

**Proposal for a M.A. Program**  
**Master of Art in Africana Studies**  
**Program Policy Statement**

Presented to the Faculty Senate  
University of Delaware, Newark DE 19716

Department of Africana Studies, October 27, 2019

## Proposal

### Part 1. Program History

#### A. Statement of purpose and expectation of graduate study in the program

In the spring of 1968, the Black Student Union occupied the Student Center for a two-day period and presented a list of demands to the University administration. These demands included an increase in the number of black faculty members and the establishment of an Africana Studies Program. The lobbying of the black students for a program of studies devoted to the black American experience was intended not only to fill a gap in the curriculum (reflecting a history of institutionalized racism) but also to end their feeling of isolation on a campus which remained overwhelmingly white and unwelcoming. In April of 1969, President Trabant instructed Provost John Shirley to appoint an Africana Studies Program Committee charged with “implementing an appropriate Africana Studies Program...leading eventually to a major in that area.” In 1971, the University created the Black American Studies Program (now Africana Studies) in the College of Arts and Science. The program would eventually offer students an 18-credit hour minor, but not the major that the students demanded and the University Committees recommended. The program was not given departmental status until the fall of 2006, and never had more than three core faculty members until 2014. In recent years, the Department of Africana Studies has secured nine (9) active faculty members whose scholarship and service affirms the College’s Strategic Plan’s stated values of excellence in teaching and research, diversity, and social responsibility.

The graduate program of the Department of Africana Studies provides students with critical exposure to the multidisciplinary study of people and cultures of African descent in the United States, Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and Europe. The Africana Studies M.A. Program, provides a balance of a foundation in Africana Studies, and multidisciplinary research methods in Africana Studies, with advanced study in the four pillars of the Department: Pan African consciousness, public humanities, gender and sexuality studies and visual and material culture. The graduate program also offers interested students the opportunity to continue in Africana Studies, History, Art History, English or other related fields at the advanced graduate level.

The Department of Africana Studies can offer a regionally and nationally competitive graduate program. There are fewer than twenty-five (25) master’s degree programs in Africana/ Black/ African American Studies in the United States, with only three of these programs in mid-Atlantic states. Best practices among these programs include both graduate certificate and BA/MA (4 + 1) options in addition to the MA. As the number of undergraduate majors increases, the Department often recommends study at other universities for our graduates. Graduate programming in Africana Studies will serve to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the Graduate College, in alignment with the University’s Strategic Plan efforts. Students will be attracted to the graduate program in Africana Studies by (1) UD’s strong Africana Studies faculty; (2) the University’s existing resources in historical studies, gender and Black Women’s Studies, museum studies and material culture studies, the Paul R. Jones Collection and the Biden Institute; and (3) the opportunity for greater marketability with knowledge of the history and status of African heritage communities; and (4) a strong portfolio for entering doctoral programs at UD thus diversifying the professoriate – including the existing African American Public Humanities Initiative (AAPHI). We anticipate five students in each entering M.A. cohort, with a tenure-stream faculty member serving as an advisor and mentor.

Students completing the M.A. degree in Africana Studies, will be able to:

- Discuss foundational theories of Africana Studies
- Articulate multidisciplinary research methods in Africana Studies
- Analyze historic and contemporary issues through a Pan African lens
- Develop Africana Studies content for public scholarship, community engagement, collections-based research and/or social justice efforts
- Apply gender and sexuality intersectional analysis to the study of black life and culture
- Explore the study of black life through visual and material culture
- Design an original research project that synthesizes knowledge and skills from Africana Studies to a concrete issue or context

B. Date of permanent status

This proposal requests approval for a MA in Africana Studies.

C. Degrees offered (include brief description of concentrations, fields, etc.)

BA in Africana Studies

## **Part II. Admissions Requirements**

A. Admission Requirements (be specific about GRE, GMAT, and TOEFL scores, GPA and others)

Candidates should apply for Africana Studies graduate programs through the University's Graduate College.

Applicants should have an overall undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher (on a scale of 4.0 = A). Applicants should have a GPA of 3.2 or higher in their undergraduate major.

If English is not an applicant's first language, then the applicant must demonstrate a satisfactory command of English. The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is required of all foreign applicants. A minimum score of 600 (paper-based test) or 100 (TOEFL iBT) is required for consideration for admission. Students with TOEFL scores below the minimum required for admission may be considered for conditional admission if they enter the University of Delaware English Language Institute's academic English program. The TOEFL requirement may be waived if the student has earned a degree from an accredited educational institution in which English is the primary instructional language.

Admissions to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strength.

B. Prior degree Requirements

Applicants must have a minimum of an earned baccalaureate degree. Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary field, so the discipline in which the applicant received his or her degree is not necessarily a decisive factor in admissions. Students are assumed to possess basic skills in written and oral communication.

#### C. Applications deadlines

Admissions Deadline: Completed applications are due February 1. We offer Fall admission only. Applications from those who wish to be considered for financial aid must be submitted by February 1st.

#### D. Special competencies needed

No special competencies needed.

#### E. Admission categories

Both full-time and part-time students will be admitted. Admissions and course requirements are the same for full- and part-time students.

Students may be told they are on a waiting list, but this would come without any promise of admission or funding.

- **REGULAR STATUS:** is offered to students who meet all of the established entrance requirements. Individuals who apply during the final year of undergraduate or current graduate work and are unable to supply transcripts showing the conferral of the degree will be admitted pending the conferral of the degree. Evidence of the earned degree must be provided prior to the first day of classes in the term of admission.

#### F. Other documents required (i.e. letters of recommendation, essays, portfolios, interviews, writing assessments, etc.)

- Applicants must submit a written statement of the reasons for their interest in Africana Studies, their motivation to pursue a graduate degree, and their professional goals and objectives. The Africana Studies Graduate Program Committee will review the essay part of the application carefully. The Committee wants to know why applicants are interested in applying to the program and how the degree will make sense in the overall career path. Essay should be 800-1200 words.
- Current resume
- Applicants must provide letters of recommendation from three (3) people familiar with the candidate's academic record and/or professional achievement.
- A writing sample of 15 to 20 pages demonstrating their ability to do critical research and writing

#### G. University Statement

Admissions to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths.

All admission and funding decisions are made by the Africana Studies Graduate Program Committee. Applicants are evaluated on several criteria: undergraduate/graduate grade point average, letters of recommendation (three), and applicant's statement of objectives, and a writing sample.

### **Part III: Academic**

#### **A. Degree Requirements**

1. List course requirements according to categories such as core requirements, concentration options, electives, research credits and dissertation credit

The M.A. degree requirements include a thesis. Theses may take one of several forms, such as a written document, or a material or visual project, or a website. Students using the program for professional development should consider the project form of the thesis. Students who may be using our program as a stepping stone toward Ph.D. admissions should complete the more traditional longer written thesis. Students must discuss the form of thesis in consultation with their Advisor.

#### Required courses:

AFRA 600: Foundations in Africana Studies

AFRA 601: Africana Research Methods

AFRA 869 MA Thesis (0-6 credit)

AFRA 695: Thesis Seminar (0 credits)

One class in each of the four pillars of Africana Studies

#### Pan Africanism

SOCI 661: Racial Stratification

HIST 640: Africa Under Colonial Rule

#### Public Humanities/ Scholarship/ Social Justice

AFRA: 651: Becoming a Public Scholar Activist

AFRA 650: Street Ethnography/Black Communities Studies

#### Blackness, Gender, Sexuality

AFRA 628: Modern African American History

AFRA 630: Expressive Cultures in the African Diaspora

AFRA 634: Interventions in Black Gender History

#### Visual and Material Culture

AFRA/ MSST 647: Curating Hidden Collections & the Black Archive

AFRA/ ARTH 645: Black Bodies on Display: Race in Museums

AFRA 630: Expressive Cultures in the African Diaspora  
AFRA 642: The Black Portrait

Additional Approved Electives Course: (6 credits)

In addition, students must take two elected courses decided in consultation with the student's primary advisor.

2. Give non-registered requirements in detail; includes residency requirements, qualifying examinations (number and format), portfolios, seminars, English proficiency, language requirements, teaching experience, internships, etc.

None.

3. Give procedures for petitions for variance in degree requirements

Up to six semester hours of graduate credit earned prior to matriculation into the MA program or at another institution and not previously counted toward another degree may be accepted toward the University of Delaware MA degree. The course(s) must have been completed:

- with grades of B or better
- within five years of the effective date of the requested transfer

Normally, those credits will become eligible for transfer only after the candidate has completed at least nine credit hours as a matriculated MA Program student at the University of Delaware. To begin the process, the student must submit to the Program Advisor a written request for credit evaluation with course descriptions and/or syllabi of courses to be considered for transfer. Courses transferred from other universities count for credits but do not affect the program grade point average. Once approved, student will complete the Transfer Credit Form from the Graduate College.

4. Define any grade minimums in courses that are different from University policy

A graduate student must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point index to remain a student in good standing and earn a 3.0 average in all required courses to be eligible for the MA degree.

5. Identify any courses, which may not be used towards the degree

No grade below a B- may be counted toward the course requirements for the degree.

6. Identify expectations of facility of expression in English (oral and written) as part of the degree requirement

All examinations, thesis and professional project reports and oral presentations are in English. Proficiency in both written and oral English is required for progress and completion of the MA program.

B. Committees for exams, thesis or dissertations

1. Identify initial procedure for advisor and advisement procedures

The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee will assign each incoming student a faculty advisor in September. Thereafter the student will meet with their advisor to plan their first year of study in the program. Advice will be given concerning course selection based on interests and undergraduate/graduate background. Our program is sufficiently small that we are able to give individualized attention to graduate students. First year students may replace their faculty advisor with another faculty advisor. Both the Chair of the GSC and the Academic Support Coordinator of the graduate program should be notified immediately of any such changes.

2. Identify each student committee needed and procedures for selecting committee members

Thesis Committee: Students should choose the type of thesis by the time they complete 18/ 21 credits in the program. Students will declare their thesis form with the program advisor. Students must identify a faculty member who is willing to supervise the thesis. A second reader/ examiner will be selected in collaboration with the thesis supervisor. The committee will be comprised of two graduate faculty members, the chair of which must be a core or affiliated faculty member in the Africana Studies Department. Upon obtaining the written consent of all committee members, the student notifies the Africana Studies Graduate Committee by memo of the composition of the Thesis Committee. To provide guidance on the development of the thesis, the committee will be developed at least six months before the expected date of graduation, and the chair will be responsible for advising the student, including guiding the selection of and approving electives.

3. Give deadlines for establishing and preparation requirements for comprehensive examinations

This is not applicable. MA students do not take comprehensive exams

4. Give policies for dates of examinations, grading of committee examinations and retake options

This is not applicable. MA students do not take comprehensive exams

5. Give guidelines for approving research proposals involving human or animal subjects

Students are unlikely to be involved in research projects involving human or animal subjects. However, approval of all research projects involving humans, even administration of a survey, must be obtained prior to beginning any study. Information about obtaining approval may be found on [Human Subjects in Research](#). If a project involves animal subjects, an Animal Use Proposal must be completed and submitted to the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#).

6. Define procedures for thesis/ dissertation approval in the department

## Thesis

Theses in the Department of Africana Studies may take one of several forms, such as a written document, a material or visual culture project or a website. The research thesis will be a study of a topic related to the Africana Studies degree. No matter the form, all theses have a written component, and all should demonstrate a high level of intellectual rigor and innovation. The traditional written thesis should be 40-60 typed pages of text (20,000 – 30,000 words), not including notes and bibliography, and must be of excellent quality. The completed Master's Paper should conform to the latest edition of the bibliographic format that is standard in one's discipline. The grade will be assigned in the semester in which the thesis is completed. Students writing the thesis will register for 6 credits of the Thesis Seminar. The thesis must be presented in a departmental research colloquium, and a version of the thesis appropriate for publication in an appropriate research journal must be prepared. The grade for the Thesis Seminar is assigned in the final semester of the MA program.

Alternatively, the thesis can be a hybrid product that combines a creative, material or digital project, and a required companion paper of approximately 20 pages of typed text (10,000 words), not including the title pages, illustrations, notes and bibliography. In this instance, the paper serves to introduce the thesis project and explain its argument(s), methodology, historiography, and scholarly contribution. The project is intended to demonstrate proficiency in applying Africana Studies principles and content through design, implementation and evaluation of project in an organizational setting. Students electing the hybrid product must identify their own site in which to enact the project. Faculty will work with the student to identify and specify the project, but it is ultimately the student's responsibility to identify the site for the project. Students conducting the project will register for 6 credits of the Thesis Seminar. The culmination of the project must be presented in a departmental research colloquium. The grade for Thesis Seminar is assigned in the final semester of the MA program.

7. Define departmental and student obligations for finding committee members

It is the responsibility of the student to propose a topic to a member of the faculty, and to secure the agreement of that faculty member to serve as first reader/adviser for a Master's Thesis on that topic. It is also the student's responsibility to secure the agreement of a second reader. At least one of the readers must be a member of the Africana Studies Department at the University of Delaware. After identifying a topic and finding two qualified readers, a brief prospectus (5 pages or 2500 words, not including bibliography) should be composed by the student and presented to the primary faculty adviser and, if she or he approves, to the Director of Graduate Studies. The student will be notified by the Director of Graduate Studies of the approval of their research topic and proposed readers, or may be asked to revise the topic or proposal or seek a different reader or readers.

8. Define departmental and student obligations and procedures for changes in committee members

It is the student's responsibility to secure the final committee members.



- C. Timetable and definition of satisfactory progress towards the degree
1. Academic load (full & part-time) expectations. Define normal progress. Define departmental review procedures for evaluating normal progress and evaluation of performance.

The curriculum is designed to be completed in 2 years of full-time study (a minimum of 6-9 hours/semester). However, there are no full-time residency requirements. Although there will be no separate part-time track, the program will be open to part-time students. Part-time students are expected to enroll in at least one to two classes per regular academic semester to remain matriculated in the program and are expected to complete their degree within four - five years.

Time limits for the completion of degree requirements begin with the date of matriculation and are specifically expressed in the student's letter of admission. The University time limit is ten consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements for students entering a master's degree program.

Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the chair of the Africana Studies graduate programs committee. The department will forward the request to the Graduate College. The Office will determine the student's eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant an extension of time.

At the midpoint in a student's program, the advisor will review the student's program of study to determine if they are making satisfactory progress through the program.

2. Grade requirements (general and specific). Include any special departmental expectations such as minimum grades in specific courses, limits on special problem courses, etc.

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to remain in good standing. A grade below a B- will not be counted toward the course requirements for a degree but is calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average.

3. Thesis/dissertation progress timetable guidelines.

The MA Thesis proposal must be submitted to the Graduate Committee by November 30 of the third semester of full-time work. This proposal will serve as the basis of work for the Thesis and for AFRA 695: Thesis Seminar.

4. Thesis/dissertation defense guidelines.

The thesis will be completed by April 30 of the student's final semester so that the committee has sufficient time to review and respond before the end of the semester. Successful candidates need to provide copies of the completed thesis to The Graduate College.

5. Forms required.

“Application for Advanced Degree”: To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an “Application for Advanced Degree” to the Graduate College. The application deadlines are February 15 for Spring candidates, January 15 for Winter candidates, May 15 for Summer candidates, and September 15 for Fall candidates. The application must be signed by the program director and department chair. There is an application fee of for master's degree candidates that is published by the university. Payment is required when the application is submitted. Upon completion of the audit, the Graduate College notifies students in writing when they have met all degree requirements.

“Supervisory Committee Notification Form”: Submitted to Africana Studies Graduate Committee when members of the MA Thesis committee have been formally selected and agreed to serve.

6. Identify consequence for failure to make satisfactory progress.

The Director of Graduate Studies will give the student written notification if they are not making satisfactory academic progress at the standard expected by the Department achievement (cumulative GPA of 3.0). The written notice will include specific areas of improvement that will be required. The student will be given one semester in which to demonstrate adequate improvement. Students should meet with their primary academic adviser and with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible after receiving such notification, so that the problem and the possible means of addressing the problem can be discussed. If the student fails to make adequate improvement, a recommendation to dismiss the student from the program will be by vote of the Department faculty, and will be conveyed to the Graduate Office for action (see Graduate Student Probation and Dismissal Policy in the University Catalogue). If the student has met the requirements for the Graduate Certificate, the student may receive the Graduate Certificate upon dismissal from the MA Program. Recommendations for dismissal are made by the Department Chair of Africana Studies to the University of Delaware Graduate College.

7. Protocol for grievance procedure if student has been recommended for termination for failure to make satisfactory progress.

Students who feel that they have been graded inappropriately or receive what they perceive as an unfair evaluation by a faculty member may file grievances in accordance with University of Delaware policies. Students are encouraged to contact the Department's Graduate Program Director prior to filing a formal grievance in an effort to resolve the situation informally.

Students who allege they have been aggrieved because of perceived discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, handicap or because a member of the University community fails to follow published University or Departmental procedure should utilize the Student Grievance Procedure stipulated by University policy.

**Part IV: Assessment Plan**

Indicate how the program will be evaluated and assessed. Every learning outcome needs to be assessed in at least two ways. One measure must be a direct measurement (where you can see the student demonstrate their learning). Other measures can be direct or indirect (such as a survey). Success should be measured against the criteria listed including the stated learning outcomes and against whatever objectives have been set forth in the first section of the proposal. Academic units are encouraged to consult with the Center for Educational Effectiveness to develop appropriate learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and benchmarks for success.

The program learning objectives will be assessed through multiple indicators including:

- Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work
- Surveys of students and program alumni
- Faculty and internship mentor evaluation of the MA Thesis

<b>Assessment plan for MA in Africana Studies</b>				
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategic Activities</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Short-term Outcomes</b>	<b>Long-term Impact</b>
Discuss foundational theories of Africana Studies	Coursework in Foundations in Africana Studies	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Surveys of graduate students in the program and post-graduation	Students are prepared for subsequent coursework that requires the foundational knowledge	Students and graduates report applying knowledge from courses to work settings or other courses
Articulate multidisciplinary research methods in Africana Studies	Coursework in Research Methods in Africana Studies	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Surveys of students focusing on their experiences in other research  Surveys of graduates to determine the utility of these classes to their career	Students employ a methodology suitable to their research and interests	Students and graduates report applying knowledge to research or work settings
Analyze historic and contemporary issues through a Pan African lens	Required course work	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Surveys of graduates to determine the utility of these classes to their career	Students will conduct research that employs a Pan African lens	Students and graduates report applying knowledge to research or work settings

Develop Africana Studies content for public scholarship, community engagement, collections-based research and/or social justice efforts	Required course work	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Survey of graduates to determine the utility of their training to their career	Students are actively sharing research content with a wider public	Students and graduates report applying knowledge to research or work settings
Apply gender and sexuality intersectional analysis to the study of black life and culture	Required course work	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Survey of graduates to determine the utility of their training to their career	Students discuss the intersection of blackness with gender and/or sexuality in their research	Students and graduates report applying knowledge to research or work settings
Explore the study of black life through visual and material culture	Required course work	Faculty evaluation of student progress in course work  Survey of graduates to determine the utility of their training to their career	Students' research interprets black life through visual and material culture	Students and graduates report applying knowledge from courses to research or work settings
Design an original research project that synthesizes knowledge and skills from Africana Studies to a concrete issue or context	AFRA 679: MA Thesis Seminar	Faculty evaluation of MA Thesis or coursework	Students demonstrate expertise in Africana Studies	Graduates enjoy long term success in academic or professional careers

## **Park V. Financial Aid**

### **A. Financial Awards**

1. Types of awards, policy for granting financial awards, summer appointments, and number of years of support

Financial aid is available to graduate students in the form of teaching assistantships, research assistantships, tuition scholarships, and fellowships. Assistantships and fellowships consist of tuition and a stipend for the September-May academic year. Awards are competitive and merit-based. All funding decisions are made in consultation with the Graduate Committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair.

2. Responsibilities of students on contract

Appointments for Research Assistantships are made in consultation with the faculty member conducting the research, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair.

Teaching assistantships are awarded to students to assist with specific courses, particularly AFRA110: Introduction to African American Studies. Appointments for Teaching Assistantship are made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Chair each semester. Teaching assistants are required to lead discussion groups, grade assignments and exams, and other instructional activities. As with any professional appointment, the amount of service may vary from week to week but the average is usually expected to be 20 hours per week. For other teaching assistant requests, AFRA faculty are required to submit a request for a teaching assistant form for each semester they are seeking an assistant specifying their expectations of the assistant (e.g., facilitation of classroom discussion, preparation and grading of examinations). The assignment of graduate students to faculty members should balance scholarly interests and professional objectives of the student and the teaching and research needs of the department. The Director of Graduate Studies may change assignments as necessary and make additional assignments if new sources of funding become available. Typically, eligibility for student funding is limited to 2 years of funding for students with a B.A. to earn the M.A. degree. Student funding is renewed as long as they remain in good standing in the program. "Good standing" is defined as strong performance in coursework, satisfactory fulfillment of their research/teaching assistantship duties, and timely progress toward completion of the degree. The Director of Graduate Studies is in charge of monitoring student progress, in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee.

### 3. Evaluation of students on contract

Evaluation of students' performance at assistantship duties are included in their annual evaluation conducted by the Graduate Program Committee.

## **Part VI. Departmental Operations**

- A. General student responsibilities
  - 1. Up-to-date addresses, etc.

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their contact information on file with the University is current (mailing address, phone number, email address). Students are required to communicate via university email and keep us up-to-date regarding their telephone and US mail address. Students are asked by departmental administrators for their up-to-date contact information each year, including address, phone, and email. Students are also responsible for regularly monitoring their email, phone and mail for important notices regarding their enrollment.

The Africana Studies Department Chair will appoint a Director of Graduate Studies for the Africana Studies Graduate Program from among the department faculty. The term of service for the Director of Graduate Studies is three years, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms that may be served. The Director of Graduate Studies serves as the chair of the Africana Studies Graduate Program Committee, and is responsible for

- Corresponding with prospective students
- Maintaining program records
- Chairing program committee meetings
- Admitting students to the program following the approval of the Program Committee
- Coordinating review/ revision of program policies and curriculum
- Submitting graduate names to department faculty for approval for graduation

Program Committee: The Chair of the Africana Studies Department will appoint department faculty to the committee. Responsibilities of the Program Committee include:

- Admission of students into the program
- Approval of changes to the graduate curriculum
- Oversight of student progress in the program, including dismissal of students who fail to make satisfactory progress
- Indirect assessment measures for the program

2. Laboratories and research equipment

Not applicable.

3. Hazardous Chemical Information Act

Not applicable.

4. Vehicles

Not applicable.

5. Keys, offices, mail, telephone, copy machine, computer terminals, etc.

Not applicable.

B. Student government and organizations (both student and professional)

Students are encouraged to participate in Department events, including: colloquia, Department conferences, workshops, and receptions.

C. Travel for professional meetings or presentations

Students are also encouraged to join professional academic organizations and attend conferences held by these organizations, when possible and relevant. Students are strongly encouraged to travel to professional conferences to present their work. Department support for travel to professional meetings is dependent on the availability of funds. Students are also encouraged to seek funding opportunities from the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate College, and other units on campus.