AS.362 (CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES)

AS.362.102. Anti-Racism 101. 3 Credits.
What is Anti-Racism? How do we identify racism’s presence and effects, and how do we direct social and civic resources to end it? In this Freshman Seminar, students will learn from a series of faculty experts and invited guests about the history, workings, and legacies of racism. They’ll also study present-day and past approaches – attempted and theorized – to abolish racism in the modern world.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

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.362.111. 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, Sutton Griggs, 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.362.118. Cutting Through the Gaze: An Introduction to Social Justice Cinema. 2 Credits.
This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of community-engaged documentary filmmaking with a focus on both theory and practice. It will examine documentary filmmaking as an educational tool for raising social- and racial-justice issues from an African diasporic and global perspective. The course is taught by award-winning professional documentary filmmakers. Students will produce their own 3-5 minute film or audio podcast. Students will select their documentary film topic, conduct their own research, and move from pre-production into production. No prior experience in filmmaking is required for this course.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

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

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.362.201. 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.362.203. 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.362.204. Anti-Black Racism and Black Freedom Struggles: History, Theory, and Culture. 3 Credits.
In Anti-Black Racism and Black Freedom Struggles: History, Theory, and Culture, students will learn about key historical, intellectual, and political aspects of white supremacy as a system or racial domination, and anti-black racism as a central feature of that global system. This class will explore the historical forms that white supremacy has taken—from colonialism and plantation slavery to Jim Crow, gentrification, and mass incarceration—racial ideologies, and how modern political systems have hinged on racial oppression. Most important, we will explore how black people have responded to the structures and ideologies of white supremacy, their thinking about freedom, being, and rights, and their efforts to fit into the worlds in which they found themselves, to improve those societies, and those projects that sought radical alternatives to the anti-black world.
Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

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.362.271. 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, “Ethiop (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.362.309. Performing the Archive 2022: 200 Years of US-Liberia Migration. 3 Credits.
This seminar will explore some of the pivotal historical and contemporary connections between the US and Liberia since the first Black American settlers arrived in West Africa with the American Colonization Society in 1822. This course asks: What are implications of these stories of migration and reception for how we make sense of global anti-Blackness in the contemporary moment? How does performance provoke new questions about shared histories of those impacted by colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade? Why is a more in-depth understanding of 19th century Black political thought and the precolonial West African indigenous category necessary for developing theory on the political economy of race today? Through the lens of performance studies, students will analyze the documents in the American Colonization Society archive, to reimagine these early encounters as informed by historical documentation including folklore and pan-Africanist theory. Through exploring a range of historical and contemporary materials that center the problematic “indigenous/settler” binary, students will engage in a dramaturgical process which presents powerful possibilities for unlearning historical misrepresentations. In particular, students will develop theater-based projects that interrogate the spatio-temporal connections between the stories of both, free Blacks and those who were enslaved in Maryland and manumitted to go to Liberia, and the contemporary politics of Liberia-US migration.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
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 “Ethiop” (William J. Wilson), Marcus Garvey, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and others.
Area: Humanities
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.362.402. Arts and Social Justice Practicum. 3 Credits.
This course provides students with an opportunity to explore art and social justice and its history in Baltimore and the Black Arts Movement through the creation of student-led artistic projects. Students will examine their creative practices and how they can be used to advocate for change. Local artist and scholars will share their expertise providing lived experiences of using art as a call to action. At the end of the semester, students will present their projects in a public showcase of student work through film, poetry, photography, painting and other visual media. (No prior artistic training necessary.)
Area: Humanities

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.362.511. Senior Honors in Africana Studies II. 3 Credits.
The second semester of Senior Honors in Africana Studies, conducted as an Independent Study. Only students who have successfully completed AS.362.510 Senior Honors in Africana Studies I will be allowed to register.
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