

African Studies (AFRS)

AFRS 1101. Introduction to African Studies. 4 Hours.

Uses a multidisciplinary approach to offer an introduction and overview of the geographical, demographic, socioeconomic, and political conditions of the African continent, emphasizing sub-Saharan Africa. Africa, "the cradle of humankind," is a vast, complex continent of diverse peoples that has fascinated observers and evoked multiple images. Topical areas of interest range from ethnic relations, politics, colonial experience, and international relations to religion, environment, health, economic development, gender, culture, and literature. Course materials aim to provide contemporary African perspectives and analyses that offer students an opportunity to acquire and interpret broad knowledge about the continent.

AFRS 1180. African History. 4 Hours.

Explores the history of the African continent from 1000 C.E. to the present era. Topics include medieval kingdoms (Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Zimbabwe, the city-states of East Africa, and the Kongo kingdom); slave trades (Indian Ocean, trans-Saharan, and transatlantic); the partition of Africa and European colonization; and the decolonization process. Due consideration is given to the interactions of African peoples with the rest of the world, particularly the relations between Africa and Europe after 1500 C.E.

AFRS 1185. Gender in the African Diaspora. 4 Hours.

Studies variations in gender roles throughout the African Diaspora, from precolonial Africa to the modern United States. Areas of the African Diaspora include Africa, the West Indies, Latin America, Europe, and the Islamic world. Issues include sexuality, labor, reproduction, and social constructions of gender. AFRS 1185, INTL 1185, and WMNS 1185 are cross-listed.

AFRS 1270. Introduction to Global Health. 4 Hours.

Introduces global health in the context of an interdependent and globalized world focusing on four main areas of analysis: infrastructure of global health; diseases; populations; and terms, concepts, and theories. While the focus is on lower-income countries, the course examines issues in a broader global context, underscoring the interconnections between global health disparities and global health policy response. Applies case studies describing interventions to improve healthcare in resource-poor settings in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere to help illuminate the actors, diseases, populations, and principles and frameworks for the design of effective global health interventions. AFRS 1270 and PHTH 1270 are cross-listed.

AFRS 1990. Elective. 1-4 Hours.

Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

AFRS 2307. Africa Today. 4 Hours.

Offers a basic survey of the latest innovations and cultural and socioeconomic trends of 21st-century Africa. Examines the political transformations of some of the 49 Sub-Saharan African nations. Focuses on a culturally and ethnically diverse continent of five regions with linguistic and religious diversity and tribal societies reflecting an ancient triple heritage—Indigenous, Arab, and European. Presents complex and critical perspectives on topics including governance and civil strife, gender empowerment, the impact of globalization, trade and investment developments, public health challenges, the visual and performing arts, identity formation among a rising youth demographic to pervasive mobile technology, food security, and the new "African" passport.

AFRS 2414. Global Revolution. 4 Hours.

Introduces the tensions that produce conflict throughout the world and the African Diaspora and explores how social justice emerges in societies worldwide. Global unrest, street protests, and citizen activism are happening everywhere as broad political struggles that express civil discontent about social and economic inequalities and lead to crisis, conflict, revolution, and change. Globalization has affected the dynamics of power, the interdependence of nations, struggling democracies, global citizenship, and how civil society and community organizing are challenging political repression and corruption and improving the quality of life for all. Covers the Arab Spring in Africa and the Middle East, Occupy Wall Street/Occupy Together campaigns, international debates on climate change and immigration reform, and the digital age and open courseware.

AFRS 2465. The Scope and Dynamics of Conflicts in Africa. 4 Hours.

Surveys the faces, character, and manifestations of violent and nonviolent conflicts across the landscape of continental Africa. Addresses the causes/sources of conflict, types of conflicts and their impact on society, and the conflict resolution mechanisms. The contemporary history of the continent of Africa is defined most markedly by conflict that has impacted heavily on the continent's diverse multicultural societies, politics, and economies. The structure of conflicts in the continent is complex and, indeed, exhibits diverse faces; conflicts differ in their roots, causes, and explanations and between the different regions and population groups in the south, east, central, west, and north. The course critically analyzes this broad range of aspects with specific focus on sub-Saharan Africa using country- and case-based analyses and critical thinking.

AFRS 2900. Swahili, Culture, and Politics in Kenya. 4 Hours.

Introduces and immerses students in Kenyan African culture, the Swahili language and politics, and studies their impact on the everyday life of the local population. Offers students an opportunity to learn Swahili, which is the national language of Kenya; its use in a context of varied indigenous languages; and cultural dynamics. Exposes students to the major issues that characterize everyday life in rural and urban settings through visits to and stays in the rural areas and transect walks in villages and urban communities. Students visit projects run by community-based organizations, observing the everyday life of ordinary Kenyans and attending formal and informal classes and settings on Swahili language, culture, and the local politics.

AFRS 3424. Epidemiology of Pandemic Diseases and Health Disparities in the African Diaspora. 4 Hours.

Examines the epidemiology and determinants of diseases and the public health practice among continental African peoples and African-derived populations in the Americas and elsewhere in the African Diaspora. Emphasizes such epidemic diseases as malaria, yellow fever, tuberculosis, smallpox, the current AIDS pandemic, obesity, and cancer. The course also aims to critically address the breadth of factors behind these pandemics, such as socioeconomic, political, health system, behavioral, and genetic. A cross-cutting theme throughout the course is the entrenched health disparities in society.

AFRS 3460. Contemporary Government and Politics in Africa. 4 Hours.

Explores contemporary politics in African nations south of the Sahara. Studies South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia, among others. Examines apartheid, colonialism, Afro-Marxism, chieftaincy, development, and Pan-Africanism.

AFRS 3464. Natural Resources and Sustainable Development. 4 Hours.

Examines the social dimensions of resource extraction. Focusing mainly on developing nations, studies global issues, including developments in industrial nations, to assess their impact on resource extraction and living and working conditions in resource-rich regions. Uses case studies of key countries producing oil/gas, minerals, and forest/agricultural commodities to illustrate the past/current causes of resource mismanagement; their social consequences; and how public policies, legislation, and financial and human resource management with industrialization can be used to avert or reduce the adverse effects of resource extraction, especially in poor countries. Major theories examined include the resource curse and alternative approaches to problems faced by resource-bearing developing nations.

AFRS 4939. Community Health, Culture, and Development in Kenya. 4 Hours.

Introduces the community health and development arena in Kenya. Community development has been presented as the panacea to many of Africa's problems, including leadership, democracy, conflict, disease, and poverty. Through teaching, research, and action, the course seeks to expose and sensitize students to the global and local debate on poverty, primary healthcare, and community development. Offers students an opportunity to gain hands-on experiences in some of the major determinants and solutions to poverty and disease by interacting with community stakeholders and organizations in a variety of cultural, rural, and urban settings and through visits to, and participating in, projects run by community-based organizations.

AFRS 4990. Elective. 1-4 Hours.

Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

AFRS 4992. Directed Study. 1-4 Hours.

Offers independent work under the direction of members of the department on a chosen topic. Course content depends on instructor. May be repeated without limit.