

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A COURSE IN THE
GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:
EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: __AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES__ COLLEGE: __ARTS AND SCIENCES__

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1. Subject Code, Number, and Title: AAS 101 Introduction to African American Studies

2. Credit Hours 3

3. Course Description

An introductory examination of the African American experience. Acquaints students with the trends, issues and forces that have shaped that experience; considers the concepts of cultural adaptation, institutional development, and group self-definition; and surveys the contemporary status and condition of African Americans.

4. This course is (check one):

an existing course with no revisions (need not go through the input system)

an existing course with revisions (attach this form to Request for Course Revision form)

a new course (attach this form to Request for New Course form)

5. Check the General Education requirement this course is intended to meet. If the course is to be proposed for more than one requirement, submit a separate form for each one.

Effective Communication

Quantitative Reasoning (*QR designation*)

Writing Intensive (*WI designation*)

Perspectives on a Diverse World

Global Awareness

U.S. Diversity

Knowledge of the Disciplines

Arts

Humanities

Science Social Science **Learning Beyond the Classroom (*LBC designation*)** Self and Well Being Community Service, Citizenship, and Leadership Cultural and Academic Activities and Events Career and Professional Development International and Multicultural Experience Undergraduate Research

6. Rationale. Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free explanation of why this is a General Education course and how it fits into this specific area of the program. (The rationale should explain to students why they are taking the course. It should address both why it is part of the General Education program and why it fits into the particular category.) This rationale should appear on the general course syllabus provided here and should be included in specific course syllabi given to students. Note: *The Writing-Intensive courses are designed to provide students with the opportunity to continue to develop their writing through engagement with disciplinary strategies and conventions. Those proposing a WI course should explain in the rationale how and why the course is a writing-intensive course.*

AAS 101 meets the requirements for a course on U.S. diversity because it surveys the origins, development, and current status of African Americans from the perspective of a discipline that places this group at the center of its inquiry. A historically underrepresented and oppressed group, African Americans constitute one of the largest minorities in the U.S. This group has been essential to the formation and character of U.S. society from its inception to the present. The struggle by African Americans for equality and human dignity and their contributions to U.S. and world cultures reveal much about the role and significance of diversity in American society. The course examines the interactions of African Americans with U.S. immigrant groups and with Native peoples. Cultural, economic, gender, religious, racial, and class factors in oppression are of particular concern.

7. Clearly and concisely explain how this course meets each of the General Education outcomes for the requirement checked in number five (all outcomes should be addressed). To do this, (a) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the course meets each outcome; and (b) explain, in general terms, the method(s) of evaluation to be used in the course and how these methods assess the degree to which students have met the General Education outcomes for this requirement.

Outcomes:

In the U.S. Diversity course, students will...

- Examine the complexity of their own cultural identities and how these relate to the cultural identities of others in the U.S.

- A. This survey course includes a broad investigation of the global processes that led to chattel slavery and other forms of racial oppression in the U.S. and their impact on the destruction of identity and culture among people of African descent. For example, the course probes the impact of the slave experience on African religious beliefs and practices, language, expressive culture, family structure and function, and so on. The course brings to light the sweeping dimensions of the African American struggle to reconstruct culture, identity, and human dignity. It looks closely at the role of African Americans in the formation of the American experience and the issue of what it means to be an American. Throughout, the course reveals how human groups draw upon the complexities of race, religion, national origin, gender, and class to develop a sense of self and to understand others. As a consequence, students will have the opportunity to probe the basis of their own cultural identities through a close and critical examination of the experiences of this group. Throughout, the experiences of African Americans are contrasted with or discussed in their relationship to various Native peoples in the Americas and to U.S. immigrant groups.

Students learn about cultural identity through lectures, discussion, and reading and writing assignments. For example, lectures will specifically address the issue of how people develop a collective sense of self through language, religion, national origin, tribal affiliation, racial designation, social heritage, material culture, cognitive culture, behavioral culture, and the like. The instructor engages students in multiple discussions regarding how students perceive and define themselves and their own culture in relationship to others who might exist outside of their own racial/cultural group. Lectures specifically examine variations in how the cultural identities of European ethnic groups, African ethnic groups, and Native American ethnic groups were sustained or altered in the context of an evolving United States culture. Readings from the texts (e.g. *The Slave Community*) specifically examine processes related to acculturation that occurred between European, African, and Native American groups. We explore how these processes contributed to the reformulation of cultural identities among all three groups. The text also examines the role of oppression (chattel slavery) in the reconstruction of cultural identity under three religious contexts, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam. Subsequent reading (e.g. *The Atlas of African American History*) engages students in the reality of an increasingly multicultural Black population and increasingly diverse ethnic-religious Asian, Latino, and Middle-Eastern populations based on current immigration trends. Additional reading that students select also requires that students investigate the complexities of their own cultural identities in relationship to the cultural identities of others in the U.S.

- B. This outcome will be assessed through two exams and a book review. The exams consist of a minimum of 100 questions each.

Examples of two related exam questions are: Which of the following speaks specifically to the survival of elements of an African cultural identity in the United States? a) Bakongo cross; b) ring shout; c) call and response; d) a and b; e) all of the above. At the time of its formation, the U.S. Constitution explicitly preserved _____ for European immigrant groups but not for Native peoples or Africans: a) women's rights; b) freedom of religion, c) social-economic equality; d) a, b, and c; e) none of the above.

The book review requires that students select, read, and review a text that explains some aspect of African American cultural identity while making comparisons to factors affecting the cultural identity of another United States racial/ethnic group. The instructor will provide guidance on how to locate these studies. An example of such a text is *There Goes the Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America* by William J.

Wilson and Richard P. Taub. Students must, in their assessment of the text, address how the study they selected relates to their understanding of their own cultural identity.

- Explore the causes and consequences of social intolerance in the U.S.
 - A. Through the study of the African American experience, this course widely probes the origins and effects in the U.S. of racial oppression. It examines chattel slavery, peonage, legalized and de facto segregation, diverse forms of institutionalized inequality, and racially motivated discrimination, prejudice, bigotry and violence. This course also investigates the various social, economic, political, and cultural responses by African Americans to systemic disruptions to progressive institution and culture building. Social intolerance and oppression experienced by Native peoples and selected immigrant groups serve as important bases of comparison.

For example, lectures, assigned readings, and documentaries teach students how the enslavement of African peoples and the colonization of Africa contributed to institutional forms of intellectual racism regarding the mental capacities of peoples of African descent. Students also learn by viewing documentaries on the origins and character of slavery in the Americas and the U.S., the colonization of Africa, the origins of the anti-lynching movement, the origins and character of the Black women's movement (beginning with the Black women's club movement), the origins and character of racial stereotyping in U.S. popular culture, and the origins and character of the modern Civil Rights movement. Lectures and readings also probe current challenges facing historically oppressed U.S. groups in light of globalization and deindustrialization.

- B. This outcome will be assessed via two exams of at least one hundred questions each. An example of a related exam question is: Slavery in the Caribbean first became focused on African peoples during what time period? a) 1415; b) 1441; c) 1619; d) 1860-1865; e) none of the above. Another example is: The modern Civil Rights movement was stimulated by: a) World War II; b) the Emmett Till case; c) Brown vs. Board of Education; d) the Montgomery bus boycott; e) all of the above.
- Examines the difference between social intolerance and institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion in the U.S.
 - A. The various themes and analyses presented in this course require that students learn to differentiate between individual acts of racial prejudice and discrimination, ethnocentrism or cultural bias, legal forms of inequality promoting exclusion, and other forms of inequality that are rooted in the way existing institutions are configured. Students learn about these concepts through lecture-discussion, readings, documentaries, and assigned readings. Lectures, for example define and give specific examples of how people tend to interpret others from their own cultural frame of reference, develop prejudicial attitudes and beliefs that lead to intolerance, practice various forms of discrimination, construct legal forms of exclusion, and develop and preserve institutional inequalities. These issues will be applied in the investigation of slavery, lynching, peonage, legalized and de facto segregation, the creation of ghettos, housing discrimination, job discrimination, intellectual racism, sexism, religious intolerance, tendencies to exclude and distort the history and culture of underrepresented and historically oppressed minorities, and so on.
 - B. This outcome will be assessed via two exams of at least one hundred questions each and a writing assignment. An example of a related exam question is: Which of the following is an example of institutionalized racism? a) changing your seat because the person sitting next to you is of a different race; b) the belief that your religion is superior to all others; c) enacting laws that separate people by

race in order to maintain racial inequality; d) persistent social arrangements that prevent specific racial groups from teaching and learning about their history and culture; e) c and d.

Through the second writing assignment the instructor will assess how well students comprehend various forms of social intolerance, institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion. For this writing assignment students will select a scholarly article from a journal in the field of African American studies. This research-based article must examine some form of social intolerance, institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, or exclusionary practice. In their assessment, students must explain how the problem addressed in the article is different from a form of inequality or prejudicial or discriminatory behavior not addressed by the article, but discussed in class.

- Explore how diversity has affected and continues to affect income distribution, economic mobility, political access, and the democratic process in the U.S.
 - A. Lectures, assigned readings, and documentaries teach students about issues that reveal the impact of historic and contemporary inequalities on the current status of African Americans. Analyses and discussions of workforce participation, income and wealth distribution, family structure and function, political participation, health status, business ownership, access to education, media images, and the like are examples of such issues. The course makes comparisons to other racial-ethnic groups and investigates gender variations.
 - B. This outcome will be assessed via two exams of at least one hundred questions each. Several examples of related exam questions are: The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850: a) eliminated jury trials for African Americans accused of being escaped slaves; b) provided financial incentives to convict alleged escaped slaves; c) provided fines or other penalties for citizens or government officials who impeded the capture of alleged escaped slaves, d) established that enslaved Africans would be counted as three-fifths human for purposes of taxation and representation; e) a, b, and c. African Americans a) earn 62-65 cents for every dollar earned by White Americans; b) control at least eleven times less wealth than White Americans; c) have reached income parity with White Americans as a result of Affirmative Action; d) a and b ; e) are represented in mainstream colleges and universities in proportion to their numbers in the population. Deindustrialization a) has contributed to the increased incarceration of African Americans in the US; b) negatively affects manufacturing jobs in the US; c) only affects the employment of African Americans; d) is connected structurally to the problems of surplus labor and overproduction; e) a, b, and d. What factors contributed to racial ghettos: a) restrictive covenants, b) police brutality, c) government mortgage lending practices, d) private mortgage lending practices; e) all of the above.
- Develop an awareness of alternative values, views, and communication styles in the U.S.
 - A. Through lectures, documentaries, and assigned readings students probe the origins and diversity of African American expressive culture (music; plastic, visual, and literary arts; language; cuisine; dress; religious expression; etc.), including their social foundations, underlying values and perspectives, and distinctive modes of communication, expression, and dissemination. They also investigate elements of African American political culture, including its philosophies, perspectives, and values. These values, views, and communication styles are compared and contrasted with dominant culture traditions and practices and the experiences of other underrepresented and historically oppressed minorities. Included is an examination of the integration of African American expressive culture in mainstream U.S. culture. Students develop this awareness through lecture-

discussion, assigned readings, and documentaries. For example, through lectures the instructor probes the role of perspective, historiography, power, and legitimacy in the development and content of African American studies as a discipline relative to traditional academic disciplines.

- B. This outcome will be assessed through two exams of at least one hundred questions each. An example of a related exam question is: Ebonic speakers typically: a) eliminate the verb “to be” if they do not wish to show habitual action in their verbal communication; b) use been and done to indicate completed action in the remote past; c) eliminate the “s” for verbs used in the third-person singular; d) all of the above; e) a and b only. African American inspired music and dance forms embody different views regarding a) sexuality; b) religion; c) rhythm and sound; d) audience participation; e) all of the above. Booker T. Washington is most associated with the political philosophy of: a) Pan-Africanism; b) Marxism; c) emigrationism; d) accommodationism; e) Black Power. The idea of the New Negro is most associated with a) Harlem Renaissance; b) Garveyism; c) the modern Civil Rights movement, d) the Black Arts movement; e) none of the above.

Evaluation

All faculty members in African American studies will teach this course. Each faculty member will bring his/her perspective, plan, and style to convey course content and to evaluate students. However, instructors will use multiple indicators to assess how well students meet the General Education outcomes for the course. Objective exams, essay exams, research papers, book reviews, and journal reviews are examples.

- 8. Attach a syllabus (1-inch margins and 10-12 pt. font). The syllabus must include the rationale from #6 above and clearly reflect the outcomes and methods of evaluation detailed in #7 above.

Please submit all materials in electronic form.

Action of the Department/College

1. Department

Vote of department faculty: For _____ Against _____ Abstentions _____

Department Head _____
Date

2. College

College Dean _____
Date

Action of General Education Advisory Committee

Vote of General Education Committee: For _____ Against _____ Abstentions _____

Chairperson, General Education Advisory Committee _____
Date

Approval

Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies and Curriculum

Date