African Studies

Professor: Bangura (Director)

The concentration in African Studies offers students the opportunity to study Africa, its people, and its societies from a perspective that provides a holistic understanding of the continent. In order to provide concentrators with an in-depth understanding of African peoples and cultures, histories, and the political, economic, and ecological environments, the program draws upon the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities.

In addition, students will develop a heightened awareness of the long-term and complex relationship between Africa and the West. A core curriculum of courses, coupled with study abroad opportunities and an ongoing series of campus events including speakers, special programs, and visiting scholars, will provide students with a foundation for future work and/or study in African studies and related fields.

Requirements for the Concentration in African Studies

Number of Units
Six units are required.

Required Courses
AFST/HIST 104 Introduction to African Studies
AFST/HIST 276 Civilizations of Africa
AFST/HIST 277 Contemporary Africa

Three additional courses chosen from the following list. Courses should include Africa specific study abroad subject to approval by the Director of African Studies.

AFST/POLS 248 Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
AFST/HIST/SEMN 271 Nelson Mandela and the Anti-Apartheid Movement
AFST/HIST/WGS 272 Gender Relations in Africa
AFST/HIST 273 Atlantic Slave Trade
AFST/HIST/RELG 274 Islam in Africa
AFST/HIST/RELG 275/SEMN 274 African Christianity
AFST/ANSO 290 Africa in Global Context
ENGL 221 African Literature

Concentrators are encouraged to take as many core and elective courses as possible.

Courses taken abroad and at other U.S. colleges and universities, or with guest scholars on campus, may meet a concentration requirement. Students are encouraged to speak with the Director of African Studies as they develop their program.

Kalamazoo College also operates study abroad programs in Africa: Kenya, Senegal, Egypt, and Botswana. These give students an intensive academic and intercultural experience in an African region. The specific African countries in which the College operates are listed in the "Center for International Programs" section of this catalog.

African Studies courses

AFST 101 Elementary Kiswahili I
This course introduces students to the basic structures of Kiswahili with an emphasis on achieving elementary communication skills in reading, writing and grammatical skills. Student will become familiar with aspects of the language they would need in Kiswahili-speaking communities in Eastern Africa. This course also introduces students to the appropriate contexts of language usage by providing them with insights into the culture, traditions and history of Kiswahili-
AFST 102 Elementary Kiswahili II
This course continues to introduce students to the basic structures of Kiswahili with an emphasis on achieving elementary communication skills in reading, writing and grammatical skills. Student will become familiar with aspects of the language they would need in Kiswahili-speaking communities in Eastern Africa. This course also continues the introduction of appropriate contexts of language usage, providing students with insights into the culture, traditions and history of Kiswahili-speaking peoples.

AFST/HIST 104 Introduction to African Studies
This course introduces students to the history of Africa and its peoples, its activities and traditions in the medieval through the postindependence period. For purposes of organization, the course explores four major themes: Medieval Africa, Africa Meets the World, The Myth and Invention of Africa and Europe Meets Africa.

AFST 201 Intermediate Kiswahili
Kiswahili 201 is a continuation of Elementary Kiswahili I & II that students have taken at K or while on study abroad in Kenya. The course emphasizes skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing with intermediate level grammatical structures. Half of the class time will be devoted to conversation and oral practice, reinforcing and going beyond the skills the students have mastered while on study abroad. The rest of the time will be devoted to reading and learning some intermediate-level grammar. Students are required to review all the readings prior to each class meeting. Attendance is required.

AFST/POLS 248 Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa
This course offers an in-depth perspective on the study of Sub-Saharan African politics. It examines Africa's post-independence democratic strides, security issues, and the failure and successes of statism. It specifically exposes students to the challenges and the conundrum of the postindependence state and the efforts in dealing with such challenges in Africa. The end of the Cold War as well as the demise of apartheid affected the political landscape in Africa, thus strengthening the role of grassroots organizations and of other external forces to engage in the process of state reconstruction.

AFST/HIST/SEMN 271 Nelson Mandela and the Anti-Apartheid Movement
There are times when specific people, places and moments in history capture the imagination of the world. This occurs when that specificity speaks volumes to the human condition and offers lessons that we all sense are important. Such has been the case with Nelson Mandela and anti-apartheid movement. This course will use Mandela and the evolution of, and struggle against, apartheid as a window into some of the 20th century's most complex issues.
Prerequisite: Sophomores Only

AFST/WGS/HIST 272 Gender Relations in Africa
This course explores categories of masculinity and femininity that relate to and inform one another. It analyzes how these identity categories interact with other axes of social and political power, such as ethnic affiliation, economic status, and age in various places and at different historical times in Africa.

AFST/HIST 273 Atlantic Slave Trade
This course examines the complex web of connections that linked together the various lives and fates of Africans, Europeans, and Americans via the Atlantic slave trade. It analyzes the mode of enslavement of Africans by slavers in Africa, the experiences of slaves in the Middle Passage, and the impact of the trade on continental and Diasporan Africans. It also explores the role played by Africa-based abolitionist movements in ending the trade in Atlantic Africa.

AFST/HIST/RELG 274 Islam in Africa
This course explores the spread of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula to the African continent in the seventh century through the nineteenth century and limns the factors, which facilitated this advance. It examines the methods and principles of Islam and how the religion affected the life styles of its African neophytes and adherents. Because of the interaction between Muslim and African civilizations, the advance of Islam has profoundly influenced religious beliefs and practices of African societies, while local traditions have also influenced Islamic practices. Muslims were important in the process of state building and in the creation of commercial networks that brought together large parts of the continent. Muslim clerics served as registrars of state records and played a role in developing inner-state diplomacy inside Africa and beyond.

AFST/HIST 275/SEMN 274 African Christianity
This course explores the complex and disparate trends of Christianity in Africa since the first century C. E. It highlights Africa's role in the development and growth of Christianity as a global religion.
Prerequisite: Sophomores Only

AFST/HIST 276 Civilizations of Africa
Study of Africa south of the Sahara including the origins of man and the emergence of food producing communities; Ancient Egypt and pre-colonial African kingdoms and federations; medieval empires of western Sudan, Ethiopia, and Bantu-speaking Africa; and the Atlantic slave trade. Emphasis on socio-political and economic history.

AFST/HIST 277 Contemporary Africa
Study of Africa south of the Sahara including colonialism and the anti-colonial struggles of the post-WWII period.

**AFST 279 Special Topics in African History**
This course takes a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing various human-environmental relations within the African Diaspora. Moving through time and space, it begins in medieval Africa, enters the Western Hemisphere via the Atlantic slave trade, travels through the colonial Americas, and then ends in contemporary Africa and the United States. Along the way it blends environmental history with topics in postcolonial studies, ecocriticism, and environmental justice.

**AFST/ANSO 290 Africa in Global Context**
This course examines the ways that people and places on the African continent have been and continue to be connected to global dynamics and explores the implications of these past and present connections for people's lives as they are lived today.

**Prerequisite: Must have taken ANSO-103 ANSO-105 or ANSO-107.**

**AFST/ARTX 295 Contemporary African Arts**
In this course, students will gain familiarity with African material culture and artists, and with broad historical trajectories and major discourses in the field of African art history; develop fluency in formally analyzing and interpreting works of African art in relation to specific historical contexts; and build skills in close reading of texts and images.

**AFST 498 Independent Study**

**AFST 593 Senior Individualized Project**
Each program or department sets its own requirements for Senior Individualized Projects done in that program, including the range of acceptable projects, the required background of students doing projects, the format of the SIP, and the expected scope and depth of projects. See the Kalamazoo Curriculum -&gt; Curriculum Details and Policies section of the Academic Catalog for more details.

**Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.**

---

*The Academic Catalog contains the most accurate information available at the time of publication. Statements contained therein are not contractual obligations, and verbal or other representations that are inconsistent with or not contained within the catalogues' offerings or policies are not binding. Kalamazoo College reserves the right to change, without specific notice, offerings, policies, procedures, qualifications, fees, and other conditions.*

*This content was last updated on February 5 2020.*