

African American Studies

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African American Studies (AAS) at The College of New Jersey explores the complex life, culture, and history of persons of African descent in Africa and its Diaspora. Through the arts, humanities and social sciences, courses in AAS examine questions of racial and ethnic difference in ways that place persons of African descent at the center of the human story and scholarly discourse. AAS courses also reach beyond the shores of the US to give TCNJ students a global perspective on questions that are pertinent to their lives and frame national debate.

AAS student-scholars learn theoretical and applied skills that are central to a liberal arts education. The department's interdisciplinary and diasporic focus provides a comprehensive understanding of global Africana culture and history as well as US political, social, and cultural development.

AAS students and faculty are committed to community outreach. To that end, the department and its curriculum have a long tradition of service to, and leadership in, "community-engaged learning" activities.

Students who complete the African American Studies major or minor will gain skills that they can employ in any vocation, as well as any cultural, social, political, or intellectual endeavor. The department's emphasis on critical thinking, technological proficiency, writing skills and ability to do research bridges the broader content of TCNJ's curriculum and prepares students for the challenges of their chosen career as well as post-baccalaureate studies.

A 10-course major and 5-course minor are offered.

Requirements for the African American Studies Major

The major requires ten AAS courses, including the following five foundation courses: AAS 179, AAS 180, AAS 378, a co-requisite course in methods/statistics and AAS 499. The remaining five courses are taken from a list of AAS electives, with one course from the Social Sciences. All courses are cross-listed with another department but AAS majors should enroll in the AAS prefix for the course. Certain methods and statistics courses require pre-requisite course requirements to be met before enrolling which may mean taking an additional course. (See also the departmental graduation standards.)

Required/Foundation Courses (5):

AAS 179/African American History to 1865	1 course unit
AAS 180/African American History 1865-Present	1 course unit
AAS 378/African American Literature 1920-1980	1 course unit
Co-requisite in Methods/Statistics from approved list	1 course unit
AAS 495 (Thesis I) and 496 (Thesis II) for honors thesis students	1-2 course(s) unit(s)
AAS 499 (Senior Capstone)	1 course unit

Electives (5)

AAS majors will take 5 AAS elective courses by advisement, **1 course must be from the Social Sciences.**

Total	10 course units
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Declaration of Major

Students in good academic standing and first-term students without a GPA are allowed to declare a major as long as entrance requirements have been met. To add a major in African American Studies, paperwork must be submitted by the college deadlines. Upon declaration, the chair gives written notice to the Office of Records and Registration and assigns the student an advisor within the major. Students proceed according to the requirements of the Undergraduate Bulletin in effect at the time of their formal declaration. The department also accepts pre-major applications. Pre-majors are admitted for a transitional semester while they complete the required entrance coursework. If the coursework is successfully completed, pre-majors will be admitted to the major.

Requirements for the African American Studies Minor

Five African American Studies courses are required, including:

AAS 179/African American History to 1865	1 course unit
AAS 180/African American History 1865-Present	1 course unit
AAS electives* (by advisement)	3 course units

*at least TWO electives must be 300-or 400-level courses

Total	5 course units
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Minors must also meet the department's graduation standards.

Declaration of Minor

Students eligible to declare majors may also declare minors in those disciplines where minors have been established. Students declare minors by registering with the chair of the chosen department or program area. The chair gives written notice to the Office of Records and Registration. Students proceed according to the requirements of the Undergraduate Bulletin in effect at the time of their formal declaration. Students are responsible for knowing their minor requirements and for completing them. Minors not complete at the time of the student's graduation will be dropped from the student's record. Students are encouraged to declare intended minors as soon as they make decisions to pursue them as some classes may be restricted to majors and minors. Minors must be officially declared at least one semester before graduation.

Department Honors in African American Studies

Department Honors is open to any AAS major with a GPA in AAS Department courses of at least 3.5 or the permission of the Chair. Students should have senior standing—i.e., they should have completed 24 course units. Students can attain departmental honors in African American Studies by completing a two-semester Senior Thesis of at least 50 pages as their capstone project, based upon original research and under the supervision of a faculty advisor. The honors sequence in AAS includes two units usually taken over two semesters (AAS 495 and AAS 496 Senior Honors Thesis.)

To apply for departmental honors, students must identify a faculty member willing to serve as their faculty sponsor and submit a completed application by the announced deadline. Faculty will only agree to supervise students for this track who demonstrate a likelihood of success through the high quality of their previous coursework in African American Studies, their submitted application, and background coursework in the area of their proposed research plan.

The application for Departmental Honors will be sent to majors each Spring semester. The application includes the preliminary title of your proposed project, the name and signature of the faculty mentor, a research proposal that includes the following:

1. Introduction and Thesis: Briefly introduce your topic and clearly state your working thesis/critical argument.
2. Critical Context and Methodology: Situate your project in the existing critical literature on your subject. Suggest what new contributions you may make. Explain your critical/theoretical/ methodological approaches. All works cited in this and other sections should be in an appended “Works Cited” page, using MLA format.
3. Chapter outline, Timeline and Plan of Work: Describe your intended process. Indicate the stages of your intended work, providing a timeline of anticipated points of completion (for example: Nov.1, Rough Draft of Thesis Introduction).

An Honors committee of at least three faculty members, including the faculty sponsor, will review applications and select qualified students in time for registration.

Honors Projects will be evaluated by the members of the Honors Committee. The Committee will award grades of Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors or may deem a project not deserving of honors. Students who successfully complete their projects and presentations will be awarded at the department graduation ceremony.

All completed honors projects must be presented to the annual Celebration of Student Achievement.

Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards

Every major program at the College has set standards for allowing students to remain in that program, to transfer within the College from one program to another, and to graduate from a program. The following are the standards for the African American Studies department. Minimum grades are noted in parentheses:

- Retention in the program is based on the following performance standards in these “foundation courses”: AAS 179 (C), AAS 180 (C), and AAS 378 (C)
- Transfer in the program from another program within the College is based upon the following performance standards in these “foundation courses”: AAS 179 (C) and AAS 180 (C)
- Graduation standards: requires a GPA of 2.0 in African American Studies courses. Only grades of C or higher in AAS foundation courses, C- or higher in the Co-Req Methods course and AAS electives, and a B- or higher for AAS 499 can be applied toward graduation degree requirements. Students who want to apply a course toward graduation for which they received a D+ or lower must repeat the course, earning a higher grade.

Four-Year Suggested Sequence

First Year

FYS	First Year Seminar	1 course unit
HSS 099	(Orientation for Humanities and Social Sciences)	0 course units
AAS 179		1 course unit
AAS	Major Elective (Africa and/or Social Science)	1 course unit
	Liberal Learning Course	1 course unit

WRI	102/Academic Writing (if not exempted)*	1 course unit
AAS	180	1 course unit
	Foreign Language (if not exempted) **	2 course units
	Minor courses and/or AAS electives	1 course unit

**It is recommended that students exempted from these courses take other liberal learning courses.*

***Chinese 151 and 152, Japanese 151 and 152, and Russian 151 and 152 are intensive courses and carry two course units of credit each. Students should take this into account when planning a normal four-course semester.*

Total for year	8-9 course units
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Sophomore Year

AAS 378	1 course unit
Co-Req Methods	1 course unit
AAS Major Electives (except 400-level) (one Social Science course)	1 course units
Liberal Learning courses	2 course units
Foreign Language (if not exempted)**	1 course unit
Second major and/or minor courses	2 course units

***It is recommended that students exempted from this course take another liberal learning course.*

Total for year	8 course units
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Junior Year

AAS Major Electives	2 course units
Liberal Learning courses	3 course units
Second major and/or minor courses and/or electives units	2-3 course
Total for year	7-8 course units

Senior Year

AAS 499 Senior Seminar in African American Studies—Capstone*	1 course unit
AAS Major Electives	1 course unit
Liberal Learning courses	2 course units
Second major and/or minor courses and/or electives	3-4 course units
Total for year	7-8 course units

**Students must have received a C or above in AAS 179, 180, 378 and C- in Co-Req Methods, and have taken at least 4 major electives (one has to be a Social Science) before taking AAS 499.*

Transfer Student Course Sequence

The department encourages prospective transfer students to take two foundation AAS courses that are the equivalent to AAS 179 and AAS 180, and one AAS elective before enrolling at the College. If transfer students have received the minimum grades for the foundation courses and AAS elective, they should enroll in AAS 378 and choose additional AAS options during their first semester at TCNJ.