

Master of Arts in African and African-American Studies

The Department of African and African-American Studies offers interdisciplinary substantive and language courses leading to the Master of Arts degree. The degree has two related objectives: (1) it fulfills the educational needs of persons who seek positions with organizations in both the public and private sectors, and (2) it prepares persons who desire to pursue the terminal degrees in their field. The program emphasizes the broader concepts in the humanities and the social sciences.

The integrative focus of the curriculum is an important characteristic of the interdisciplinary nature of this program. In this regard, the candidate should develop the capacity to continue as a self-educator throughout their career. Broad background study in this field enables the graduate to assimilate newly-acquired skills and methodologies quickly. Graduates should be prepared to cope with the rapid changes in Africa and the African diaspora. The program places considerable emphasis on both the internal and external forces which affect African and African-American societies. The continuity and change in Africa and their impact on world civilizations are emphasized in both the required courses and through electives.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Admission to the M.A. Program

Prospective students are admitted to the M.A. program for the fall or spring semester.

- Application deadline for fall admission: **May 1**. For first consideration of funding, it is highly encouraged to apply by **January 5**.
- Application deadline for spring admission: **October 1**

Deadlines will be extended to the following business day if they fall on a weekend or holiday.

Application Requirements

- A copy or scan of official transcripts (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/#section366>) from each college and post-secondary institution you have attended. Copies of official transcripts should be uploaded

directly to the online application. If admitted, applicants will be required to submit official, sealed transcripts directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions within the first semester of enrollment.

- Statement of Purpose: A professional narrative explaining your background, academic interests, and reason for applying to the M.A. program in African and African-American Studies at KU. Please indicate the faculty member(s) (<https://afs.ku.edu/faculty/>) with whom you would like to work in your statement. (maximum 3 pages double-spaced)
- A resume or curriculum vitae listing your education, employment history, volunteer experience, internships, scholarships/fellowships, academic awards, knowledge of foreign languages, and any other relevant information
- Three letters of recommendation from qualified individuals, preferring most recent professors
- A sample of your writing or creative work that could be an academic paper or a combination of written work and a portfolio of creative work (maximum 15 pages)

Eligibility criteria for admission to the M.A. program follow Graduate Studies' admission policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>).

M.A. Degree Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
Core courses		
AAAS 801	Introduction to Africana Studies: African-American	3
AAAS 802	Introduction to Africana Studies: African	3
AAAS 803	Research Methods in Africana Studies	3
AAAS 804	Seminar in Africana Studies	3
Electives		15
Students select 5 elective courses from the below list in consultation with their faculty advisor and/or Director of Graduate Studies. Students can take up to 6 credit hours outside the department in related course offerings with DGS approval. The student must incorporate their research skill, outlined below, into their electives.		
Thesis Hours or Critical Creative Project Electives		6
Thesis Option: The student will enroll in 6 hours of AAAS 899 to develop a high quality thesis that meets the standards of a strong academic work.		
AAAS 899	Master's Thesis	
OR		
Critical Creative Project Option: If this option is chosen, the student will select 2 additional elective courses per the above guidance. The critical creative project is a high quality creative project containing 2 pieces of work including, but not limited to, research papers, creative/artistic works, exhibitions, and digital humanities projects. The critical creative project must meet the standards of a strong academic work.		
Total Hours		33

Research Skills

Students will fulfill a research skills requirement in accordance with their research interests. Language/research skills courses must be taken at the 500 level or above to count toward the 33 hours required for the degree.

- Students conducting research in African studies must obtain proficiency in an African language. Proficiency may be fulfilled by 1 of the following:

- Completing 2 years of college-level language study at KU, at an equivalent institution, or through an intensive course. Language courses offered on a regular basis at KU that count toward proficiency are Arabic, KiSwahili, Wolof, Yoruba and any one of the number of African languages for which the Kansas African Studies Center has pedagogical materials and proficiency-testing capabilities.
 - The equivalent of 2 years of an approved language.
 - Proof that the student is a native speaker of an African language.
2. Students conducting research in African-American studies must:
- Fulfill the African language requirement outlined above, or
 - Fulfill Haitian Creole or any other non-African language requirement employing standards comparable to those governing the African language requirement outlined above, or
 - Demonstrate competence in a research skill relevant to the student's specific area of research. Competence in a research skill is certified by the department's Director of Graduate Studies.

In consultation with their advisors and to the satisfaction of the department, students must demonstrate that their choice of a language or research skill is appropriate for their specific research interest.

Thesis or Critical Creative Project Oral Defense

A final oral defense of the thesis or creative critical project is required. The defense includes questions about the thesis or project topic, argument, methodology, as well as questions that discuss the topics within large contexts of the field. After the defense, the committee will deliberate regarding the outcome (satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

Course Level Requirement

Students pursuing an M.A. in African & African-American Studies must take 50% or more of their coursework at the 700 level or above.

Handbook and Graduate Policy

Additional information can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook (<https://afs.ku.edu/graduate-student-handbook/>). Students are encouraged to review Graduate Studies' policies (<https://ogs.ku.edu/policies/>) related to master's programs for information about other requirements that may apply.

Code	Title	Hours
AAAS M.A. Elective Course Options		
AAAS 502	Directed Language Study: _____	5
AAAS 503	Directed Language Study: _____	3
AAAS 504	Directed Language Study I: _____	3
AAAS 505	Directed Language Study II: _____	3
AAAS 511	The Civil Rights Movement	3
AAAS 518	Capitalism and the Black Experience	3
AAAS 520	African Studies in: _____	3
AAAS 523	African-American Studies in: _____	3
AAAS 534	The Rhetoric of Black Americans	3
AAAS 543	Language and Culture in Arabic-Speaking Communities	3
AAAS 550	Senior Seminar in: _____	3
AAAS 555	African Film	3
AAAS 561	Liberation in Southern Africa	3

AAAS 565	Gender, Culture, and Migration	3
AAAS 574	Slavery in the New World	3
AAAS 583	Migration, Diasporas and Development	3
AAAS 584	Black American Literature	3
AAAS 598	Sexuality and Gender in African History	3
AAAS 600	Politics in Africa	3
AAAS 630	The Life and Intellectual Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois	3
AAAS 657	Women and Gender in Islam	3
AAAS 690	Investigation and Conference	1-3
AAAS 695	Honors Project in: _____	3
AAAS 701	Politics in Africa	3
AAAS 716	Women in Islam	3
AAAS 720	Intercultural Communication: The Afro-American	3
AAAS 723	Special Topics in Africana Studies: _____	3
AAAS 727	African-American Culture	3
AAAS 730	Black Leadership	3
AAAS 731	African Literature	3
AAAS 732	Francophone African Literature	3
AAAS 733	Islamic Literature	3
AAAS 749	Islam	3
AAAS 760	Topics and Problems in African and African-American Studies	3
AAAS 770	Language and Society in Africa	3
AAAS 780	African Art and Gender	3
AAAS 788	The Black Woman	3
AAAS 811	The Civil Rights Movement	3
AAAS 830	The Life and Times of W.E.B. Du Bois	3
AAAS 834	The Rhetoric of Black Americans	3
AAAS 843	Language and Culture in Arabic-Speaking Communities	3
AAAS 855	African Film and Video	3
AAAS 874	Slavery in the New World	3
AAAS 884	Black American Literature	3
AAAS 885	Race and the American Theatre	3
AAAS 898	Sexuality and Gender in African History	3

Plan of Study

Students are expected to discuss their plans of study with the graduate advisor. The information that follows is only a guide toward that discussion, using fall admission as an example:

Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours	Semester	Hours
1	2	3	4				
AAAS 801 (required)	3	AAAS 802 (required)	3	AAAS 803 (required)	3	AAAS 804 (required)	3
2 electives	6	2 electives	6	1 elective	3	6 thesis hours or 2 elective courses for non-thesis option	6

Demonstrate research skill competence or begin work toward it	Demonstrate research skill competence or continue work toward it	Demonstrate research skill competence or continue work toward it	Demonstrate meeting research skill competence requirement
9	9	6	9

Total Hours 33

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of relevant knowledge in the fields of Africana Studies and Black Studies. This mastery can encompass related fields of Arab Studies and Islamic Studies.
- Articulate an understanding of the nexus of the African continent and African Diasporas and their interconnections with US and global histories, cultures, and socioeconomic systems.
- Understand the development of Africana Studies and academic activism and critique dominant Eurocentric paradigms.
- Apply interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods and approaches related to Africana Studies.
- Engage with communities of the African diaspora through research, service learning, community action, or a dialogue on a relevant topic in the field.
- Produce a significant thesis or critical creative project.