Department of African American & African Studies

University of Minnesota

One of the oldest Black Studies Programs in the Country!
African American & African Studies

In 1968 San Francisco State University established the nation’s first Black Studies department.

In 1969 the Department of African American and African Studies was created at the University of Minnesota.
Like any academic department our goal is to prepare students to succeed in a wide range of professions including business, medicine, law, the arts, science, technology, foreign affairs, and so forth.
Yet, as we approach our fortieth anniversary, the Department of African American & African Studies at the University of Minnesota, like other similar departments around the country, continues to face questions about its relevancy:

What exactly can a person do with an African American & African Studies major?
We asked Robert Fikes, Jr., librarian at San Diego State University, to compile a representative list—which merely scratches the surface—of 150 accomplished professionals who have completed an undergraduate liberal arts major or double major in Black Studies.

These successful graduates are as diverse as their professional interests. They are Native American, Asian and Asian American. They are of Middle Eastern, Latino, European and African descent.

Their professions range from A (ambassador) to Z (zoo administrator).
In short, the answer to those asking what a person can do with an African American and African Studies major is simple:

…Anything!

Consider:
Current

United States Ambassador to South Africa

Jendayi Frazer

- B.A., African American Studies, Political Science, 1985; Ph.D., Political Science, Stanford University

- Professor Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

- Special Assistant to President George W. Bush; former Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council, 2001 - 2004
TV Reporter/Producer
Haven Daley

- B.A., African American Studies and Journalism, Pennsylvania State University, 1993
- M.A., Broadcast Journalism, Northwestern University
- Member of the Native American Journalists Association; ex-officio board member of the Radio and Television News Directors Association
- Reporter/Producer at PBS TV39
Documentary Film Producer
David Van Taylor

- B.A., African American Studies and Sociology, Harvard University, 1991
- Film credits include the, “Ghost of Attica” (2001, winner of DuPont-Columbia Silver Baton, (the “broadcast Pulitzer”)); Local News, a five-hour PBS series exploring racial politics behind the scenes of a TV news room; and “Caught In The Crossfire”: Arab-Americans in Wartime.
Broadcast Journalist

Ray Saurez

- M.A., Urban Affairs, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Senior Correspondent, Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) “Jim Lehrer’s News Hour”; former host of National Public Radio (NPR) news program “Talk of the Nation.” A longtime member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists; and a founding member of the Chicago Association of Hispanic Journalists.
Local Government
Peter A. Shapiro

- B.A., summa cum laude, Afro-American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, 1994

- Served two terms on the Prince George's (Virginia) County Council, representing District 2

Science & Technology
Mae Jemison

- B.A., African and African American Studies; B.S., Chemical Engineering, Stanford University, 1977

- M.D., Cornell University School of Medicine, 1981

- Speaks fluent Swahili, Russian and Japanese. Peace Corps Medical Officer for Sierra Leone and Liberia, West Africa.

- Dr. Jemison was the first woman of color to travel into space aboard the shuttle “Endeavor”.
Electrical Engineering
Kimani C. Toussaint, Jr.

- B.A., African Studies; B.S., Physics and Mathematics, University of Pennsylvania, 1996

- M.S., Electrical Engineering, 1999; Ph.D., Electrical Engineering, Boston University, 2004

- U.S. patent pending for his research in quantum ellipsometry

- Currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Chicago
Assistant Professor
Naomi Pabst

- B.A., summa cum laude, African American & African Studies and English, University of Minnesota, 1993

- Ph.D., History of Consciousness, University of California, 2000


- 2003 Assistant Professor, African-American Studies, Yale University
Political Cartoonist
Aaron McGruder

- B.A., African American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, 1998

- Cartoonist, writer and creator of the nationally syndicated comic strip “The Boondocks.”

- 2002 NAACP Image Award recipient
Poet Laureate
Devorah Major

- B.A., Black Studies, San Francisco State University, 1975
- Former librarian, San Francisco African American Historical Society
- Named the third Poet Laureate of San Francisco in 2002. She is also a trained actress and dancer.
Civil Rights Activist & Playwright
Endesha Ida Mae Holland

- B.A., African American Studies, 1979; Ph.D., American Studies, University of Minnesota, 1986
- National Lorraine Hansberry Award Recipient, 1981
- Pulitzer Prize nominated play, From The Mississippi Delta, (1997)
- Profiled in Juan Williams’ Voices of the Civil Rights Movement (2004)
Museum Director
Thelma Golden

- B.A., African American Studies and Art History, Smith College, Northampton, MA

- Deputy Director for Exhibition and Programs at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Writer of books and articles on American art.
Award Winning Novelist
Gloria Naylor

- M.A., Afro-American Studies, Yale University, 1983
- Guggenheim Fellow and National Endowment Fellow
- Gloria Naylor has taught at Penn, Cornell, and the University of Kent (England). Established her own multi-media production company.
Lisa Williamson aka “Sista Souljah”

- B.A. African Studies and American History, Rutgers University

- Global Student, anti-apartheid activist, volunteer in a medical center in Zimbabwe, and assisted refugee children in Mozambique.

- Published *No Disrespect* (1994) and the *NY Times* bestseller *The Coldest Winter Ever* (2004). Founder Million Women March (1999), Philadelphia. Executive Director of a social program that serves inner city children.
Youth Development
Jonah M. Edelman

- B.A., summa cum laude, African American Studies, Yale University, 1992
- Attended Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship, where in three years he earned an M.A. and the Ph.D. in Politics (1995)
- Currently Executive Director of Stand For Children. Jonah is the son of Marian Wright Edelman, CEO of the Children’s Defense Fund.
Business
Yvette Moyo

- B.A., African-American Studies, Eastern Illinois University

- President and CEO of Resource Associates International, Ltd.

- Ms. Moyo has committed her professional life to the positive promotion of African-American culture.
First African American Female Orthopaedic Surgeon
Claudia Thomas, M.D.

- B.A., Africana Studies, Vassar College, 1971
- M.D., Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, 1975
- Attending physician at Johns Hopkins hospital for twenty years, where she served on admissions committee, actively raised scholarship funds and mentored countless individuals.
- Recently joined former students in a private practice (Leesburg, FL) destined to become the largest African American orthopaedic surgery practice in the USA.
Law
Judge Richard W. Roberts

- B.A., cum laude, Black Studies and Political Science, Vassar College, 1974


- J.D., Columbia University, New York, NY, 1978

- Appointed by President Clinton (1998) to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Previously worked in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.
Law

Tanya Greene

- B.A., African American Studies, Wesleyan University, 1991
- J.D., Harvard University, 1995
- Attorney in the Capital Defender Office, New York City, representing people charged with capital crimes. Received the 1999 Reebok International Human Rights Award for her work against the death penalty.
Television Media
Bill Whitaker

- M.A., African History, Boston University, 1974
- News correspondent reports regularly for CBS Evening News; lead reporter covering the 2000 Presidential Campaign of George W. Bush.
State Leadership

Senator Carl Andrews

- M.A., African-American Studies, State University of New York, Albany, NY


- Senator Andrews became active in the communities of his youth due in large part to inspiration provided by heroes of the Civil Rights Movement.
WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A MAJOR IN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES?

FEATURED HERE ARE PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED THEIR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OR GRADUATE DEGREE IN BLACK STUDIES FROM MAJOR INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

CAREERS/SPECIALIZATIONS
- Ambassador
- Archaeologist
- Award-Winning Author
- Banking & Finance
- Business Consultant
- Campaign Manager
- Capital Punishment Law
- Cardiovascular
- Charitable Foundation Director
- Chemist
- Choreographer
- Civil Rights Organizer
- Corporate Law
- Counselor for Homeless
- Cultural Anthropologist
- Dentist
- Desktop Publisher
- District Attorney
- Economist
- Editor
- Educator
- Electrical Engineer
- English Professor
- Ethnographer
- Fine Arts
- Foreign Affairs
- Historian
- Hollywood Actor
- Human Resources Development
- Human Rights Activist
- Independent Film Producer
- Integrative Medicine
- Journalist
- Judge
- Labor Organizer
- Law Professor
- Librarian
- Media Consultant
- Medical Doctor
- Musician
- Museum Director
- Olympic Gold Medalist
- Orthodontist
- Orthographic Engineer
- Pastor
- Peace-Corps Volunteer
- Photographer
- Physicist
- Pilot
- Postmaster
- Political Scientist
- Psychologist
- Romance Scholar
- Reporter
- Senior Correspondent, PBS
- Sociologist
- State Representative
- Syndicated-Columnist
- Tax Law
- TV Anchor
- TV Producer
- Web Site Animator
- Urban Planning
- Youth Development
- Zoo Administrator

AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELD, AFRICAN AMERICAN & AFRICAN STUDIES...
- Teaches critical awareness about the peoples and cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora.
- Provides a bridge between the formal/physical sciences and the medical and physical sciences.
- Exposes undergraduate majors to a wide array of careers and professions, e.g. training in cultural diversity and global experience gives a business resume added depth and value.

EXPLORES SUCH CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS AS...
- Health Care & HIV/AIDS
- New Global Economy
- Environmental Racism
- Media Portraits of African People
- Criminal Justice Policies and Practices
- Youth Development
- Avenue Crime
- Social Welfare Policies

University of Minnesota
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
ONE OF THE OLDEST BLACK STUDIES PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY

501 Social Science Building Minneapolis, MN 55455-1118 website: http://afroam.umn.edu email: afroam@umn.edu
For more information about majoring in African American & African Studies contact Undergraduate Advisor 612 Social Science Building 612 624-5083
To major in the Department of African American & African Studies you will need....

- Approximately 30-36 credits at the 3xxx, 4xxx, and 5xxx level designated AFRO courses.

To earn a Minor

- You will need 15 credits in 3xxx, 4xxx, or 5xxx level designated AFRO courses.
For More Information Contact:
The Director of Undergraduate Advising

Telephone: 612-624-9847
Email: afroam@umn.edu
or
Visit our website: www.afroam.umn.edu