

AP African American Studies

Grade 11-12
Prerequisites: none
2 semesters

Description

AP African American Studies is an interdisciplinary course that examines the diversity of African American experiences through direct encounters with varied sources. Students explore key topics that extend from early African kingdoms to the ongoing challenges and achievements of the contemporary moment. Given the interdisciplinary character of African American Studies, students in the course will develop skills across multiple fields, with an emphasis on developing historical, literary, visual, and data analysis skills. This course foregrounds a study of the diversity of Black communities in the United States within the broader context of Africa and the African diaspora. The course is designed to be the equivalent of an introductory college or university course in African American Studies, Africana Studies, African Diaspora Studies, Black Studies, or Ethnic Studies. (2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p6-7)

Why This Course

As a result of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Apply lenses from multiple disciplines to evaluate key concepts, historical developments, and processes that have shaped Black experiences and debates within the field of African American Studies.
- Identify the intersections of race, gender, and class, as well as connections between Black communities, in the United States and the broader African diaspora in the past and present.
- Analyze perspectives in texts, data, and visual sources to develop well-supported arguments applied to real-world problems.
- Demonstrate understanding of the diversity, strength, and complexity of African societies and their global connections before the emergence of transatlantic slavery.
- Evaluate the political, historical, aesthetic, and transnational contexts of major social movements, including their past, present, and future implications.
- Develop a broad understanding of the many strategies African American communities have employed to represent themselves authentically, promote advancement, and combat the effects of inequality and systemic marginalization locally and abroad.
- Identify major themes that inform literary and artistic traditions of the African diaspora.
- Describe the formalization of African American Studies and new directions in the field as part of ongoing efforts to articulate Black experiences and perspectives and create a more just and inclusive future.
- Connect course learning with current events, local interests, and areas for future study.

(2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p6)

Units of Study

Origins of the African Diaspora

This unit introduces students to the rich and complex histories, politics, cultures, and economies of early African societies and empires. It explores the diversity of early African societies and their lasting impact on contemporary African diaspora communities worldwide. The unit helps students understand how people of African descent have innovated and thrived for over 500 years and how their identities were shaped by their experiences in both Africa and America.

(2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p318)

Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance

This unit explores how African people resisted enslavement and shaped American society from the 16th century through the Civil War. It highlights how enslaved and free Black people created their own communities and cultures, while also demanding that the United States live up to its ideals of freedom and equality. The unit also covers how Black resistance movements, including the Haitian Revolution, helped transform the Western Hemisphere.

(2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p322)

The Practice of Freedom

This unit examines how African Americans actively defined and pursued freedom after the Civil War, even as they faced growing oppression and racial violence during Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era. Students will explore how Black communities created new institutions, artistic expressions, and political movements—like the Harlem Renaissance and the Black women's club movement—to fight for their rights and reshape their identities in the face of immense challenges.

(2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p326)

Movements and Debates

This unit focuses on the Black Freedom movement from the mid-20th century to the present day. It investigates the Black Arts movement, the evolution of hip hop, and the push for Black political power. The unit concludes by exploring African American contributions to medicine, science, and technology, as well as the future possibilities represented by Afrofuturism and the field of African American Studies itself.

(2024, *AP African American Studies Course and Exam Description*, College Board, p330)

District Provided Resource(s)

Freedom on My Mind, 2021, BFW

Required Assessment(s)

At the end of this course students may take the College Board AP African American Studies exam.

Course Number(s)

159601 / 159602