

AFRI 312: Socio-Political Development and Change in Africa and the African Diaspora

AFRI 312 is an interdisciplinary examination of culture, thought, and political change in the African diaspora. The course draws on the methods and materials of a variety of fields, including music, food traditions, religious traditions, political thought, and philosophy. The course traces changes in theory and thought about the African diaspora throughout the twentieth century and applies these theories to case studies that trace the movement and change of thought and culture from its African origins to the new world. Case studies focus on the United States, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Brazil. AFRI 312 addresses the learning objectives of the Foundational Studies program, particularly Foundational Studies Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10. AFRI 312 meets the goals of the Integrative and Upper-Division Electives category and the Foundational Studies program in the following ways:

Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing.

The overall thread that runs through AFRI 312 is the idea of diaspora and the cultural processes by which ideas and culture are reinterpreted and combined with European culture in the New World. We compare the processes of reinterpretation and change of African traditions throughout several locations throughout the diaspora. For example, we examine syncretic religions in the African diaspora such as Vodun in Haiti, Condomblé in Brazil, and the Black church in the US to see how the different circumstances of slaves and their descendents in those countries have approached the combination of African and European traditions in similar but localized ways.

Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue.

The main project for AFRI 312 is a multi-stage research paper that considers a particular idea or cultural tradition and traces its origin in Africa to its New World reinterpretation. The project begins with a proposal of the topic, and students receive feedback and assistance in narrowing their topic to a specific example. Students then survey the literature and gather 15 scholarly sources into an annotated bibliography. With the help of peer review, they then turn their paper into a treatment of their chosen aspect of culture (e.g. music, religious tradition, material culture, etc.) focused on a single example (e.g. song, religious ritual, handmade item). Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the class, students have wide latitude on their chosen topic and may find themselves examining culture or ideas in several different traditional academic fields.

Analyze and write at an advanced level.

The rationale for the approach to the research paper is that at the upper division, students need to move their writing from a report of a small number of sources to the synthesis of a great deal of scholarly material. In addition, the paper requires that students focus on a very small number of examples of the cultural process they are treating. This allows them to consider in depth and analyze a single cultural process, work of art, or piece of material culture in depth rather than a large number of examples superficially.

Because of the variety of experiences and ideas of people of the African diaspora, wrapping one's mind around the concept of diaspora is complex. As such, the readings for this course are often quite difficult. One of the goals of the course is to guide students as they tackle difficult scholarly readings and analyze larger ongoing conversations in the scholarly community about the nature of diaspora. For example, they will trace W.E.B. DuBois's idea of double consciousness as a fundamental part of the black experience through its development into the foundation for the ideas of current-day diaspora theorists such as Paul Gilroy. This approach requires students to deepen their understanding of the arguments they read, come to nuanced interpretations of the arguments in the readings, and trace these arguments in scholarly discourse.



AFRI 312
The African Diaspora

MWF 11:00-12:00
Stalker Hall 108

Required Texts and Materials:

Paul Gilroy. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard UP, 1993.
Three Negro Classics, Ed. John Hope Franklin
The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities, Ed. Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui. Bloomington: IU Press, 2001.
Supplemental Materials on the Blackboard Site¹

Course Description:

AFRI 312 is an interdisciplinary course that meets the **Upper Division Integrative Elective requirement for Foundational Studies 2010**. This course will focus on the circulation of beliefs, ideas, and cultural production throughout the African Diaspora. We will consider theories of the African Diaspora in detail, and consider the changes in these ideas over time. We will also examine similarities and differences between diasporic practices and traditions in the United States, the Caribbean, and South America.

As an Upper Division Integrative Elective, this course requires that students engage the material through multiple “ways of knowing.” Within the Foundational Studies program, this means ways of knowing about the world or ways of solving problems. Most courses in the Foundational Studies program teach from a particular perspective or “way of knowing” about the world and human behavior. The Upper Division Integrative Electives then allow you to make use of multiple ways of knowing to examine a particular topic or theme. In AFRI 312, we will employ the following ways of knowing on a regular basis: 1. Global Perspectives and Cultural Diversity; 2. Historical studies; 3. Social and behavioral sciences; 4. Literary studies; and 5. Fine and performing arts. In addition, the course requires that students make use of, and improve, their communication and composition skills through in-class discussion and multiple writing assignments.

Learning Objectives:

The learning objectives for AFRI 312 reflect those laid out in the Foundational studies program in general and

¹ AFRI 312 takes a thematic approach with the idea of “African Diaspora” at its center. The course integrates multiple ways of knowing. The readings include scholarly work in their fields of social and behavioral sciences, literature, art, music, religious studies, and Africana studies. The readings treat an extremely diverse set of topics and themes across multiple “ways of knowing.” They range from economics and unemployment in Jamaica to combining African and European religious traditions in Brazil to the development of an education system for African Americans after slavery in the US. The theme that we continually return to is how social conditions and varied ideas in locations across the African Diaspora have led to multiple ways of reordering culture brought by the slaves from Africa.

in the category of Upper Division Integrative Electives in particular.

Foundational Studies Objectives (FSO 1-10, noted later)

Because this course is part of the larger Foundational Studies Program, it is important to place its goals within the context of the program's goals. By the conclusion of your Foundational Studies Program at ISU, you will be able to...

1. Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
2. Critically evaluate the ideas of others;
3. Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history);
4. Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts;
5. Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies;
7. Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions;
9. Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness;
10. Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

Courses that satisfy the Upper Division Integrative Elective requirement of Foundational Studies 2010 are also designed to meet specific learning objectives [referred to as **LO 1-3**] and to build skills for applied learning [referred to as **SALR 1-5**].

Learning objectives:

1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing;
2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue;
3. Analyze and write at an advanced level.

Skill applied learning requirements:

1. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop critical thinking skills
2. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop information literacy skills
3. Include a graded writing component, which whenever possible is developmental
4. Must incorporate opportunities for students to critically read and analyze sophisticated, complex text, and to write intensively.
5. Must include assignments that apply information from within and across various "ways of knowing"

Grading:

The final grade in this course will depend on several components—attendance, class participation, assignments, papers, and two exams. Weight for each of these components will be assigned in the following way:

<i>Attendance and Participation</i>	10%
<i>Map Quiz</i>	5%
<i>Exam 1</i>	25%
<i>Exam 2</i>	25%
<i>Proposal</i>	5%
<i>Annotated Bibliography</i>	5%
<i>Final Paper</i>	25%

Assignments:

Reading: This is a very reading-heavy course. Most days will follow a lecture and discussion format. I will begin with a brief overview or lecture, and we will move to class discussion. You are required to complete all the assigned readings before class. Do not allow yourself to fall behind as it will be difficult to catch up. You should read the assigned readings carefully and take notes. If the readings contain an unfamiliar word or concept, it is your responsibility to look it up before class. If I find that the students are not completing the readings

Papers:

This semester you will be researching a topic on African retention or reinterpretation of a cultural tradition in the African Diaspora. Two earlier assignments and a peer review will eventually lead to an 8-10 page paper at the end of the semester. The paper-related assignments are as follows:

Proposal Due 2/1²

Annotated Bibliography Due 2/22

Peer Review 4/26

Final Paper 4/1

More detailed information on the paper can be found on the Blackboard site under “papers.” The proposal and the final paper will be turned in on the Blackboard site through a turnitin link. Papers should follow the style outlined in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Ed. There are links to tutorials for this citation style on the Blackboard site under “Paper.”

Exams

Exams will test both factual knowledge and ideas discussed in class. Completing all reading and

² The paper project for this class is a multi-stage project that requires that students trace some aspect of culture (e.g. music, food, religious traditions, funeral traditions) from West Africa to some location in the African Diaspora. Students are required to analyze the changes that the culture has undergone as well as what has been retained. The project serves several pedagogical purposes. It helps to hone their research and information literacy skills (SALR 2) through learning database searching in developing their annotated bibliographies. Students also learn to vet sources as primary secondary, and tertiary, and as scholarly or non-scholarly. The project also follows SALR 3 as it goes through several stages, each with feedback to help them improve their research and writing skills. The development of the paper also requires that students engage the literature of several fields of study: Africana studies (and its many approaches based on the methodologies of many disciplines), social sciences (including anthropology and sociology), humanities (including history) as well as subfields that use the methodologies of these field like material culture studies and art history. (LO 2,3; SALR 4,5) The paper is an opportunity for the students to closely analyze one aspect of culture of interest to them and to synthesize a variety of scholarly literature. (LO 1,2,3)

homework will help you keep up with the material and prepare for exams. While the exams are not technically cumulative, students will be responsible for an understanding of the main concepts and vocabulary used throughout the semester.

Class Policies

Attendance is Required. Students who miss more than five classes will fail the attendance and participation portion of the class. Attendance in this class is mandatory and will be monitored. A significant portion of your grade will depend on your active participation in this class. You must let me know **at the beginning of the semester** if you must be absent for religious holidays. Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor.

Laptop Policy: Laptops are often distracting to other students and discourage active participation. Laptops will be permitted in class **for taking notes only**. I reserve the right to change this rule if I suspect it is being abused. It is possible that I may occasionally require laptops for class.

Cell Phones: Cell phones must be off during class. Texting is not allowed. Students caught texting will be given an absence for the day.

Email Policy: It is your responsibility to check your email on a regular basis and in a timely fashion. Email sent to the instructor will normally be answered within 48 hours. Please do not send last-minute emails.

Email Format: All emails should contain in the subject line the course number and a descriptive subject (e.g. Subject: AFRI 325, Question about Study Guide). Emails should contain a greeting (i.e. Dear Prof. Ryan), use proper capitalization, grammar, and punctuation (i.e. no textspeak), and a signature line with the student's full name.

Academic Honesty: It is expected that each student will follow the guidelines set forth in ISU's policy on Academic Honesty. It is the student's responsibility to examine these rules. Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. **Signing another student's name to attendance sheets DOES constitute cheating.**

ADA: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with diagnosed disabilities are entitled to evaluation and consideration in their coursework. All accommodations, however, including those for students with learning disabilities, must be made through the Student Academic Service Center (<http://www1.indstate.edu/sasc/dss/index.htm>). Any accommodations must be made known to me **at the beginning of the semester**.

Course Schedule and Assignments

AD=*The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*

TNC=*Three Negro Classics*

BA=*The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*

Week 1 — Introduction

1/11 – Introduction to the Class

1/13 – Understanding the African Diaspora³

Reading: Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past*, preface (Supplemental Readings on Website)

1/15 – Introduction to the Culture Concept

Reading: Herskovits, *Myth of the Negro Past*, Chapter 1 (Supplemental Readings on Website)

Week 2— Tracing Africanisms⁴

1/18 – **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No Class**

1/20 – Kinship Systems

Reading: AD Ch. 6

1/22 – Food Traditions

Reading: Fehintola Mosadomi, “Food and Language” (Supplemental Readings)

Map Quiz at the Beginning of Class

Week 3— Africanisms and *Up From Slavery*

1/25 – Musical Instruments

Reading: AD Ch. 24

1/27 – Booker T. Washington⁵

³ We begin the semester with a discussion of some basic terms and concepts of the diaspora through a discussion of Melville Herskovits’s foundational text. Students learn basic background about the legacy of slavery and colonialism in the African Diaspora and learn to apply this terminology to specific examples such as the creolization of language. (FSO 1,2,3,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 1,4)

⁴ Beginning in week 2, we spend three days applying the terms in Herskovits to three different areas of culture: Kinship Systems, Food Traditions, and Musical Instruments. This unit looks at these areas of culture across several locations in the African Diaspora comparatively. For example, when we discuss food traditions, we compare West African dishes with those in the US and the Caribbean. We discuss how the availability of ingredients to slaves led to reinterpretations of the dishes in the New World. For example, the palm oil used in Africa was replaced with the salt pork available in the slave allowance in the US or with fish available in the Caribbean. For comparison, I prepare dishes for students to sample in class. (FSO 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,10; LO 1; SALR 1,4).

⁵ In Week 3 we begin an examination of three classic texts of African American Studies: Booker T. Washington’s *Up From Slavery*, WEB DuBois’s *Souls of Black Folk*, and James Weldon Johnson’s *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. These texts represent some of the most foundational treatments of the idea of the African diaspora and of the personal experience of negotiating one’s identity in the context of slavery, discrimination, and colonialism. Each text covers the personal experiences and views of early twentieth-century African Americans. (FSO 1,,3,5,6,7,8,10; LO 1,2,3; SALR 1,4).

Reading: TNC, Ch.1,7

1/29 – Booker T. Washington
Reading: TNC Ch. 13 and 14

Week 4— WEB DuBois: *Souls of Black Folk*

2/1 – **Proposal Due at Class Time**⁶

2/3 – DuBois I
Reading: TNC, Pages TBA

2/5 – DuBois II
Reading: TNC, Pages TBA

Week 5— DuBois, James Weldon Johnson

2/8 – DuBois III
Reading: TNC, Pages TBA

2/10 – James Weldon Johnson
Reading: TNC, Pages TBA

2/12 – James Weldon Johnson
Reading: TNC, Pages TBA

Week 6—Black Atlantic I

2/15 – Black Atlantic⁷
Reading: BA pp.1-19 and Martin Delany (Supplemental Readings)

2/17 – Black Atlantic
Reading: BA pp. 19-40

2/19 – Black Atlantic
Reading: BA pp. 72-96

Week 7— Black Atlantic II

2/22 – **Annotated Bibliography Due at Class Time**

2/24 – Black Atlantic

⁶ The project is broken into several parts (proposal, annotated bibliography, rough draft, peer review, and final paper. As students finish each stage, I guide them in how to approach the next. When they turn in their proposals, for example, we spend a day discussing database search and evaluating scholarly sources in preparation for the next stage—the annotated bibliography. (FSO 1,2,3,10; LO 2,3; SALR 3,4,5)

⁷ The centerpiece of the course is an examination of the most recent theorizations of the African diaspora, particularly Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*. Gilroy builds on the work of previous writers such as DuBois, and Herskovits to create a new theory of diaspora built on new theorizations of race and the exchange of culture back and forth throughout the diaspora, not just as a one-way trip but as an Atlantic-series complex. Gilroy takes several case studies. For example, his discussion of music traces ideas and musical aesthetics between West Africa, the Caribbean, Britain and the United States. This book brings together much of what we have studied thus far in the semester. (FSO 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 1,4).

Reading: BA pp. 96-110

2/26 – Black Atlantic

Reading: BA pp. 111-45

Week 8— Children’s Games and Exam I

3/1 – Exam Review

3/3 – Exam I

3/5 – **Open**

Week 9— No Class: Spring Break

Week 10— Carnival and Brazil

3/15 – Carnival Traditions in the African Diaspora⁸

Reading: None

3/17 – Introduction to Brazil⁹

Reading: Brazil Overview (Supplemental Readings)

3/19 – Gender in Brazil¹⁰

Reading: AD Ch. 14

Week 11— Brazil and Jamaica

3/22 – Candomblé

Reading: Cheryl Sterling, “Finding Africa in the Dances of the Gods”
(Supplementary Readings)

3/24 – Introduction to Jamaica¹¹

Reading: Jamaica Overview (Supplementary Readings)

⁸ In week 10, we begin a series of case studies from the Caribbean and South America. We begin this unit tracing carnival traditions, a practice not common in the US outside of Louisiana, but common in many forms throughout the Caribbean and South America. (FSO 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 1,4)

⁹ Each case study in this unit begins with an overview of the country in question so that students may contextualize the more in-depth examples within the particular history and circumstances of that particular country. (FSO 1,2,3,6; SALR, 3,4)

¹⁰ The two focused studies on Brazil treat a changing sense of gender in Brazil and the syncretic religion Candomblé, which is based on a Yoruba religious traditions. The case of Candomblé is an example of an unusually homogenous group of Africans brought to the New World and kept relatively isolated. In class we compare this to the processes of cultural change and preservation in other parts of the diaspora. (FSO 1,2,3,6,7; LO 1,3; SALR 1,4).

¹¹ In the unit on Jamaica, we focus on Jamaican film in the context of Caribbean cinema and the influence of Hollywood on films such as *The Harder They Come*. In addition, we consider the Christmastime carnival celebration of Jonkonnu in detail and the legacy of slavery on its practice. (FSO 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR, 4)

3/26 – Jonkunnu
Reading: AD Ch. 16

Week 12— Jamaican Cinema

3/29 – *The Harder The Come I*
Reading: None

3/31 – *The Harder They Come II*
Reading: None

4/2 – Caribbean Cinema
Reading: AD Ch. 29

Week 13— Haiti

4/5 – Introduction to Haiti¹²
Reading: Haiti Overview (Supplementary readings)

4/7 – Images of Haiti and Abolition
Reading: AD Ch. 10

4/9 – Vodun in Haiti
Reading: AD Ch. 15

Week 14— Cuba

4/12 – Introduction to Cuba¹³
Reading: Cuba Overview (Supplementary readings)

4/14 – Race in Cuba
Reading: AD Ch. 11

4/16– Cuban Music
Reading: AD Ch. 26

Week 15— Wrap-up: The Idea of Diaspora¹⁴

¹² In the unit on Haiti, we consider the importance of images of the Haitian revolution to the abolition of slavery throughout the African Diaspora. We also consider in detail the process of reinterpretation of African gods in terms of Catholicism in the practice of Vodun, comparing the practice of Vodun to that of Candomblé. (FSO 1,2,3,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 4).

¹³ Our discussion of Cuba centers on race in Cuba and on Cuban music. We consider the changing idea of blackness in Cuba in the Early twentieth century and the interest in whites in black Cuban culture. We discuss the Cuban concepts of race in comparison with the system in the US. With regard to Cuban music, we consider the spread of Cuban forms in the first half of the twentieth century all throughout the African diaspora, Europe and West Africa, considering it as an example of the Black Atlantic, a complex system of exchange throughout the world. (FSO 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 4)

¹⁴ We wrap up the semester with three recent articles that consider the interest in Pan-Africanism (a feeling of unity between Africa and people of the African diaspora) and its effect on the identity of African peoples in the world. As one example of a discussion topic, students are asked to consider reasons why Pan-African movements have consistently failed. This type of analysis requires students to integrate material from a variety of readings and employ a variety of ways of knowing. (FSO 1,2,3,5,6,7,8; LO 1,3; SALR 1,4)

4/19 – African Identity

Reading: AD Ch. 3

4/21 – Pan-African Politics

Reading: AD Ch. 31

4/23 – Unfinished Migrations

Reading: “Unfinished Migrations” (Supplementary Readings)

Week 16— Wrap Up and Review

4/26 – Peer Review: Bring a Copy of Your Paper to Class

4/28 – Paper Revision Day: I will be available for meetings

4/30 – Exam 2 review