Recommendations

B.A. African American Studies

To learn more about making the most of your educational experiences within and beyond the classroom contact:
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PARTICIPATE

Community Service

Related course
AFAM 476 - Black Activism; AFAM 335 - Survey of the Civil Rights Movement; AFAM 397 and AFAM 398 - Special topics courses that could potentially have a community service component.

Sites/experiences
AFAM 476 regularly has a practicum component in which students are required to briefly volunteer with and study a community-based organization that is an example of contemporary grassroots activism among African Americans. Examples of such organizations include: the South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council; Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services; Appleseed Foundation; Transitions Homeless Recovery Center; Alston Wilkes Society; Community Schools in the Midlands; South Carolina Victim Assistance Network; Central Carolina Habitat for Humanity. Students are expected to engage in 4 hours of volunteer work (one Saturday) or an equivalent assignment while interviewing key leaders and stakeholders to understand their perceptions of activism. AFAM 335 provides students with experiences to understand the historic 1950s-1970s Civil Rights Movement among African Americans, as well as opportunities to get involved in groups continuing to advocate around various civil rights issues. A few examples of such organizations/sites include the Columbia Urban League and Columbia Chapter of the NAACP.

Why this is important
African American Studies as a discipline was founded with the concern of “praxis” or making connections between theory and practice with regards to the African American experience. Community service as part of the learning experience is an invaluable way to make this connection.

Global Learning

Related course
AFAM 580 -- Culture and Identity in the African American Diaspora

Timing for “study abroad”
Maymester

Destinations
Brazil (especially the Bahia region); Venezuela; Costa Rica; The Dominican Republic; Mexico (especially Costa Chica region of Oaxaca, Guerero, Veracruz); Puerto Rico; Jamaica; Virgin Islands; Bermuda; Trinidad and Tabago; Africa -- West Africa especially Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria as well as South Africa; Europe -- especially England, France, and Amsterdam.

Opportunities
International House at Maxcy; Walker Institute; Columbia World Affairs Council

Why this is important
African American Studies is a discipline that concerns itself with not only with the experiences of persons of African descent in the United States, but also with the experiences of persons of African descent around the globe.

Peer Leadership

Student Organization(s)
Association of African American Students; Campus Chapter of the NAACP; Brothers of Nubian Descent (BOND); Pan-African Student Association (PANA-SA);

Opportunities
There are a wide range of leadership opportunities at USC relevant to African American Studies majors such as leadership and/or membership in the above or related organizations. Additional opportunities are available within the AFAM program where we call upon students and collaborate with students groups to assist in the planning of programs including the AFAM Open House, the Black History Month Program, and the End of the Year Celebration.
The discipline of African American Studies concerns itself with how leadership has mattered in shaping American citizenship and the full citizenship rights of African Americans. Campus leadership is a practical means through which students can develop the skills necessary to become citizens of a multicultural world. Students are encouraged to work with or volunteer with a range of other programs with the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs.

Internships

Related Courses
AFAM 399 -- Independent Study (in lieu of a internship course; although presently the AFAM Associate Director is developing a proposal for a internship course.)

Recommended sites/work experiences
There are any number of sites/work experiences relevant to an AFAM major. A few examples include the equivalent of AFAM internship-related opportunities with: the Mojeska Monetieth Simkins House; South Carolina Archives and History Center; South Carolina African American Heritage Commission; Renaissance Cultural Arts Center at Historic Bethel; Historic Waverly Neighborhood Community Center; and work with Randolph Cemetery.

Professional Organizations
South Carolina Council for African American Studies

Why this is important
African American Studies majors must understand how their major concretely connects them to professional and career opportunities in a range of fields, but most especially those fields that deal with experiences and issues of historical preservation of African American communities.

Research

Related courses
AFAM 498 or AFAM 499 -- Seminars in African-American Studies. These are research methods courses; with 498 being taught by AFAM core faculty members whose disciplines are related to social and historical foundations and 499 being taught by AFAM core faculty members whose disciplines are related to arts and cultural foundations.

Sample research projects or topics
Among the research projects and topics of these courses are: Work with the South Carolina Library preparing a display of student research on the history of the Booker T. Washington high school and community; interviews with local black South Carolina poets, writers, and painters; a research project involving the Historic Waverly Neighborhood and effective Diabetes Prevention efforts; an investigation of grave markers with the historic Randolph Cemetery; and research on the history of the Saxon Homes Housing Development.

Why this is important
Research is at the core of African American Studies as an academic discipline and thus it is fundamentally important, conceivably most important, for students to learn how to be good researchers and thus scholars.

INTEGRATE

How to integrate
There are a range of integrative learning opportunities that have and will be provided to AFAM majors such as: class presentations on what they have learned from volunteering and participating with a local homeless agency; a blog about their experiences in attending a theatrical production (especially with the local NiA company of the Trustus Theater); a case study of the importance of Cecilia Saxon in the civil rights movement of South Carolina and Columbia.
Apply what you have learned Students may demonstrate applied knowledge from there USC Connect-related experiences in new contexts by making presentations to various community groups in collaboration with these groups. This was the case with Dr. Bobby Donaldson’s AFAM 498 Research Seminar, where students presented their findings -- original documents and other materials, interviews, photographs -- to families connected to the Booker T. Washington High School neighborhood.

Why this is important It is very important for students to understand the practical applications of what they are learning.

LEAD

Initial career opportunities Applied knowledge as presented to various communities is of vital interests to African American Studies because it connects our scholarly purpose with our responsibility to be of service to communities. A list of careers AFAM graduates with bachelor’s degrees have pursued include: business/service industry, journalism, community development, community services, student services, academic affairs, travel and tourism especially posts related to heritage tourism, social services and youth programs, education (elementary and secondary such as a teacher or program coordinator/school administrator) and legal services.

Related graduate programs Some of the masters, doctorates, or other degrees of advanced study that African American Studies graduates have pursued are a master or doctorate in: African American Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, History, English and Literature, Public Health as well as degrees in Medicine.

Future career opportunities African American Studies (especially at USC) is an entree to various disciplines of graduate study and various career opportunities including: History, Anthropology (physical and cultural), English and Literature, Political Science, Sociology, and Music. The advanced level careers in these fields include: college professor (assistant, associate, full professor), chair of an academic department, chair/director of an African American Studies program or department, director or fellow of a research institute related to African American/African/or Diaspora Studies, director of an African American culture center or Black Student/Multicultural Student center.

The listed experiences are a sample of options for your major. See the USC Connect experiences database to search for more opportunities. www.sc.edu/usccconnect/participate