

BLACK STUDIES (BLST)

BLST 101 - 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 cultural frames of reference as a parallel process for studying Black cultures.

Crosslisting: QS 102.

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

African/Diaspora 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: DANC 122.

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

The Denison University Gospel Choir carries the tradition of sharing love and hope through song to our community. We learn and perform songs in the true African American gospel tradition, as well as some that are contemporary and inspiring.

Crosslisting: MUSP 133.

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.

Crosslisting: HIST 193.

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

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

BLST 201 - Blackness in the Modern World: Race, Ethnicity & Diaspora (4 Credit Hours)

The course delves into the meanings of Blackness in national and international contexts. With a focus on the relationships among Africans, the African Diaspora, and African Americans, the course will explore connections and distinctions between African and African Diaspora cultures and histories. The course will also consider relationships between African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups in the US. The course materials include foundational theoretical, historical, and literary texts that help to define Blackness, race, and Diaspora.

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 229 - Digital History - Runaway Slaves in Ohio (4 Credit Hours)

This course is a hands-on, experimental, learn-as-we-go experience that introduces students to using digital tools and sources to conduct original historical research, formulate historical arguments, and communicate historical ideas in digital formats. To focus our efforts, we will apply what we learn to a particular area of historical study: runaway slave advertisements and runaway slave narratives from nineteenth-century Ohio.

Crosslisting: HIST 289 and DH 229.

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 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.

Crosslisting: REL 238 and WGST 218.

BLST 254 - African American Literature (4 Credit Hours)

Offers a historical survey of major texts, movements, and/or themes in the development of a distinct African American literary tradition. By examining texts from multiple genres and periods, students will be introduced to critical concepts central to the study of African American literature, including Middle Passage, slavery, diaspora, race, class, gender, sexuality, ecology, migration, language, and power.

Crosslisting: ENGL 254.

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 285 - Blackness in the Modern World: Race, Ethnicity & Diaspora (4 Credit Hours)

The course delves into the meanings of Blackness in national and international contexts. With a focus on the relationships among Africans, the African Diaspora, and African Americans, the course will explore connections and distinctions between African and African Diaspora cultures and histories. The course will also consider relationships between African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups in the US. The course materials include foundational theoretical, historical, and literary texts that help to define Blackness, race, and Diaspora.

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 308 - The Black Athlete in the U.S. (4 Credit Hours)

This course, grounded in history, Black studies, and sport studies frameworks, focuses on the experiences of Black athletes in the United States from the 18th century to the 21st century. Great emphasis is placed on the 20th and 21st centuries. Through an examination of personal narratives and social movements, students will explore the numerous factors that have shaped the individual and collective experiences of athletes of African descent in sports. The aim is for students to gain an understanding of the role sports have played in the lives of Black athletes in the United States based on their varying social identities that have shaped their lives. The class will place certain themes such as race and racism, slavery and freedom, and oppression and resistance, through the prism of athletics in the context of U.S. society.

Prerequisite(s): HESS 200 or BLST 101.

Crosslisting: HESS 308.

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 and 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 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 Astro-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 101 or BLST 235.

Crosslisting: EDUC 360.

BLST 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

BLST 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

A student in good standing may work intensively in areas of special interest under the Directed Study plan. A Directed Study is appropriate when, under the guidance of a faculty member, a student wants to explore a subject more fully than is possible in a regular course or to study a subject not covered in the regular curriculum. A Directed Study should not normally duplicate a course that is regularly offered. Directed Studies are normally taken for 3 or 4 credits. A one-semester Directed Study is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Directed Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

BLST 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

BLST 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)

Independent Study engages a student in the pursuit of clearly defined goals. In this effort a student may employ skills and information developed in previous course experiences or may develop some mastery of new knowledge or skills. A proposal for an Independent Study project must be approved in advance by the faculty member who agrees to serve as the project advisor. Note: Independent Studies may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

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 and other schooling systems around the world, 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 20-25 hour curricular service-learning commitment in an area school or community organization, which is intended to deepen students' engagement with course concepts. 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.

Prerequisite(s): EDUC 213.

Crosslisting: WGST 391 and EDUC 390.

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 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 400 - Advanced Seminar in Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

This is an intensive seminar for juniors and seniors that will focus on a specific topic in Black Studies to develop interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches. Students will get opportunities to explore and apply Black Studies approaches and theories, learn research methods, and develop scholarly and creative projects appropriate to the topic.

Prerequisite(s): BLST 101 or BLST 201 or consent.

BLST 422 - Performance: African/Diasporan (1 Credit Hour)

New and reconstructed works choreographed by faculty and guest artists in African/Diasporan dance are learned by students and rehearsed for public performance. Participation can include attending biweekly company classes and contributing to the production of the performance. Differences in course number refer to genres of performance work. By audition or invitation only; auditions are typically held during the first two weeks of each semester or immediately preceding a short residency by a guest artist.

Crosslisting: DANC 422.

BLST 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Students may enroll in Senior Research in their final year at Denison. Normally, Senior Research requires a major thesis, report, or project in the student's field of concentration and carries eight semester-hours of credit for the year. Typically, a final grade for a year-long Senior Research will not be assigned until the completion of the year-long Senior Research at the end of the second semester. In which case, the first semester Senior Research grade will remain "in progress" (PR) until the completion of the second semester Senior Research. Each semester of Senior Research is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Senior Research may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.

BLST 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)

Students may enroll in Senior Research in their final year at Denison. Normally, Senior Research requires a major thesis, report, or project in the student's field of concentration and carries eight semester-hours of credit for the year. Typically, a final grade for a year-long Senior Research will not be assigned until the completion of the year-long Senior Research at the end of the second semester. In which case, the first semester Senior Research grade will remain "in progress" (PR) until the completion of the second semester Senior Research. Each semester of Senior Research is limited to a maximum of 4 credit hours. Note: Senior Research may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements.