

AS.362 (CENTER FOR AFRICANA STUDIES)

Courses

AS.362.102. Anti-Racism 101. 3 Credits.

What is Anti-Racism? How do we identify racism's presence and effects, and how do we direct social and civic resources to end it? In this Freshman Seminar, students will learn from a series of faculty experts and invited guests about the history, workings, and legacies of racism. They'll also study present-day and past approaches – attempted and theorized – to abolish racism in the modern world.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.111. Introduction to African American Studies. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of African American Studies, with attention to the literature, film, culture, history, and politics of black life in the United States. Our reading list will likely include texts by David Walker, Frederick Douglass, Frances E.W. Harper, Sutton Griggs, W.E.B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Toni Morrison, and others.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.112. Introduction to Africana Studies. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to the field of Africana Studies. It focuses on the historical experience, intellectual ideas, theories, and cultural production of African-descended people. We will consider how people of the black diaspora remember and encounter Africa.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.115. Introduction to Police and Prisons. 3 Credits.

This introductory course will examine policing and prisons in the United States and beyond, with a focus on racial inequality. It will consist of three parts. First, we will define key concepts in police and prison studies. Then, we will explore the contemporary state of prisons and policing in the United States and look at debates around the rise of "mass incarceration" and aggressive forms of policing in the final third of the 20th century. Third, we will explore policing and prison in other parts of the globe in the contemporary moment, highlighting similarities and differences from the U.S. case. What can studying the instruments of social control in other societies reveal about our own? Students will develop an understanding of major trends, keywords, and debates in the literature on policing and prisons, with particular reference to race and racism.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.119. Abolition and the University. 3 Credits.

This course explores "critical university studies" through the lens of abolitionist thought, from W.E.B. DuBois to Ruth Wilson Gilmore. It historicizes universities' growth within U.S. cities during the twentieth century.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
Writing Intensive

AS.362.128. Black Women Artists, Social Change and Baltimore. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to a history of social change in Baltimore centered on Black women artists. Students will learn and apply archival and oral history methods as they learn about local movements.

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.140. Blackstorytelling: Public Health in the Black World. 3 Credits.

What about performance offers a unique opportunity to learn from and with communities? How might dramatic performance be used to share information while learning from an audience? This course examines the work and research of young artists from Liberia, West Africa who used street theatre to teach best practices for prevention during the Ebola crisis and considers how their use of dialogical performance contributed to critical knowledge which iteratively informed interventions throughout their awareness campaign. This community engaged course connects public health education efforts in Africa to community health education in Baltimore through the Blackstorytelling tradition with local expert Janice the Griot. Course co-educator and artist Janice the Griot Green will share her firsthand experiences and guide the class through the principles of Blackstorytelling for community change. Students will design public performance projects around local-global community-based concerns using the tools they have learned. In partnership with the Great National Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, students will develop performance-based public health messaging drawing on their collection to support community outreach curricular materials development. This performance work will be created collaboratively in workshops during class and in team meetings. Public health researchers who are looking for innovative ways to share their data will gain insights into this experimental ethnographic method and practitioners who want to offer their communities ways to connect best practices to lived experience will develop new pedagogical tools. This is a Community Engagement course in partnership with the Center for Social Concern.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.200. Translating the Haitian Revolution: Resurrecting Literature. 3 Credits.

This course will examine the lasting aesthetic impact of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) on Black fiction writers and playwrights, with an emphasis on issues related to culture wars, imaginary marronage, colonial language, slave memory, literary violence & trauma, sexual politics, beliefs, and the African diaspora.

Distribution Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.201. African American Poetry and Poetics. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will follow the development of black poetry primarily as it has evolved in the United States. Beginning with the first published African American writers of the eighteenth century and ending with several important poets writing and performing today, we will consider the shape of the African American poetic tradition as commonly anthologized and as defined by our own theoretically-informed readings of the assigned literature. Attention will be given to both canonical and neglected literary movements and groups. Readings will include poetry and essays by Frances E.W. Harper, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Amiri Baraka, Harryette Mullen, Tracie Morris, and others.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.203. Fight the Powers that Be: Black Music and Film in the 20th Century. 3 Credits.

Focusing specifically on the representation of Black music in U.S feature films from 1900-2000, this course explores the ways in which race and power are negotiated in two interconnected spaces – behind the camera and within the narrative of the film. This seminar introduces participants to film analysis as well as an overview of several Black music genres. Assignments will include weekly responses as well as a final creative project.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.204. Anti-Black Racism and Black Freedom Struggles: History, Theory, and Culture. 3 Credits.

In Anti-Black Racism and Black Freedom Struggles: History, Theory, and Culture, students will learn about key historical, intellectual, and political aspects of white supremacy as a system or racial domination, and anti-black racism as a central feature of that global system. This class will explore the historical forms that white supremacy has taken—from colonialism and plantation slavery to Jim Crow, gentrification, and mass incarceration—racial ideologies, and how modern political systems have hinged on racial oppression. Most important, we will explore how black people have responded to the structures and ideologies of white supremacy, their thinking about freedom, being, and rights, and their efforts to fit into the worlds in which they found themselves, to improve those societies, and those projects that sought radical alternatives to the an anti-black world.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.211. Rastafari: From Marcus to Marley. 1 Credit.

This summer institute is a week long opportunity that takes place abroad with a theme focused on the healing arts. Grounding this theme is the pursuit of reparatory justice in the Rastafari faith. The summer school will integrate learning activities with existing community projects, for instance, the School of Vision and Rastafari Indigenous Village. Students will study Rastafari as an African-centered ethos, inclusive of culture and economic sustainability.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.216. The Politics of Black Cultural Production. 3 Credits.

Rather than being a niched form of popular culture, black music, films, and art has in some ways become synonymous with American culture. These productions and the workers associated with them have been used to sell everything from life insurance to computer chips. But accompanying these cultural productions are a whole host of questions regarding racial authenticity, the reproduction of urban space, and various gender/class dynamics, that have gone relatively understudied. In this class we will seek to trace the politics of the production, circulation, and consumption of black cultural production.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.219. Black Movements in America. 3 Credits.

This course explores Black social movements in the United States to better understand social inequality, social structures, oppression, agency, and power across time and space.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.305. Nope. Black Resistance in Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.

What role does resistance play in black political thought and action? How do black concepts of resistance shape broader political processes? How are these concepts essential in understanding political development past and present?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.309. Performing the Archive 2022: 200 Years of US-Liberia Migration. 3 Credits.

This seminar will explore some of the pivotal historical and contemporary connections between the US and Liberia since the first Black American settlers arrived in West Africa with the American Colonization Society in 1822. This course asks: What are implications of these stories of migration and reception for how we make sense of global anti-Blackness in the contemporary moment? How does performance provoke new questions about shared histories of those impacted by colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade? Why is a more in-depth understanding of 19th century Black political thought and the precolonial West African indigenous category necessary for developing theory on the political economy of race today? Through the lens of performance studies, students will analyze the documents in the American Colonization Society archive, to reimagine these early encounters as informed by historical documentation including folklore and pan-Africanist theory. Through exploring a range of historical and contemporary materials that center the problematic "indigenous/settler" binary, students will engage in a dramaturgical process which presents powerful possibilities for unlearning historical misrepresentations. In particular, students will develop theater-based projects that interrogate the spatio-temporal connections between the stories of both, free Blacks and those who were enslaved in Maryland and manumitted to go to Liberia, and the contemporary politics of Liberia-US migration.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.362.311. Black Utopias. 3 Credits.

In this course, we will read literary and historical texts that present visions of black utopia. Authors include "Ethiop" (William J. Wilson), Marcus Garvey, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and others.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.315. Black Against Empire. 3 Credits.

This course will examine the confrontation of Black social movements with imperialism in the twentieth century. How, we will ask, have key Black internationalist thinkers conceptualized and defined diaspora, capitalism, imperialism, war, and the global? What have been the effects of war and repression, as well as economic growth and globalization, on Black internationalism? Readings may include texts by W.E.B. Du Bois, Angela Y. Davis, Frantz Fanon, Ashley Farmer, Claudia Jones, Robin D.G. Kelley, Claude McKay, Huey P. Newton, Walter Rodney, Malcolm X, etc. Students will complete a research paper on a topic of their own choosing related to Black internationalism in the twentieth century.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.318. Liberation in the African Diaspora. 3 Credits.

This course explores the historical, theoretical, and political question of liberation in the African diaspora from the period of enslavement up to the current era. We will consider three major themes: enslavement, marronage, and freedom; Pan-Africanism and anti-colonialism; Black Power and national liberation. We will examine how African peoples conceptualized freedom and liberation in each period, the major organizations and intellectuals who framed them, and how popular activity developed and informed all three (ideas, organizations, and intellectuals). Some of the questions taken up include: How did enslaved Africans conceptualize freedom? Did their ideas and activities merely extend western notions of liberty and freedom, or did they develop distinct conceptions of freedom, rights, and humanity? Why, in the early Twentieth Century, did African peoples around the world pursue pan-Africanism as a political philosophy? How do class, nationality, gender, and sexuality inform such movements? Did national liberation struggles from the 1950s through the 1970s in Africa and the Caribbean bring about fundamental changes to those societies or merely replicate colonial regimes? What connections existed between national liberation movements in Africa and the Caribbean, and Civil Rights and Black Power in the United States and England?

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

AS.362.325. Humanities Research Lab: The Military-Industrial Complex in Maryland, D.C., and Virginia. 3 Credits.

Washington, DC, is the capital of the United States but also the capital of its post-World War II national security state and military-industrial complex. This course will investigate the local effects of this status on the Washington-Baltimore corridor, in terms of immigration and urban development. The course will be divided into three major sections. First, we will analyze the growth and development of the military-industrial complex. Second, we will look at its place in the city and region's development, including the construction of the Pentagon, Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and other institutions. Third, we will analyze how these institutions have driven changes in the region's population, as immigrants from war-torn parts of the globe have found new homes in and near Washington, DC. This course requires at least four Friday group trips to 555 Penn in Washington, which will take most of the day (transportation provided).

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)
EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)
Writing Intensive

AS.362.326. Nothing About Us, Without Us: Storytelling as a Method for Community Organizing. 3 Credits.

This course offers a hands-on opportunity for students to develop new skills as community organizers by learning from the best teachers possible: residents who have been serving their neighborhoods and building grassroots power in Southwest Baltimore since the 1990s. As a community-based learning course with the Center for Social Concern, and co-taught by professors, archivists, cultural curators, and longtime residents, including the founder of Fayette Street Outreach, Ms. Edna Manns Lake, this course will leverage the narrative power of storytelling to help rewrite a multigenerational history of community organizing in a part of the city long neglected by local government and threatened historically by open-air drug markets, rampant criminalization, and predatory housing speculators. Through community immersion, including story circles, oral histories, community archiving, local meetings, and guest presentations, students will learn how to navigate, identify, and build upon existing neighborhood assets. Students will then collaborate with a community partner to co-design and complete a neighborhood project by the end of the semester. Dispelling myths, learning truths, documenting history, and honoring decades of struggle in the face of massive odds, students will help re-write the narrative of Southwest Baltimore, centering humanity and resilience among resident-activists who stayed and fought for their community.

AS.362.335. Unlocking Knowledge: Theorizing Prison from the Inside. 3 Credits.

What can we learn about mass incarceration, and social life in the USA more broadly, when we listen to incarcerated people themselves? This course centers the voices, experiences, and expertise of the incarcerated and will combine scholarly readings on life inside prisons with a range of writings by incarcerated people. Topics of discussion may include censorship, rehabilitation, Covid-19, solitary confinement, sexuality, racism, etc. Students will learn to probe primary-source collections to amplify silenced and overlooked voices, while completing a multi-stage research project. Prior course experience on mass incarceration preferred.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5), Projects and Methods (FA6)
Writing Intensive

AS.362.402. Arts and Social Justice Practicum. 3 Credits.

This course introduces students to concepts of social justice and practices of community-engaged artmaking. It also provides students an opportunity to explore the history and legacies of the Black Arts Movement, and contemporary intersections of art and social justice in Baltimore City. Local artists and scholars will share their expertise using art to challenge social injustice. In turn, students will examine their personal creative practices and how they can be used to create and advocate for change. Throughout the semester, students will develop individual art projects that respond to course topics and are rooted in the principles and process of social practice art.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

AS.362.501. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Credits.

This course is available to students who wish to pursue selected, special work that may not be included in the Center's other courses.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

AS.362.510. Senior Honors in Africana Studies I. 3 Credits.

The first semester of Senior Honors in Africana Studies, conducted as an Independent Study. Interested students should submit an application to the CAS Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

AS.362.511. Senior Honors in Africana Studies II. 3 Credits.

The second semester of Senior Honors in Africana Studies, conducted as an Independent Study. Only students who have successfully completed AS.362.510 Senior Honors In Africana Studies I will be allowed to register.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Customized Academic Learning using the Customized Academic Learning form found in Student Self-Service: Registration > Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)