

PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The Department of Pan-African Studies offers a four-year program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in the College of Arts and Sciences. The major in Pan-African studies provides in-depth exposure to history, language, philosophy, education, literature, sociology, art, music and other disciplines as they relate to peoples of African descent.

The Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University serves a vital need in the university community. Pan-African Studies is the teaching and learning about communities of people of African descent both on the continent of Africa and in various countries throughout the world. The department focuses on bringing the local point of view of diverse communities into a global context, where specific national stories (U.S., Haiti, Jamaica, etc.) and specific regional stories (West Africa, North Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Indian Ocean, etc.) can be understood in a world context. The department offers four concentrations: Community Activism, Strategy and Development; The Arts in Culture and Society; Race, Sex and Gender; and Global and Government Systems. The department also offers three minors: African Studies; Globalization, Identity and Space; and Pan-African Studies.

The faculty of the department represent a broad spectrum of scholarly and applied experience. This diversity allows us to provide a holistic and integrated view of the African experience through time. Faculty have their degrees in history, political science, philosophy, education, Africana Studies, visual arts, literature, communications and media, theatre arts and ethnomusicology.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The curriculum exposes students to theoretical and practical issues pertinent to community development. For example, students can take courses on the African-American family, the African-American woman and community development. Other themes represented within the curriculum include gender and sexuality, the African Union and contemporary political economies in Africa, ancient and colonial civilization in Africa, contemporary issues in the Caribbean, Afro-Hispanic life in North America, and modern literatures of the Pan-African world.

The Department of Pan-African Studies offers a rich and diverse program for undergraduate students. Its primary purpose is to increase student capabilities in critical thinking and carrying out research. We also aim to provide students with applied knowledge and interest in civic participation and to provide them with basic information and questions that will lead to further research, study and analysis. The courses cover the full spectrum of Pan-African affairs (the past, present and future of the global African experience). The curriculum also promotes a healthy appreciation, recognition and understanding of the diversity of cultures and civilizations comprising the human family.

The department was first created when, during the Civil Rights era in the late 1960s, African-American students requested that the university curriculum significantly reflect their historical and contemporary experiences. Those requests were joined by support from other student movements for civil liberties at Kent State. The Institute for

African American Affairs was created in 1969, the Center of Pan-African Culture in 1970, and the Department of Pan-African Studies was finally created in 1976, becoming the umbrella and major framework within which these other institutional functions operate.

The Pan-African Studies curriculum provides students with a fundamental understanding about the role of people of African descent in human history. It explores how different communities were formed in the Americas and how each society has evolved since the colonial period. It also explores the post colonial narratives and events of nation building and how those processes were affected by black populations, as well how they impacted black peoples' development and social evolution. Courses are available that specifically address those issues in the United States, the Caribbean, Brazil and different regions of Africa.

SPECIAL DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

The Department of Pan-African Studies is an institutional member of the National Council of Black Studies Programs and the West African Research Association. It benefits from these linkages by gaining access to speakers' programs, student networks and grant opportunities. In addition, for the year 2011-2012, the department was a grantee of the Ohio Humanities Council.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A concentration in Pan-African Studies prepares students to work effectively in a number of employment areas. Some examples are: teaching, business, public administration/urban studies, broadcasting, the arts, law, nutrition, social work, journalism, medicine, architecture and creative writing. Besides preparing student for employment, the degree in Pan-African Studies provides a foundation for graduate studies in Africana Studies. When coupled with another major or minor concentration (such as history, political science, business, nursing, fashion merchandising), a major in Pan-African Studies also supports advanced training in social sciences, humanities and professions such as psychology, criminal justice and nursing — that require sensitivity training or skills relative to interracial or intercultural understanding and conflict management.

PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES

The department has formal links with six community organizations in the area, including the King Kennedy Center and Skeels-Mathews Community Center in Ravenna, the AfricanSky organization for work in the development of schools in Mali; Lovelight Inc., which works with children in area primary schools; and the Way of Mind and Body (WOMB), which seeks to use culture and popular education to inspire our community's creativity and imagination. Students majoring and minoring in Pan-African Studies are able to work with these organizations as interns.

CENTER OF PAN-AFRICAN CULTURE

Managed by the Department of Pan-African Studies and student organizations linked with the department, the Center of Pan-African Culture is an integral part of the department life and sponsors various cultural activities, extending educational experiences beyond the classroom. The center programs guest lecturers on cultural themes, films, artistic performers, the annual Pan-African Festival and other cultural events.

THE INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN AFFAIRS

The Institute for African-American Affairs complements the academic activities of the department by offering students opportunities to do on-hands research with Pan-African Studies professors. The institute also brings in speakers on contemporary topics, links the department with related campus initiatives in research and to encourage students in proposal and research writing. In 2010-2011 the director of the institute secured a grant allowing students to do field work in Akron on issues in the black community. Students are encouraged to publish and attend professional conferences, through this office and the majors and minors network.

AFRICAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Department of Pan-African Studies usually offers Kiswahili I, II, III and IV. Currently we are revising and upgrading the program, which may expand to an additional African language, as well as courses on Kiswahili culture.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ARTS PROGRAM

A unique feature of the Pan-African Studies curriculum is the Communications Skills and Arts Program. A joint effort by the Department of Pan-African Studies and the Department of English, the program teaches college writing

courses in an innovative and student-centered manner. The freshman courses differ from other such courses offered by the Department of English only in the content of reading and writing assignments. Students in the program are also encouraged to enroll in complementary courses Interpreting the Black Experience I and II.

AFRICAN COMMUNITY THEATRE

The African Community Theatre, located in Ritchie Hall, increases exposure to and knowledge of the theatre heritage of the global African community for students and local community residents of all ages. The program encourages area residents and students to participate in its theatrical productions. Students enhance communication skills and gain awareness and appreciation of the African-American heritage as depicted through theatre.

UUMBAJI ART GALLERY

The Uumbaji Art Gallery is a space dedicated to examining themes about global Africa, social justice and other issues facing Peoples of Color. However, it is also a space that embraces themes not directly related to Africa and its diasporas. We select proposals based on the quality of the artwork, how it fits in with our themes, as well as the interest proposed shows may have for the entire university and surrounding community. We encourage applications that reflect a variety of media, styles and viewpoints.

FACILITIES

The Department of Pan-African Studies and its associated programs (Center of Pan-African Culture, Institute for African-American Affairs and African Community Theatre and Uumbaji Art Gallery) are all located in the newly renovated and remodeled Ritchie Hall. In addition to classrooms, offices and lounges, resources available to students include a research library, art gallery, darkroom, large lecture room, a community theatre, computer lab and several open study areas with comfortable furnishings and the latest in environmentally friendly lighting.

Pan-African Studies

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