

# BLACK STUDIES

The Black Studies Minor examines the lived experiences, modes of cultural production and political perspectives of people of African descent. Using a multidisciplinary methodological framework rooted in a liberal arts curriculum, courses utilize a transcontinental approach to the Black experience through the lens of race, gender, sexuality, class, national, and political orientation in the modern world. Black Studies courses incorporate theories, concepts, histories, cultures, theologies and political ideologies central to the Black diaspora through the themes of justice, democracy, citizenship, human rights, liberty, and globalization.

## Student Learning Goals

Help students to develop and strengthen critical writing and analytical skills, while challenging traditional ways of thinking about difference;

Foster a critical consciousness about global relations and how Black people play a constitutive and performative role in these relations;

Enable students to understand how knowledge of the Black experience will enhance their engagement with contemporary social, cultural, and political issues and prepare them for world citizenship;

Provide an inter-cultural dimension to student's growing store of knowledge and encourage critique of received wisdom;

Allow students to learn and practice an interdisciplinary and global model for knowledge production that is grounded in the Black experience;

Instill an appreciation of the liberal arts as useful for understanding and solving the challenges of race, class, gender, nationality, and region.

## Requirements for the Minor

Code	Title	Credits
BLS-201	Introduction to Black Studies	1
BLS-401	Capstone Seminar	1
Black Studies Electives		3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>5</b>

BLS-201 is the methods course for the field. Ideally, Black Studies minors will take this course in their sophomore year. This course will introduce students to the history, methodology, and major problems in Black Studies through an interdisciplinary survey of literature, cultural theories, and historical works.

In BLS-401, students will demonstrate facility with Black Studies methods and familiarity with Black Studies sources by preparing a substantial and original work of research and analysis and by giving a public presentation of their work (which might include a conference presentation).

### BLS-201 Introduction to Black Studies

This is the methods course for the field. Ideally minors will take this course in the fall or spring of their sophomore year. This course will introduce students to the history, methodology, and major problems in Black Studies through an interdisciplinary survey of literature, cultural theories, and historical works. Meets the Diversity Requirement for the PPE major.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** , Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity

### BLS-270 Special Topics

The objective of this class is to develop the student's ability to think interdisciplinarily. Through the analysis of a particular theme, topic, cultural expression, or political movement, students will gain a greater understanding of Black Studies scholarship and methodology/ies. Since the content of this course varies from year to year, it may be repeated for credit upon the instructor's approval. Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:**

### BLS-271 African American Literature

This course will introduce students to the critical study of African American literature as a means of racial identity formation and political and philosophical articulation. Among other things, African American art, literature, music, and cinema reflect an attempt to grapple with issues of human psychology, justice, love, race, and democracy. The readings, videos, and recordings are meant to provide a source of material for examining what, if anything, African American literary producers have to say about what it means to be human, why and how race matters, the nature of justice, the efficacy of love, gender and class identities, and the possibility of creating a society of equals. Lastly, in-class discussions and out-of-class projects are meant to assist in skill development for (in the words of bell hooks) transgressive engagement with all texts and media.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts, Literature

**Equated Courses:** ENG-241

### BLS-272 Southern Gothic Literature

This class is about the ghosts that haunt the literature of the American South. After the Civil War, when the ideal of the pastoral plantation crumbled, Southern writers sought to contend with the brutal historic realities that had always lurked behind the white-pillared façade: poverty, violence, slavery, racism, patriarchy. Southern Gothic literature—which emerged in the early 19th century and continues strong today—is marked by dark humor, transgressive desires, grotesque violence, folk spiritualism, hereditary sins, emotional and environmental isolation, supernatural forces, and punishing madness. In this class, we will listen to the stories that the ghosts of the American South have told, and still tell today.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**Equated Courses:** ENG-250

### BLS-280 Special Topics

The objective of this class is to develop the student's ability to think interdisciplinarily. Through the analysis of a particular theme, topic, cultural expression, or political movement, students will gain a greater understanding of Black Studies scholarship and methodology/ies. Since the content of this course varies from year to year, it may be repeated for credit upon the instructor's approval. Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:**

**BLS-281 African American History**

Emphasis on several crucial periods: slavery; Reconstruction and its aftermath; the civil rights and Black liberation movements of the 1960s; and contemporary African American culture. Relations between Blacks and Whites will be examined through the reading and discussion of classic African American texts by Douglass, Jacobs, Washington, DuBois, Wright, Angelou, Moody, Walker, Malcolm X, King, Baldwin, Gates, and others.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** , History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** HIS-244

**BLS-282 Africa Since 1885**

Emphasis on several crucial periods: slavery; Reconstruction and its aftermath; the civil rights and Black liberation movements of the 1960s; and contemporary African American culture. Relations between Blacks and Whites will be examined through the reading and discussion of classic African American texts by Douglass, Jacobs, Washington, DuBois, Wright, Angelou, Moody, Walker, Malcolm X, King, Baldwin, Gates, and others.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion, Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity

**Equated Courses:** HIS-272

**BLS-283 Philosophy of Race**

This course covers the history of the development of the concept of race, the metaphysical framework for thinking about the "reality" of race, the various ways to consider the meaning of race, and the relation between the meaning of race and the experience of racism. Questions about how difference and equality function in the law and the application of the law, concepts of white privilege and community investment in racial distinctions, intersectional analyses that think race together with gender, class and sexuality and the concept of race in colonial and post-colonial settings are likely topics. Meets the Diversity Requirement for the PPE major.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion, , Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity

**Equated Courses:** PHI-217

**BLS-284 Politics of the Civil Rights Movement**

This course offers an in-depth look at the African American civil rights movement and its significance to the political development of the United States. Topics will include the organizations and campaigns that comprised this historic social movement; the mobilization and experiences of individual civil rights movement participants; the impact of the civil rights movement on public policy; and contemporary social movement efforts to mitigate racial inequality. Particular attention will be paid throughout the course to the role college students played in the civil rights movement.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Behavioral Science, Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity

**Equated Courses:** PSC-214

**BLS-287 Philosophy of Education**

This class will examine foundational questions about education (e.g., What is the nature and purpose of education?) with a particular focus upon the role of public schools in a democratic society. We will read and watch texts drawn from philosophy, as well as from literature and history, as we consider the nature of teaching and learning at the classroom level and within the broader society. Issues addressed typically include: tensions between individual students' development and the needs of the broader society; the role of the educational system in a diverse and multicultural society; the nature and goals of classroom relationship (teacher/student and student/student); and approaches to educational reform. Level: Open to any student; required of all Education Studies minors. Offered fall and spring semesters.

**Prerequisites:** ENG-101 or established proficiency

**Corequisites:** ENG-101 or established proficiency

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** EDU-201

**BLS-288 Educational Policy & Eval**

This course examines educational policy at the federal and state levels. We will explore the role of educational policy in guiding educational evaluation, with particular focus upon the use-and abuse-of statistical approaches to the evaluation of teaching and learning. After an introduction to the assumptions underlying qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs for educational research, the focus turns to the ways in which teaching and learning processes are understood and measured in public education. Standardized testing and common practices such as "quantitizing" qualitative data are examined for their assumptions and limitations in educational settings. The goal of the course is the development of quantitative skills and literacies needed for critical participation in public discussions and decision-making about these metrics as tools for diagnosis and reform in public education. In particular, students will be prepared to better evaluate political debate and news coverage related to the assessment of teaching and learning. Calculation of descriptive statistics commonly used in classroom assessments and in standardized educational measures, including those with normal and with skewed distributions, is taught using Excel. Substantial practice is devoted to representation and interpretation of quantitative data, using Excel's graphing and charting functions.

**Prerequisites:** FRT-101

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Quantitative Literacy,

**Equated Courses:** EDU-240

**BLS-289 Civic Literacy & Democracy**

This course examines the role of P12 social studies education in preparing students for participation in democracy in an increasingly diverse and global country and world. We consider what kinds of social studies content would be required to meet the needs of responsible democratic citizenship and governance today, with inquiry into selected current controversies over the teaching of social studies fields including history, geography, psychology, sociology, economics, and government. We explore the underlying social and historic forces that have led to the present moment, and consider the ways in which broader social beliefs and values may interact and conflict with approved and proposed social studies standards and content. Specific topics taught in a given year may vary, but will be drawn from current and recent events. Recent topics have included #BlackLivesMatter; Indigenous treaty rights; the role of Confederacy remembrances in the modern era; immigrant rights and exclusion policies and practices; and the content and focus of U.S. government courses in relation to ongoing questions about individual rights and freedoms that derive from the 1st and 2nd Amendments.

**Prerequisites:** Take ENG-101

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** History/Philosophy/Religion

**Equated Courses:** EDU-250

**BLS-300 Special Topics in Black Studies**

Since the content of this course varies from semester to semester, it may be repeated for credit upon the instructor's approval. Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**BLS-303 Diversity and Multicultural Education**

This course introduces students to a sociological study of diversity in the U.S. system of public education, with particular attention to schools as sites of social conservation and reproduction. Readings, discussions, and written assignments explore the ways in which opportunity and (in)equality that exist in the wider society are reflected and perpetuated by typical approaches in U.S. schools. These explorations of challenges for schools are accompanied by an examination of multicultural and inclusive curricula and instructional practices. We consider the theoretical underpinnings of multicultural education as well as examples of curricula and practices designed to ameliorate education inequities. Meets the Diversity Requirement for the PPE major.

**Prerequisites:** EDU-201 (recommended)

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Behavioral Science,

**Equated Courses:** EDU-303

**BLS-370 Independent Study in Black Studies**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a faculty member before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** Take BLS-201;

**Credit:** 1

**BLS-387 Independent Study in Black Studies**

This course will allow students to engage in individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a faculty member before registering for the course

**Prerequisites:** Take BLS-201;

**Credit:** 1

**BLS-388 Independent Study in Black Studies**

This course will allow students to engage in individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a faculty member and the Chair of the Department before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** Take BLS-201;

**Credit:** 1

**BLS-400 Independent Study**

This course will allow students to engage in individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a faculty member and the Chair of the Department before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**BLS-401 Capstone Seminar**

Students will demonstrate facility with Black Studies methods and familiarity with Black Studies sources by preparing a substantial and original work of research and analysis and by giving a public presentation of their work (which might include a conference presentation).

**Prerequisites:** BLS-201

**Credit:** 1

The Black Studies minor is administered through a steering committee comprised of Affiliated Faculty and chaired by the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS) Faculty Coordinator.

Timothy Lake, English

Richard Warner, History

Jamal Watson, Black Studies

Julian Whitney, English, chair