



# Afroamerican and African Studies

The Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS) offers students the opportunity to analyze historical and contemporary cultures, concerns, perspectives, and accomplishments of peoples of African descent, particularly those in Africa, the United States, and the Caribbean. The concentration is a multidisciplinary, interdepartmental program that allows students to use and integrate historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, economic, and political concepts and perspectives. Students are encouraged to bring a critical approach to their studies, challenging conventional beliefs and methods of analysis regarding the African and Afroamerican experience.

Whenever possible, current issues are linked with classroom study, enabling students to connect their community and academic experiences.

The concentration has served as a foundation for careers in many fields, such as law, business, education, and community development. Many students continue their education in a graduate or professional school program. Listed below are some characteristic skills developed by Afroamerican and African Studies majors, as well as representative occupations of program graduates.

## SKILLS & ABILITIES

The interdisciplinary nature of the program helps students acquire a wide variety of skills. Concentrators develop the ability to gather and synthesize information from many sources, and to communicate ideas in a clear manner. Students may draw upon all aspects of society and culture, from politics and literature to film and music, in an effort to understand the African experience. These

skills may be used in many different job settings. For example, a professor, an attorney, and a personnel director may use the skill of examining evidence for different purposes, but each may use that skill on a daily basis. A sampling of representative skills and abilities follows.

### Cultural Sensitivity

- Working with competing notions and ideas
- Understanding society through culture
- Incorporating interdisciplinary methods
- Examining the relationship of historical, economic, and political forces
- Understanding the practical significance of academic experiences
- Developing appreciation for racial and class differences and perspectives

### Project Development

- Assessing needs and interests
- Generating ideas
- Identifying resources
- Developing sound research designs
- Evaluating results
- Translating theory into action
- Working with community groups

### Communication

- Writing clearly
- Expressing ideas through several media (e.g. film, music)
- Listening to others
- Challenging conventional ideas
- Conveying ideas systematically

### Analysis and Research

- Identifying research topics
- Gathering information
- Examining evidence
- Comparing/contrasting ideas and concepts
- Solving problems
- Thinking critically
- Assessing alternative modes of analysis

## OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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The selected list that follows offers a glimpse of the wide-ranging career paths of Afroamerican and African Studies majors from the University of Michigan and other colleges. For some occupations listed below, such as urban planner,

related training may be desirable. For those occupations marked with a • on the list, additional graduate study is generally required.

<b>Business</b>	<b>Government/ Public Service</b>	<b>Education/Research</b>	<b>Community Organizing</b>
Market researcher	Congressional staff member	Teacher (K-12)	Canvass director
Consultant, cross-cultural relations	Foreign service officer	•Professor	Lobbyist
Export/import sales manager	Probation officer	•Museum curator	Administrative assistant
Staff training and development specialist	Affirmative action officer	•Librarian	•Legal advisor
Bank management trainee	•Urban planner	•Student services administrator	Issues director
Web designer	<b>Media</b>	•Public historian	Field organizer
	Journalist	•School social worker	Fundraising manager
	Media buyer, public relations		
	Advertising copywriter		

## CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

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Students may pursue either a concentration or a minor in African American and African Studies, as well as honors in this interdisciplinary field. At the outset of their studies, all concentrators and minors take the gateway prerequisite course, AAS 111, "Intro to Africa and Its Diaspora," an interdisciplinary, multimedia course co-taught by two professors and selected by many other students to fulfill their LS&A Humanities distribution and Race/Ethnicity requirements. Students are also required to take a designated number of courses to ensure geographic coverage at both the 200 and upper (300 and 400) levels: including area courses on Africa, area courses on African America (the U.S. and Caribbean), and cross-area courses making

links between Africa the Diaspora. In choosing their upper-level area courses, CAAS concentrators also decide on a subconcentration in African Studies or in African American and Afro-Caribbean Studies by completing 18 credit hours focused in one of these areas. In their senior year, concentrators and minors complete AAS 495, Senior Seminar, a writing-intensive interdisciplinary capstone course. Concentrators pursuing CAAS honors fulfill the same requirements, but must also complete a major thesis during their senior year under the supervision of two CAAS faculty. The staff of the CAAS Advising Center are happy to help. For an appointment, contact [caasadvising@umich.edu](mailto:caasadvising@umich.edu). Please consult the CAAS website (see URL below) for more information.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For information about choosing a career, about graduate/professional school, internships, or job descriptions; and for library resources:

The Career Center  
3200 Student Activities Building  
(734) 764-7460  
[www.careercenter.umich.edu](http://www.careercenter.umich.edu)

For information about choosing a major and about concentration and degree requirements:

LS&A Academic Advising Center  
1255 Angell Hall  
(734) 764-0332

The Center for Afroamerican and African Studies  
4700 Haven Hall  
(734) 764-5513  
[www.umich.edu/~iinet/caas/](http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/caas/)