to the history of African American, and arguably, American culture as well.

ENG 455/ 555: Style and Editing—Considerations of Linguistic Justice MWF 11:00

Dr. Cynthia Mwenja

While people around the globe use many varieties of English to communicate effectively in innumerable contexts, the idea persists that writers should adhere to an imagined singular, “correct” standard. Students in this class will interrogate these perceived norms of American English, thinking specifically about whether those standards are as uniform as many people imagine. The class will also examine how—in practical terms—a multi-cultural democratic society might make room for many English varieties to be equally regarded as legitimate. In this course, we will interrogate the idea of “Standard Written English”—and of whose language use is excluded from the imagined “standard.” We will also explore various meanings of the word “grammar,” examine the conventions of various style guides, and discuss the interactions between linguistic style, written genre, and print conventions. In addition to reading sample texts taken from a variety of settings, students will draw on course texts such as April Baker-Bell’s *Linguistic Justice* and Geoff Thompson’s *Introducing Functional English Grammar*.

ENG 475/575: Queer Voices and Food Choices: Food Literatures from the Margins

Dr. Maxine Morgan

TR 2:00

ENG 475/575: Literature of Sexuality and Gender emphasizes the study of literatures that explore human sexuality and gender from a variety of perspectives. In this section, Queer Voices and Food Choices: Food Literatures from the Margins, we will read a broad survey of literatures written by a diversity of authors—those of the African, Asian, and Latinx diasporas, and others, & those queer and non-queer—who uniquely use imageries and illustrations of food, cooking, and hunger to shape their narratives; the development, experiences, and identities of their characters; and major themes around race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and exclusion and belonging. We will read novels and short stories, prose and poetry, and memoir and autobiography; draw upon scholarship concerning diverse sexualities and foodways; and engage other cultural and performative artifacts like drama, digital media, artwork, and film. Through written assignments, oral presentations, and unconventional projects, students will apply theoretical approaches of Black feminist (literary) criticism and queer of color critique to critically interpret how our authors create—for themselves and their characters alike—complex identities and liberated senses of self and sexuality by narrating food (food items and food access), cooking, hunger, and nourishment as avenues to disrupt and subvert dominant systems of power. We will read authors that include E. Patrick Johnson, Jewell Gomez, Ann Allen Shockley, Sharon Bridgforth, Audre Lorde, Laura Esquivel, Ntozake and Savannah Shange, Monique Truong, and so many more.

THEA 450: Beyond Color: Black Voices in Black Theatre

TR 2:00

Ms. Chalethia Williams

This course will explore the validity and complexity of Black Theatre, including, but not limited to the need for Black stories to be told by Black actors, for the world as a whole and especially for the Black community specifically (telling our own stories). The end goal being to celebrate the culture—as all cultures are celebrated—within the Black community. The class will also foster an appreciation for the stories of Black life through play readings, video viewings, and discussions of a culture that is rich, complicated, and so much a part of America’s story and the world.