



Fall 2025 Courses

Fall 2025 African American Studies *Required Classes*

AAS 200: Introduction to African American Studies

TR 9:30

Dr. M. Maxine Morgan

This course will equip students with the foundational knowledge needed to understand 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, oral presentations, and a multidisciplinary and innovative final 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.

AAS 200 fulfills three General Education credit hours for Humanities & Fine Arts.

AAS 302: Black Popular Culture/ African American Satire: Humor, Resistance, and Social Critique

MWF 10:00

Dr. Paul Mahaffey

This course explores the rich tradition of African American satire across multiple genres, including literature, film, music, and visual culture. From the 18th century to the present, African American writers and artists have used satire as a powerful tool to critique racism, challenge social hierarchies, and reimagine Black identity. Through close readings of novels, essays, films, television programs, and comedic performances, students will examine how satire serves as both a form of entertainment and a mode of resistance. The course will introduce historical satirical works, such as those by George Schuyler, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as contemporary expressions in novels by Paul Beatty, Colson Whitehead, Kiese Laymon, Danzy Senna, Kristen Hunter, and Richard A. Jones. Special attention will be given to the ways in which African American satire engages with themes of politics, media, and race in the 21st century, particularly in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, the rise of neoliberalism, and the digital age. By the end of the course, students will develop an understanding of the aesthetics and functions of African American satire while considering its evolving role in contemporary literature and popular culture. Assignments will include analytical essays, creative responses, and discussions that critically engage with satire's ability to expose and subvert oppressive structures.

Fall 2025 Approved African American Studies *Electives*

HIST 473: African American History

MW 2:00

Dr. L. Kathryn Tucker

Examines the experience of Black people in America from 1619 to present, with special attention to slavery, emancipation, segregation, race, leadership, and the Civil Rights Movement. Prerequisite(s): HIST 101 and HIST 102.

ENG 232-006 & 007: Eating Nations—Transnational Literatures of Food, Identity, and Nation MWF 10, 11

Dr. M. Maxine Morgan

In this class, students will critically engage literature written by authors who center food and food-related themes such as cultures of cooking and eating; food delicacies, taboos, and politics; eating- and cooking-oriented spaces, and more in their texts. Students will interrogate these authors' use of such in narratives and across character developments, and students will consider how, then, food is used to shape cultures within and without the Americas and to shape themes of race and ethnicity; citizenship, emigration, and immigration; class, labor, and globalization; war, nationalism and nationhood; and identity, belonging, and freedom. Reading literature by and about people and characters from the African, Asian, Latinx, Irish, Jewish, and European diasporas, students will strengthen their analytical skills and improve their expository writing in assignments and class discussions by critically interpreting how these authors narrate food, food access, food (in)security, and hunger, to contemplate the relationship of culture and nationality to identity formation, belonging, and exclusion. We will read a survey of literature including novels and short stories; poetry, drama, and prose; excerpts of autobiography, memoir, and other non-fiction; as well as digital media.

ENG 405: Studies in One or Two Authors—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie TR 11:00

Dr. Jennifer Rickel

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most prominent literary figures of our contemporary era. She is a Nigerian writer and public intellectual whose novels and short stories have earned the highest acclaim and whose public speaking and nonfiction continually reshape popular cultural conversations. Her viral Ted Talks and social media posts are so poignant they have been bound and republished as trade books. Beyoncé sampled her in "Flawless," and the MacArthur Foundation awarded her its Genius Grant. From love stories to war stories, her prose is both humorous and unsettling in its realism. Most of her fiction alternates between multiple narrative perspectives, urging readers to move beyond what she has called "the danger of a single story." Adichie's work depicts gender inequities, sexual assault, and racial injustice within a global context that complicates conventional narratives about rights, race, religion, and international relations. She rebukes imperialist attitudes toward African nations and peoples and challenges her readers to critique their own culture's violence against immigrants, women, and people of color. As we study Adichie's work, we will consider the very role of the novelist in contemporary life. We will respond to her prompts to reflect on the ways that cultural narratives circulate, solidify, and evolve, especially in the context of social movements and political conflict. Some of Adichie's own problematic public comments in disputes over gender expose a fundamental fault in the conception of contemporary rights. This course will contemplate how questions of accountability for the artist disrupt the conventional cult of authorship, and we will critically examine cultural narratives about rights, gender inequality, and racial violence.

ENG 471/571-001: African American Literature—Soul Food Lit TR 12:30

Dr. M. Maxine Morgan

In this course, we will read a variety of African American literature, and through close reading, interpret what food in this literature reveals and reflects about the dynamism of Black peoples, identity, and culture. We will read novels, short stories, excerpts, and poetry alongside cookbooks and recipes to consider how the foods and practices of cooking and eating therein locate Black literary, aesthetic, and culinary traditions. Engaging Black feminist literary criticism, African American literary theory, and scholarship on African American foodways, we critically examine the meaning and utility of foods in African American literature to question and defend how these foods have been shaped by and reflect African diasporic experiences and culinary histories. Using a chronological approach, we will invest time in the soul (1960-1975) and post-soul (1975-present) eras to define and discuss soul food as an African diasporic cuisine and its significance in African American literature. We will engage and discuss scholarships and artifacts (artwork, music, performance, fashion, etc.) of these eras to understand the contours of their defining and their aesthetic contributions to conceptualize if, how, and through what cultural context the foods present in our texts are soul foods. Using our cultural texts as a frame and food—particularly soul food—as a lens, we will interrogate the intersections of race, gender, region, sexuality, ability, and socioeconomic status and explore constructions of Blackness, selfhood, community, and agency in African American literature.