

# AS.362 (CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES)

## AS.362.109. Introduction to African American Literature- Part II. 3 Credits.

This course will offer students an introduction to the central novels, plays, short stories, essays and poetry that have constituted African American Literature from 1930-1980. By focusing on representative works that span each of the major periods from the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement, we will continue to consider the question of race and representation. How does one represent the race? And, for whom should black authors write – a white audience in order to change their minds about black people, or to black people for their pleasure and edification? Over the course of the semester, we will trace the various ways early- to late- 20th century black writers sometimes borrowed from earlier literary traditions and, at other times, developed new ones. In addition, we will hone in on the major debates and central texts that have come to define African American Literature and explore how it has long served as a creative, political, and intellectual enterprise.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

## AS.362.110. Colonial Encounters: Artistic Responses. 3 Credits.

This course disrupts conventional ways of seeing, reading, and examining artistic texts. When we read a novel or study a work of art, especially that produced by white people, we tend to treat it as representative of the nation, talk about its aesthetic genius, or discuss it as reflecting its social/historical moment. Black artistic production, on the other hand, is most often treated as “protest,” as that which simply responds to a national narrative. But what would happen if we treated the experience of black people and other people of color as universal? What would happen if we treated colonialism as the dominant social and intellectual problem of our age?

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

## AS.362.111. Introduction to African American Studies. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of African American Studies, with attention to the literature, film, culture, history, and politics of black life in the United States. Our reading list will likely include texts by David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Frances E.W. Harper, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Toni Morrison, and others.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

## AS.362.112. Introduction to Africana Studies. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the field of Africana Studies. It focuses on the historical experience, intellectual ideas, theories, and cultural production of African-descended people. We will consider how people of the black diaspora remember and encounter Africa. We will explore, too, how such people have lived, spoken, written, and produced art about colonialism and enslavement, gender and mobility, violence and pleasure. This course will be thematically organized and invite you to center your own stories about black people within your understanding of the modern world and its making.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

## AS.362.115. Introduction to Police and Prisons. 3 Credits.

This introductory course will examine policing and prisons in the United States and beyond, with a focus on racial inequality. It will consist of three parts. First, we will define key concepts in police and prison studies. Then, we will explore the contemporary state of prisons and policing in the United States and look at debates around the rise of “mass incarceration” and aggressive forms of policing in the final third of the 20th century. Third, we will explore policing and prison in other parts of the globe in the contemporary moment, highlighting similarities and differences from the U.S. case. What can studying the instruments of social control in other societies reveal about our own? Students will develop an understanding of major trends, keywords, and debates in the literature on policing and prisons, with particular reference to race and racism.

Area: Humanities

## AS.362.123. Introduction to African American Literature (Part 1). 3 Credits.

This course will survey African American Literature from the 19th century to the late 20th century. We will turn to prose, poetry, and drama to explore the various ways black writers have engaged U.S. culture, history, and politics.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

## AS.362.160. Land, Labour and Environmental Rights and Struggles in Contemporary Africa. 3 Credits.

‘Africa rising’ has become an influential, albeit contested, narrative used by institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Economic Forum to describe the rapid economic growth in 21st century Africa. This rapid ‘economic growth has been accompanied by another type of ‘Africa Rising’ – a mushrooming of social protest and popular uprisings across the continent. The course will introduce important theoretical perspectives, debates, and examples to equip students to critically examine contemporary social dynamics through the interconnected themes of land, labor and environmental rights and struggles that have gripped the African continent. What has given rise to these awakenings? Who are the actors involved in these actions? What are their demands and strategies? What lessons does it hold for social movement theory and development more broadly? The first section focuses on land reclamation movements, the new wave of ‘land grabs’ and responses from below. The second section presents the role of labour movements and its intersection with popular uprisings. The third section considers responses from communities and movements to the ecological destruction and climate change.

Area: Humanities

## AS.362.200. Race and Power in American Cinema. 3 Credits.

This course will examine changing norms of racial representation in American cinema and consider those images in relation to the operations of the film industry and to specific moments in U.S. history that informed cinematic representations of race. In particular, we will be analyzing film as a social practice that creates meanings that inform both everyday practices and deliberations over many of the most important issues and debates in American society. Ultimately, the goal is to gain a better appreciation for how the stories films tell us shape our personal and collective identities and inform our understanding of political life.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.201. African American Poetry and Poetics. 3 Credits.**

In this course, we will follow the development of black poetry primarily as it has evolved in the United States. Beginning with the first published African American writers of the eighteenth century and ending with several important poets writing and performing today, we will consider the shape of the African American poetic tradition as commonly anthologized and as defined by our own theoretically-informed readings of the assigned literature. Attention will be given to both canonical and neglected literary movements and groups. Readings will include poetry and essays by Frances E.W. Harper, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Amiri Baraka, Harryette Mullen, Tracie Morris, and others.

**AS.362.202. Colonial Encounters and Literary Responses. 3 Credits.**

This course considers how black writers of the diaspora engaged the history and realities of colonialism and imperialism. While some novelists wrote specifically about the colonial encounter and its consequences, others chose to critique the enterprise by rewriting – from the perspective of the colonized – the literary tradition of the colonizing nation. Focusing on works by African, Caribbean, and American writers alongside the British tradition to which they respond, we will look at how diasporic writers thought about and constructed ideas about the world, the self, and the racial Other.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.203. Passing in American Culture. 3 Credits.**

This course will examine film and literary narratives of “passing” in 20th century America. We will study texts that feature people who cross social boundaries of race, class, sexuality, and gender, and consider what “passing” reveals about American social mobility.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.362.207. Race and public policy in comparative perspective. 3 Credits.**

This course will explore the relationship between racial inequality, racial politics, and policy-making in the western world, particularly as it concerns the fight for equality by people of African descent in the US, Canada, Britain, and France. It will cover historical and contemporary struggles over policy, beginning with the African-American civil rights movement, the ensuing War on Poverty and War on Drugs, and followed by contemporary debates over immigration, racial segregation, poverty and racial economic inequality across the four countries. We will take insights from theory and empirical research to study the role that racial constructs and politics play in policy designs, contests over power and resources, electoral representation, public opinion, social movements, and political change. Through case studies of policies aimed at racial inequality (e.g., affirmative action, police reform, urban revitalization), we will examine why and under what circumstances they arise, what form they take, and in what ways they alleviate or reproduce racial inequality. These questions will be considered in light of the broader impact of neo-liberalism on normative ideas about policy, race, and inequality.

Area: Humanities

**AS.362.216. The politics of contemporary black film. 3 Credits.**

Over the past few years films such as Black Panther, Get Out, and Black KKKlansman have been both critical and economic successes, significantly changing how we think of “black films” as a genre. What do these films tell us about what it means to be black at this specific moment in time? How is what these films tell us shaped by how they are produced? How do the circulation of concepts like “Wakanda Forever!” shape political imaginations? When we watch these films how are our own ideas change? As a particularly powerful form of popular culture, film not only entertains, but it educates, and in some instances propagandizes. This is no less true of black films than it is of non-black ones. In this class we will examine a range of recent popular black films with an eye to examining the politics of their production, circulation, and consumption.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.219. Freshman Seminar: Black Narratives and the Archive. 3 Credits.**

This course will explore the various ways black people have narrated stories. From the slave narrative to fiction, biography to oral history, we will consider the relationship between historical events and the stories that people tell about those events. Where does history and imagination meet in the telling? How does one weave together story material to give it shape? While we will spend the first half of the semester engaging published and more popular narratives about black life, the second half of the course will focus on interviewing and archiving the stories of black workers and staff at JHU. What kinds of stories do they tell? How do they tell them? What do their stories help us understand about the past? Ultimately, this course will concern itself with what it means to be black and the various ways everyday people and artists alike have attempted to narrate their experiences in both writing and oral forms.

Area: Humanities

**AS.362.241. Seeing the Unspeakable: Baltimore, #BLM, and Kara Walker. 3 Credits.**

The advents of smartphone technology, social media platforms, and the 24-hour cable news cycle has made violent images of Black death and dying ubiquitous. The public consumes these images unremittently and social movements have used these images to highlight the vulnerable character of Black life globally. However, questions remain as to whether these images work as tools of populist politicization or as sources of entertainment for viewers unsympathetic to the various politics expressed by the Black Lives Matter movement. This course seeks to explore this uncomfortable reality through the artistic renderings of Kara Walker, an acclaimed mixed media artist whose provocative explorations of race, sexuality, and violence offer one lens by which explore this political phenomenon. Additionally, students will spend the semester creating multimedia archival projects that explore these images and their political impact on Baltimore. In doing so, students will explore the politics bound within, pressed upon, and interpreted from the Black body.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.271. Hip Hop Culture: From the Boogie Down to Black Lives Matter. 3 Credits.**

Hip hop has become one of the most influential youth cultural movements of the past 40 years. It has moved from being a geographically-isolated African American and Puerto Rican musical scene to influencing every aspect of American and international youth culture, including music, visual culture, language, and politics. How did hip hop develop? Where did it come from, who made it, and why? What do the images and messages of hip hop culture mean, how has it changed our world, and who cares? We will approach these questions by delving into the historical, aesthetic, socioeconomic, and political dimensions of hip hop culture. Classes will historically explore specific themes, either examining issues that hip hop has dealt with (e.g., police brutality) or employing theoretical frameworks that we can use to help us think more critically about hip hop (e.g., subcultural theory).

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.301. Black Women Writers. 3 Credits.**

This course will introduce students to a variety of works written by black women of the Diaspora with a focus on the U.S. We will consider how women have theorized power, engaged history, and creatively imagined both the past and the present.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.305. Black Periodical Studies. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century black periodical culture fostered (and, at times, hampered) the literary and cultural production of the African diaspora. Authors will likely include Frederick Douglass, "Ethiopia" (William J. Wilson), Frances E.W. Harper, Pauline Hopkins, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Richard Bruce Nugent, and others.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.311. Black Utopias. 3 Credits.**

In this course, we will read literary and historical texts that present visions of black utopia. Authors include "Ethiopia" (William J. Wilson), Marcus Garvey, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and others.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.315. Black Against Empire. 3 Credits.**

This course will examine the confrontation of Black social movements with imperialism in the twentieth century. How, we will ask, have key Black internationalist thinkers conceptualized and defined diaspora, capitalism, imperialism, war, and the global? What have been the effects of war and repression, as well as economic growth and globalization, on Black internationalism? Readings may include texts by W.E.B. Du Bois, Angela Y. Davis, Frantz Fanon, Ashley Farmer, Claudia Jones, Robin D.G. Kelley, Claude McKay, Huey P. Newton, Walter Rodney, Malcolm X, etc. Students will complete a research paper on a topic of their own choosing related to Black internationalism in the twentieth century.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.371. Public Health Crisis in Africa. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the historical and current public health crises in Africa. Topics covered include infectious diseases and viral outbreaks, water and food access, sanitation, education, behavioral health, gender equality, health care and health care access, as well as the link between culture, economics and health. Introduction to Epidemiology is recommended but not required.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.362.412. Black Political Thought. 3 Credits.**

This course examines how modern black political thought emerged through a series of critical engagements with Enlightenment ideas about universalism, progress, the authority of reason, and the foundations of citizenship. Course readings include texts by W. E. B. Du Bois, Angela Davis, James Boggs, Frantz Fanon, bell hooks, and others.

Writing Intensive

**AS.362.413. African American Representations in the Western. 3 Credits.**

The course will investigate American cinematic representations of African Americans, slavery (and more specifically its absence), the Civil War, and racial formation along the United States' southwestern frontier in films produced from the 1950s through the contemporary period. The course closely examines American cinematic fantasies of the western frontier, frontier violence and the desire to escape or erase the tensions of race and slavery that have deeply permeated the American cultural consciousness, strongly shaping the production of American masculine ideals. The course will also take decided note of the national shift from liberal "Great Society Programs" of the 1960s to the conservative "neoliberal" social and cultural ideals in the 1980s and 1990s. Our purpose is to consider the organization and reformation of hegemonic power by way of the complex morality play the western film evokes, typically considering the interstitial geographies between blackness and whiteness, civilization and savagery, belonging and alienation, and metropolis and colonial outpost. We will privilege in our discussions the contested frontiers of racial dominion. Films include "Buck and the Preacher," "The Battle of Algiers," "Sgt. Rutledge," and "Django Unchained."

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.510. Senior Honors in Africana Studies I. 3 Credits.**

The first semester of Senior Honors in Africana Studies, conducted as an Independent Study. Interested students should submit an application to the CAS Director of Undergraduate Studies.

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.590. Independent Study for Africana Studies. 3 Credits.**

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.  
Writing Intensive

**AS.362.595. Summer Internship. 1 Credit.**

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.