

BLACK STUDIES

Courses

BLST 122 - African/Diasporan Dance I (2 Credit Hours)

African/Diasporan Dance I focuses on African-centered forms of dance in one of many possible genres across the African Diaspora (e.g., traditional African forms, dances of the African Diaspora, African American vernacular, Hip-Hop, Contemporary African, etc.). Taught from a cultural perspective, this course emphasizes fundamentals such as fluidity, use of the head, spine and pelvis, grounded and weighted qualities, isolations and complex embodied rhythms. Concert attendance, short written critical responses and weekly written journals are examples of outside work that is required. No previous dance experience is expected.

Crosslisting: Dance.

BLST 133 - Gospel Choir (Ensemble) (1 Credit Hour)

BLST 146 - Special Topics in Black Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

Selected introductory topics in Black Studies.

BLST 171 - Pre-Colonial Africa (4 Credit Hours)

This survey course will introduce students to the history of Africa from the earliest times to 1880 - also known as pre-colonial African history. Though the focus is on Africa south of the Sahara, North Africa will be featured from time to time. Topics include the earliest human settlements in Africa, empires and kingdoms in East, West, and Southern Africa, Islam and Christianity in Africa, slavery, and the partitioning of the continent by powers in the mid 1800s.

Crosslisting: HIST 131.

BLST 172 - The History of Africa Since 1880 (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines myths about Africa, the history of colonialism on the continent in the 19th and 20th centuries, the rise of primary resistances to colonialism in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and how this fed the secondary and tertiary resistance movements from the 1930s through to the 1990s when the apartheid regime collapsed in South Africa. Through close readings of the historiography, students will grapple with the history of colonialism and the postcolonial era in Sub Saharan Africa.

Crosslisting: HIST 132.

BLST 183 - African American History to 1865 (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the history of African Americans in the United States from their origins in North America to the end of the Civil War 1865. It is organized chronologically, beginning with the arrival of the first Africans in North America and proceeding through the evolution of slavery in tandem with the growth of the United States, the development of ideas and laws about race, the struggle for freedom and equality, and the creation of African American identity, community, and culture. We will study the contributions that African Americans have made to the economic, political, and cultural development of the United States. We will also pay special attention to the processes by which African Americans – even under slavery – demonstrated agency and resisted racism, subjugation, and enslavement. This course is designed to present an introduction to African American history and lay a foundation for further study.

BLST 193 - African American History Since 1865 (4 Credit Hours)

This course will examine the history of African Americans in the United States from the end of Civil War to the beginning of the 21st century. Beginning with the ways in which formerly enslaved peoples made the transition to freedom and culminating with the election of the first African American president, this course will analyze the evolution of Black politics, labor, activism, and culture. We will explore the contributions that African Americans have made to the political, cultural, and social development of the United States. We will also pay special attention to the processes by which African Americans have navigated U.S. race relations, became a political force, and fought for equality, inclusion, and justice.

BLST 199 - Introductory Topics in Black Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

BLST 212 - Race and Ethnicity (4 Credit Hours)

Contrary to the expectations of many modern social theorists, race and ethnicity continue to be important elements in the lives of contemporary people, serving as frameworks through which individual identities, community actions, and cultural meanings are interpreted. This course will introduce students to the sociocultural analysis of racial and ethnic identities. How did ethnic and racial identities and communities develop over time? Why does race, though now understood to be a social rather than a biological category, continue to be (mis)understood as a biological category? How do aspects of political, class, gender, and sexual identities influence racial and ethnic identities? We will use a global perspective to understand the conception of race and ethnicity. We will explore these topics among others including cultural and historical variability of ethnic and racial categories, the dialectical formation of identity, and the persistence of certain forms of racial and ethnic prejudice. Students will be expected to examine critically their own common assumptions and presuppositions about race and ethnicity, and to begin developing the theoretical tools for interpreting life in an ethnically diverse world.

BLST 219 - World Music (4 Credit Hours)

This course includes in-depth studies of several representative genres of music from around the world, including their social or political contexts. Traditional and popular musics of the world can play important roles in religion, identity formation (gender, race, sexuality), tradition, education, agriculture, history preservation, political resistance and domination, protest, symbolism and entertainment. Students will learn to identify, classify, and describe musical examples from several cultures by discerning musical styles, instrumental or vocal timbre, form and texture.

BLST 223 - African Diasporan Dance II (2 Credit Hours)

African/DiasporanDiaspora Dance II focuses on African-centered forms of dance in one of many possible genres across the African Diaspora (e.g., traditional African forms, dances of the African Diaspora, Hip-Hop, African American vernacular, contemporary African, etc.). Taught from a cultural perspective, this course deepens exposure to fundamentals and aesthetics with complex phrasing and multi-layered movement. Emphasis is placed on fluidity, use of the head, spine, and pelvis, grounded and weighted qualities, isolations and complex embodied rhythms. Limited work outside the classroom is required. Examples include concert attendance, focused relative research inquiries, weekly journal writing, and video essays. Level II is only open to students with previous dance experience in any genre. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the instructor prior to enrollment to determine their experience level. Prerequisite(s): Prior Dance experience required.

BLST 228 - Rebellion, Resistance and Black Religion (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the connection between politics and religion among Black Americans and the role religion plays in the African-American quest for liberation. It also examines the cultural continuities between African traditional religions and Black religion in the United States. The course examines theological and ethical issues, such as the color of God and the moral justifiability of violent revolution. Students will be given an opportunity to study contemporary religious movements, such as Rastafarianism and the Nation of Islam, along with more traditional African sectarian practices such as voodoo and Santeria.

Crosslisting: REL 228.

BLST 234 - History of Gospel Music (4 Credit Hours)

This course will explore the historical development of African-American gospel music in the 20th Century. The course will begin an examination of the pre-gospel era (pre-1900s-ca. 1920), move on to gospel music's beginnings (ca. 1920s), and continue unto the present. The course will explore the musical, sociological, political, and religious influences that contributed to the development of the various gospel music eras and styles. Through class lectures, demonstrations, music listening, reading and writing assignments, students will learn about the significant musical and non-musical contributions of African American gospel artists and the historical development of African American gospel music. Students will also strive to gain an understanding of the African American musical aesthetic and to determine how it is retained and expressed with African American gospel music and other musical genres. The class is open to students, staff, and faculty of all levels.

BLST 235 - Introduction to Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary study of African American culture and experiences. The course surveys the field of Black Studies by introducing topics or issues relevant to Black American life from an interdisciplinary perspective. In this course, history, sociology, religion, literature and philosophy provide the foundation for exploring dimensions of Black Studies. Literary works, historical works, social science theory and contemporary issues will serve as texts for students to analyze. This course is taught from an interdisciplinary perspective which requires students to explore their own cultural frames of reference as a parallel process for studying Black cultures.

BLST 237 - Global Health and Local Wellbeing (4 Credit Hours)

The course examines the sociocultural bases of both Western and non-Western medical and psychiatric systems. It focuses especially on different cultural assumptions about the nature and causes of illness and the institutional arrangements for the care of patients. The course will consider a variety of social scientific theoretical perspectives on the relationship between illness, medicine, and society. It will assess the degree to which non-Western medical systems may be compatible with and/or of benefit to Western medicine and psychiatry.

BLST 238 - Sacred Texts and Social Justice (4 Credit Hours)

From women's Suffrage to Black Lives Matter, biblical texts, ideas, and ideals have played a significant role in movements and struggles for equity and justice in the United States. In this course, we will consider the role that sacred texts play in movements for social change, analyze how ideas about the Bible— and the Bible as an idea— are invoked in public discourse, and evaluate the rhetorical and interpretive moves by which the same sets of texts could be invoked to maintain the status quo or transform relations of power. This course will discuss historical movements for social change in the United States, but will focus primarily on movements for anti-racism and reproductive justice in the 21st century.

BLST 246 - Intermediate Topics in Black Studies (2-4 Credit Hours)

This course provides a venue in which to explore chosen topics in Black Studies at the intermediate level. Topics vary according to the interests of students and faculty. In some cases, the course may be repeated for credit. This course may be cross-listed based on the topic and disciplines that inform it.

BLST 255 - Ethnic Literature (4 Credit Hours)

A study of the literature of various ethnic, racial and regional groups of the United States. This course explores cultural heritages, historical struggles, artistic achievements and contemporary relations of groups in American society.

BLST 260 - Contemporary African Novels in English (4 Credit Hours)

A study of contemporary Anglophone African novels, all of which engage with histories and experiences of European colonialism.

Crosslisting: ENGL 260.

BLST 265 - Black Women and Organizational Leadership (4 Credit Hours)

This class explores Black women's leadership orientations in organizations. Afrocentric and womanist frameworks are used to inquire about Black women's leadership in the context of their lives. In this course we explore and theorize Black women's use of communal and generative leadership orientations as well as their application of a multiple and oppositional consciousness. Organizational dilemmas stemming from their race, class, and gender, as well as the unique challenges Black women leaders face in creating a supportive life structure are examined. Students will critique the omission of Black women's leadership styles in the mainstream theories about leadership, as well as explore the implications of Black women's leadership for expanding mainstream theory.

Crosslisting: WGST 265.

BLST 280 - Ecofeminist-Ecowomanist Theory & Practice (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces the conceptual frameworks of ecofeminism and ecowomanism, exploring how environmental issues impact vulnerable communities and in particular, women of color. It uses an intersectional race-gender-class approach to help students analyze ecofeminist and ecowomanist principles around views of nature, spirituality, human and non-human relations, capitalism, indigeneity and ongoing colonization, globalization, and various forms of activism. Students will work toward understanding both ecofeminist and ecowomanist theoretical frameworks and their application in their own lives. This is a special topics course crosslisted with WGST and SES 280.

BLST 282 - K-Pop, Hip-Hop, and R&B: Black, Asian, and American Cultural Interactions (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the differences, diffusions, appropriations, adaptations, and fusion of African American and Asian American cultures through the musical genres of R&B, Hip-hop, and K-pop. K-pop, Hip-hop, and R&B are three distinct genres of music that have different origins and characteristics but have influenced each other over time. For instance, it is clear how African American hip-hop artists have influenced Korean artists such as Seotaeji and the Boys, Tiger JK, as well as Psy. Meanwhile, African American hip-hop artists, including the Wu-Tang Clan, RZA, and Nicki Minaj, have also showcased Asian-inspired aesthetics in their music. How did these cultural connections occur and what impact do they have on the national and international scale? What do these genres reveal about racial and gender identity formation in America and Asia? Students will explore the intricate interactions between Black, Asian, and Asian American populations from a transnational perspective to contemplate how globalization through music impacts the development of culture in America and Asia. This is a special topics course crosslisted with WGST and EAST 282.

BLST 284 - Global Hip-Hop (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course crosslisted with DANC.

BLST 304 - Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in the US (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the formations and intersections of the scholarly concepts and practices of race and religion in the United States. The goals are to better understand how and why race often remains a taboo subject in the study of religion and the ways in which race and ethnicity are relevant to religious studies scholarship. To do this, the class examines the development of categories of race, ethnicity, nation, and religion in the context of American religious history and sociology. We then turn our attention to landmark texts and problems in contemporary scholarship. These texts engage with a variety of racial and religious identities.

BLST 310 - History of Radical Printmaking (4 Credit Hours)

The course analyzes the creation, history, and continual legacy of radical printmaking via transnational and multiracial social movements. Therefore, the course takes a global art historical approach to the materials, analyzing the influence of transnational art and political networks. The course is influenced by postcolonial theory, transnationalism, and critical race theory. Through visual, textual, and social analysis via close readings, critical discussions, and a comprehensive research project, students will find connections, networks, and contact zones between distinct graphic art movements. Throughout the course, we will explore specific networks created among Mexican, Black, and Chicana printmakers, but students will be encouraged to find similar transnational and multiracial solidarity movements among other printmakers.

BLST 320 - Contemporary African Peoples in Historical Perspective (4 Credit Hours)

This course is an examination of the historical, ethnic and socio-cultural diversity of sub-Saharan Africa societies. Central to this overview is an emphasis on the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras. It considers questions of economic development, urbanization, agricultural production and the relationship of the contemporary African state to rural communities. This course also explores symbolic systems in the context of rituals, witchcraft, indigenous churches, and new forms of Christianity currently spreading in Africa.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 or by consent.

BLST 325 - African-American Women's Literature (4 Credit Hours)

Historical and contemporary African-American women's literature grounds an inquiry into black women's literary and intellectual traditions within the matrix of race, gender, class, and sexual relations in the United States.

Crosslisting: ENGL 325, WGST 325.

BLST 332 - The Fourteenth Amendment and the Meanings of Equality (4 Credit Hours)

Since 1868, Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment has served as the principal benchmark for legal debates over the meanings of equality in the United States. This course explores the origins of the amendment in the post-Civil War period and the evolution of its meanings throughout the late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries. We will examine closely the contested interpretations of equal protection and due process; the rise, fall, and rebirth of substantive due process; and the battles over incorporating the Bill of Rights. We will pay particular attention to how struggles for racial and gender equality have influenced debates over the amendment, and how the amendment has reshaped the parameters of U.S. citizenship.

Crosslisting: HIST 392.

BLST 334 - Dancing in the Street: African-American Urban History (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the history of the African-American urban experience. In the mid-18th century, the African-American community began to transition from a rural to an urban population. By the mid-20th century, African-Americans had become an overwhelmingly urban group. The course examines the process of the rural-to-urban transformation of African-Americans and the ways in which they have confronted, resisted, and adjusted to urban conditions of housing, employment, education, culture, and public space.

BLST 337 - The History of Black Power: From Marcus Garvey to Chuck D (4 Credit Hours)

This course explores the history of the ideology of Black Power and its various dimensions and incarnations from its origins in the early 20th century to its significance in the present. Topics to be addressed may include, but are not limited to: definitions of Black Power, applications of this ideology to politics and economics, artistic aesthetics, gender dynamics, key figures and organizations, current manifestations, meanings for the African-American community, and reactions from the larger American society.

Crosslisting: HIST 297.

BLST 340 - Social Movements (4 Credit Hours)

In this course, we explore social movements as a primary means of social change. We attempt to understand the conditions that precede, accompany, and follow collective action. Particular case studies for analysis will be drawn from the United States and cross-cultural contexts to illustrate that social movements are human products that have both intended and unintended consequences. This course is sometimes taught with a special subtitle: "Social Justice Movements in Communities of Color". Cross-listed with the Anthropology/Sociology Program.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 or consent.

BLST 345 - Advanced Topics in Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

Selected intermediate topics in Black Studies.

BLST 355 - The Harlem Renaissance (4 Credit Hours)

An analysis of the interrelationship between the cultural phenomenon and the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, particularly the way in which the social, economic and political conditions of the era helped to shape the literary art of the 1920s.

BLST 356 - The Narrative of Black America (4 Credit Hours)

A study of representative samples of Black literature ranging from slave narratives to contemporary Black fiction.

BLST 357 - Postcolonial Literature and Criticism (4 Credit Hours)

Readings in literature and criticism from Asia, Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean, in response to the experience of colonialism.

BLST 358 - Afrofuturism (4 Credit Hours)

This course focuses on the movement, genre, and aesthetic known as Afrofuturism and related concepts such as Africanfuturism and Afro-Blackness. Students will read a selection of critical essays and literature that represent or engage with these concepts and explore media such as film and music. Here are some key questions that the course will try to answer: What is Afrofuturism? When and where did it begin? Is it a national or global phenomenon? What are some of the messages "encoded" in Afrofuturism when it comes to Blackness? How does this genre engage with not only race but class, gender, sexuality, age, and so on.

Crosslisting: ENGL 358 and WGST 358.

BLST 360 - History of African American Education (4 Credit Hours)

The goal of this course is to examine the historical experiences of African Americans in education and related aspects of life. Much of the course will focus on Blacks' experiences in schooling in the South from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In addition, students will contrast African American schooling experiences with those of Native Americans and others during this period. Students who enjoy and benefit from cooperative and participatory learning environments are encouraged to take this course.

Prerequisite(s): EDUC 213 or BLST 235.

BLST 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**BLST 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****BLST 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****BLST 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****BLST 368 - Black Political Thought (4 Credit Hours)**

This course focuses on black political thought in the United States and around the world by considering how Afrocentric scholars, activists, and intellectuals have considered and acted to realize justice for Black persons (and thus for all persons). The course will broadly focus on the experience of blackness since ~1500CE, also known as "modernity." This choice of periodization is based on arguments made by foundational theorists of race such as Orlando Patterson, Omi & Winant, and Charles Mills, among others, who argue that racial formation is a sociohistorical process that unfolds over time and place, such that categories of race are neither eternal, unchangeable, or material, but subject to creation, evolution, and transformation through intellectual, political, social, and legal struggles. While we may experience race as real, the creation of race as a category of meaning was a political project. We will pay special attention to the experience and political significance of enslavement, colonization, and Afro-independence struggles to consider the meaning of freedom and grapple with contemporary legacies of violence. How does Black Political Thought enrich our understanding of significant political questions such as the nature of political equality, justice, and democracy? The course may include, among others, thinkers such as David Walker, Maria Stewart, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, Franz Chinua Achebe, Fanon, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, Orlando Patterson, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Michael Dawson, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Angela Davis, and Claudia Rankine.

BLST 370 - Advanced Topics in Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

Special topic courses with a focus on particular aspects of Black Studies.

BLST 372 - Critical Pedagogies: Gender, Race and Class in U.S. Education (4 Credit Hours)

In its examination of current pressing issues in U.S. education, the central concern throughout this course is the relationship between teachers and students; schools and society; and people and the world. Particular attention is given to pedagogies informed by critical theory. The course includes a 25-30-hour service-learning commitment in an area school or community organization. The course is a Curricular Service Learning course. This course fulfills the Social Sciences and Women of Color in the U.S. distribution requirements for WGST majors and the Black Studies (BLST) cross-listed course requirement for WGST majors/minors. Crosslisted with WGST 391 and EDUC 390 Prerequisite: EDUC 213.

BLST 375 - Race and Law in US Politics (4 Credit Hours)

How have ideas about race shaped law, legal institutions, and legal practices in the United States? Conversely, how have law, legal institutions, and legal practices shaped how we think about and make race? In line with the work of Critical Race Theorists (such as Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Gary Peller), the fundamental assumption of the course is that these two domains are integrally related, such that to think of or analyze one requires thinking of or analyzing the other, as well. Thus, studying race without considering law's role in shaping race is deficient, and studying law without considering how race has shaped it is similarly unsatisfactory. This follows from contributions by scholars such as Michael Omi and Howard Winant who argue that categories of race are sociohistorical formations rather than eternal essences and that racial categories can be created, transformed, and destroyed; part of our work in this course will be to trace how categories of race in US politics have been built by law and within legal practices and institutions. To better understand our world, we should consider how they work together to shape our institutions and lives. The bulk of the course will consider the interaction between race and law in major policy areas such as immigration, incarceration and policing, education, or housing.

Prerequisite(s): PPA 201, BLST majors/minors, or consent of instructor.

BLST 380 - Black Feminist Thought (4 Credit Hours)

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the key ideas, theories, and activism within Black feminist thought, focusing on the unique experiences of Black women at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, geography, and other dimensions of identity. Students will critically engage with the works of prominent Black feminist scholars and activists, including bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Patricia Hill Collins explore how Black feminism has challenged both mainstream feminist and civil rights movements. The course examines the development of Black feminist theory and its role in shaping contemporary discussions on identity, power, and social justice. We will explore foundational concepts such as intersectionality and standpoint epistemology and employ a Black feminist hermeneutic to social movements including, but not limited to, prison abolition, environmental justice, and Black Lives Matter reproductive justice. Additionally, we will analyze Black women's cultural representations and resistance to systemic oppression, while also considering the global impact of Black feminist activism. By the end of the course, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the contributions of Black feminists to historical, contemporary, and future movements for social change. This is a special topics course crosslisted with WGST 381.

BLST 390 - Topics in Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

This course provides a venue in which to explore chosen topics in Black Studies. Topics vary according to the interests of students and faculty. This course may be cross-listed based on the topic and disciplines that inform it.

BLST 391 - Comparative Slavery in the Americas (4 Credit Hours)

For many, the history of slavery is synonymous with the United States South. But slavery was not limited to the US and by approaching slavery from a comparative perspective, we will deepen our understanding of slavery as an institution, slaves as historical actors, and therefore the legacies of slavery throughout the Americas. We will explore regional differences within slaves' opportunities to form families, to create cultures, to rebel, and to labor for their own benefits; as well as the interactions of African cultural visions and Christianity.

BLST 393 - Race, Identity & Power in U.S Sports (4 Credit Hours)

Sport in the United States is far more than a source of leisure, entertainment, or fitness. Rather, sport – particularly when played on a college or professional level – has become an institution that, in becoming embedded in our culture, both reflects and shapes our society. Through readings, class discussions, and the writing of a 15-20 page research paper based on the analysis of historical documents and scholarship, this course will explore the intersection of race and sport in U.S. history. While college and professional sports have often been viewed as vehicles for obtaining equality and upward mobility, sports have also reflected and perpetuated inequality in American society. We will interrogate the construction and significance of race in American sports, including its intersections with class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Paying special attention to the experiences of athletes of color in a variety of sports, we will explore the ways that they navigated the world of sports and thought about and utilized their positions to advocate for social change. We will also use sport as a space to think about concepts of identity, community, and nationalism. Note that this course is not eligible to fulfill a Social Sciences General Education requirement. If taken as under the History cross-listing, it will fulfill a Humanities GE. If taken under the BLST cross-listing, it will fulfill an Interdivisional GE.

Crosslisting: HIST 393.

BLST 399 - Topics in Black Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

BLST 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**BLST 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**