

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES, B.A.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

This major helps students achieve a critical understanding of the forms of knowledge, culture, and social organization that African-Americans have produced, and of the social conditions that have supported and constrained this work. Using interdisciplinary approaches as well as methods drawn from the traditional disciplines, the major exposes students to the ideas, institutions, movements, and practices that African-American peoples have used to survive and shape the modern world. The African American Studies curriculum promotes the critical faculties, cultural competencies, and historical sensibilities of its students, and thereby equips them for success in graduate school, professional school, and the workplace.

What is African American Studies?

African American Studies is an intellectual field of inquiry that examines the history of people of African descent from the colonial period through the present; how systems of racial inequality are produced through state policy, traditional western scholarly disciplines, and popular discourse; and the social, political and cultural movements that black people have developed to identify and resist the unequal material and political conditions that shape black social life in the African Diaspora. The undergraduate major and minor provide a strong foundation in the key theoretical concepts in the discipline, the historical formation of African American Studies as an interdisciplinary field of study, and prepares students to apply what they have learned in the classroom, in independent research and in internships with social justice/service organizations.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are passionate about learning more about the history, cultures, and political struggles of people of African-descent in the West.
- You are interested in understanding how racism operates structurally and shapes the social experiences and life chances of black communities.
- You want to study social, cultural, and political movements throughout the African Diaspora.
- You are interested in pursuing independent research or internships with non-profit, research, and community-based organizations committed to racial equity and social justice.