Certificate Program Overview:

The Program in African American and Diaspora Studies (PAADS) offers an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and comparative curriculum of study of the histories, literatures, music, visual cultures, and politics of people of African descent around the world. To that end, PAADS focuses on several geographic areas: Africa, the Americas (North & Latin America), and the Caribbean. The Program examines equally the interactions of those diverse geographic areas, whose African-descended multiracial and multicultural inhabitants make up the African diaspora, with Europe. The program recognizes as well that there is a growing population of blacks dispersed throughout Europe, that is, Black Europeans; hence we are equally committed to exploring intellectually Black Europe and the particularities of the Black European experience. The Program in African American and Diaspora Studies is directed by Tracy D. Sharpless-Whiting (French and African American Studies).

Scholarship on race and its intersection with gender, class, color, inequality, religion, and sexuality has opened up new ways of thinking about qualitative and quantitative research and new theoretical perspectives and paradigms. Intellectually, black studies/diaspora studies have reinvigorated disciplines across the academy. Interest in the discipline’s intellectual production remains a high priority for publications across university presses (www.insidehighered.com/news/2005/12/29/publishing).

The certificate in Diaspora Studies has been designed to complement students’ disciplinary training, expose them to the interdisciplinary trends in the academy, and broaden their career possibilities. The Diaspora Studies certificate provides graduate students with access to interdisciplinary scholarship in the dynamic and continually evolving field of studies in the worldwide African Diaspora. The certificate also gives students a competitive edge and interdisciplinary training for the still robust career outlook for specialists in pan-black studies as well as in the search for postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities and social sciences.

Description of Program Entry and Application Requirements and Justifications

The certificate in Diaspora Studies is open to any student enrolled in graduate study at Vanderbilt University. Acceptance to the program requires the approval of PAADS graduate studies committee, comprised of the Director of Graduate Studies from PAADS (currently Tiffany Patterson), one faculty member from PAADS, and the Director of PAADS. Students must also submit as part of the application to the certificate program a one-page description of their interests in Diaspora Studies. Students should also submit a letter of approval from their faculty advisor or their departmental Director of Graduate Studies with respect to the certificate. The letter should speak as well to the student’s standing in the department.
Courses taken at Vanderbilt University prior to admission to the program may be counted toward the certificate requirements with the approval of the PAAD’s Director of Graduate Studies. The conferral of the certificate requires an overall GPA of 3.3, satisfactory performance of B+ or better in AADS 300, completion of all distribution requirements with a B+ or better, and a “pass” on the Graduate Certificate paper.

The minimums—3.3 GPA or B+ course performance stipulations—for enrollment and certificate conferral are three-fold: 1) the program’s faculty agreed that such minimums represented the threshold for solid academic standing in most graduate programs; 2) since we are a certificate program rather than a full-fledged graduate program we sought to offer a quantitative alternative to the GRE as an entrance requirements 3) the program’s faculty sought to adhere to some consistency across interdisciplinary program certificates offered in the College with respect to a minimum metric of satisfactory performance.

Coursework/Distribution Requirements

The certificate in Diaspora Studies consists of 15 credit-hours of course work distributed as follows:

1. AADS 300 Conceptualizing Diaspora. Interdisciplinary introduction to materials, methods, debates, and theoretical terms of scholarly research in Diaspora Studies. 3 cr.

2. Four additional graduate-level courses on race and its intersection with gender, class, religion, power, and/or sexuality, which are appropriate to the student’s graduate program of study, are eligible. All courses must be approved for credit by the PAADS graduate committee, and include at least three courses outside the student’s home department. Students will be required to provide a copy of course syllabi to the PAADS graduate committee so that the committee may determine whether the courses taken or proposed to be taken by the student are indeed appropriate for certificate credit. The PAADS’s DGS may at his/her discretion follow-up with the faculty member(s) regarding course content. Students must receive a B+ or better in these courses. 12 cr.

We expect that the Certificate in Diaspora Studies will attract a broad range of graduate students with varying degrees of interests with respect to the certificate program. Our offering of the certificate is way to engage more fully at the graduate level; we welcome then all graduate students whether they are interested in pursuing the certificate or merely enrolling in our courses for exposure to field.

3. AADS 395a or b Directed Study. Students may take an independent study with a core or affiliated faculty member in African American and Diaspora Studies who shares their research interest in Diaspora Studies. This course may count towards certificate credit as one of the four graduate level courses per requirement #2 of the certificate. Students must receive a B+ or better in this course in order to receive certificate credit.

4. Additionally, a paper (35pp) must be submitted to the PAADS graduate certificate faculty committee for evaluation. The paper/project must be comparative and cross-
cultural in keeping with the certificate’s diasporic emphasis. Moreover, the final paper must build upon work explored in AADS 300, AADS 395, or another course approved for graduate certificate credit. The submitted work should represent a substantial expansion of the previous work. Students must submit a proposal for the final paper to the PAADS graduate committee by the beginning of the semester in which they expect to receive the certificate. The proposal should also include the name of their faculty advisor. The paper will be evaluated by the faculty advisor as well as the PAADS graduate committee. The committee will assess the submitted paper on a pass/fail basis.

It is the committee’s hope that the feedback on the paper will enable the student to sufficiently revise the paper for possible future publication in peer-review diaspora studies-related journals such as Meridians, African American Review, Research in African Literatures.

Related Activities

- **ASWAD Conference:** As institutional members of the Association of the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora, students enrolled in the program will be allowed to participate in the conference without paying membership. PAADS will also pay registration fees for students enrolled in the certificate program. **While the program cannot require students to attend the conference (as we cannot similarly require students enrolled in language departments to study abroad), for such a requirement might place undue financial stress on the student, the program, and/or their departments, we will nonetheless strongly urge students to take advantage of this important opportunity.**

Cost to the University

- The administration of the Certificate in Diaspora Studies will come at zero cost to the university. PAADS will draw upon existing core faculty (currently six) and its affiliated faculty. The Program Director, T. Sharpley-Whiting, will be listed as the instructor of record for AADS 300 Conceptualizing Diaspora.

Benefits to the University

- In lieu of pursuing a full-fledged Ph.D. program (Northwestern, Harvard, Yale, UC-Berkeley, MSU, UMass-Amherst, Temple) or M.A program (Columbia) in black studies, the certificate program will allow Vanderbilt to compete nationally with its peer institutions (Duke, Emory) who already offer such graduate certificates. Additionally, the NRC values greatly certificate credentialing at the graduate level.
- Contributes to the interdisciplinary and global initiatives articulated in the university’s strategic plan.
- Contributes to the recruitment and retention of graduate students and faculty.
- Complements university trans-institutional initiatives (namely, Center for the Americas, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture)
Benefits to Students.

- Gives students a competitive edge for the continuing robust career outlook for specialists in pan-black studies as well as in the search for postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities and social sciences.
- Provides access to faculty trained in Diaspora Studies
- Offers interdisciplinary training in a growing area of scholarly interest.

Benefits to Faculty.

- Promotes the pursuit of new and innovative strategies and concepts for interdisciplinary classroom teaching and research on the Diaspora
- Allows PAADS faculty access to graduate students outside of their traditional disciplines
- Promotes and enhances efforts to build a diverse interdisciplinary scholarly community
Core Faculty

Anastasia Curwood (19th-20th century American history, race, and gender)
Kathryn Gines (philosophy, gender, race)
Tracy D. Sharpley-Whiting (French, comparative black diaspora movements, literature, film, gender)
Gilman W. Whiting (masculinity studies, sociology of education, social development theory, ethnographic research)
Tiffany Patterson (specializations in comparative history, the African Diaspora in the Americas)
Rosanne Adderley (comparative diaspora religion, comparative slavery, Latin America and the Caribbean basin, African Atlantic world)

The program also has twenty-four associated faculty. As with our undergraduate curriculum, courses offered by those faculty at the graduate level that fulfill requirement 2 of the graduate certificate are open to students seeking the certificate in Diaspora Studies. Equally, requirement 2 states explicitly, “Four additional graduate-level courses on race and its intersection with gender, class, power, religion, and/or sexuality, which are appropriate to the student’s graduate program of study, are eligible.” Hence, graduate courses offered by faculty not holding affiliated status with the program may also count towards the certificate, should the PAADS graduate committee find such courses appropriate.

A suggested listing of courses offered by VU faculty in the College that may be eligible for certificate credit (per the Graduate Catalog) academic year 06/07 follows. The list is neither comprehensive, nor intended to suggest that the courses have been found eligible for certificate credit; moreover, it does include graduate courses to be developed by 4 newly appointed African American faculty in English and Creative Writing.

**Anthropology**
349 Historical Archaeology of Latin America

**English**
320 Studies in American Literature
321 Studies in Southern Literature
325 Seminar in British and American Literature
337a Introduction to Literary Theory
350 Special Problems in English and American Literature
355 Special Topics in English and American Literature

**French**
388 Seminar in Francophone Literature

**German**
395 The Racial Imagination
History
305 Studies in Comparative History
360 Studies in Imperialism
340 Urban History
358 Comparative Slavery in the Colonial Americas
359 Atlantic World History
360 Studies in Imperialism and the Colonial Other
361 Topics in Latin American History
365 Seminar in Latin American History
371a Studies in Early American History to 1783
372a Studies in the Middle Period of American History, 1783-1861
373a Studies in United States History, 1861-1900
374a-374b Studies in Recent American History
375 Seminar in Recent American History
381 Topics in American History
384a Studies in American Social History
384b Seminar in American Social History
385a-385b Studies in the Intellectual History of the United States

Art History
320 British Art and Culture
324 Seminar: Studies in Twentieth-Century Art
325 Studies in American Art

Philosophy
352 Topics in Philosophy (Must be AADS-related)
353 Figures in Philosophy (Must be AADS-related)
365 Twentieth-Century Philosophy (Must be AADS-related)

Political Science
305 Feminist Social and Political Thought
330 Studies in American Politics
332 Political Parties and Electoral Behavior
333 Political Culture, Opinion and Behavior

Religious Studies
3415 Feminist/Womanist Ethics
3442 African American Political Theology
3134 The Ideology of Race and Gender in the Hebrew Bible
3822 The Amarna Period
3882 African American Biblical Hermeneutics
3214 Women and Religion in America
3235 African American Religious History
3239 Roots of American Evangelicalism 1770-1879
3249 Seminar: Colonial American Religious History
3538 The Black Church in America
3852 Slave Thought
3535 Black Islam in America

**Sociology**
302 Contemporary Theory
331 Survey Analysis on Inequalities and Movements
333 Survey Seminar on Cultural Sociology
345 Survey Seminar on Social Stratification

**Spanish and Portuguese**
314 Introduction to Latin American Colonial Studies
334 Ordering and Disrupting Fictions in Latin America
338 Studies in Colonial Literature
354 The Politics of Identity in Latino U.S. Literature

**Women’s and Gender Studies**
301 Gender and Sexuality: Feminist Approaches
302 Gender and Pedagogy
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For more detailed information on the Diaspora Certificate, please go to http://www.vanderbilt.edu/afams or contact the Director of Graduate Studies in the Program in African American Studies at truby.patterson@vanderbilt.edu or by phone 615-343-6390.

Requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Diaspora Studies

1. African American and Diaspora Studies 300.
2. Four additional graduate-level courses on race and its intersection with gender, class, religion, power, and/or sexuality, which are appropriate to the student’s graduate program of study, are eligible. All courses must be approved for credit by the PAADS graduate committee, and include at least three courses outside the student’s home discipline. Students will be required to provide a copy of course syllabi to the PAADS graduate committee so that the committee may determine whether the courses taken or proposed to be taken by the student are indeed appropriate for certificate credit. One course may be satisfied through an independent study (*AADS 395 Directed Study*) with a core or affiliated faculty member in African American and Diaspora Studies.

4. A paper (35pp.) submitted to the PAADS Graduate Committee for evaluation. The paper must be comparative and cross-cultural in keeping with the certificate’s diasporic emphasis. Moreover, the final paper must build upon work explored in AADS 300, AADS 395, or another course approved for certificate credit. The committee will assess the paper on a pass/fail basis.


**Approved list of courses:**

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND DIASPORA STUDIES: 300, Theories of Diaspora; 395, Directed Study.

ANTHROPOLOGY: 349, Historical Archaeology of Latin America.

ENGLISH: 320, Studies in American Literature; 321, Studies in Southern Literature; 325, Seminar in British and American Literature; 337a, Introduction to Literary Theory; 350, Special Problems in English and American Literature; 355, Special Topics in English and American Literature.

FRENCH: 388, Seminar in Francophone Literature.


HISTORY: 305, Studies in Comparative History; 340, Urban History; 358, Comparative Slavery in the Colonial Americas; 359, Atlantic World History; 360, Studies in Imperialism and the Colonial Other; 361, Topics in Latin American History; 365, Seminar in Latin American History; 371a, Studies in Early American History to 1783; 372a, Studies in the Middle Period of American History, 1783-1861; 373a, Studies in United States History, 1861-1900; 374a-374b, Studies in Recent American History; 375, Seminar in Recent American History; 381, Topics in American History; 384a, Studies in
American Social History; 384b, Seminar in American Social History; 385a-385b, Studies in the Intellectual History of the United States.


PHILOSOPHY: 352, Topics in Philosophy (must be AADS-related), 353, Figures in Philosophy (must be AADS-related), 365, Twentieth-Century Philosophy (must be AADS-related).


SOCIOLOGY: 302, Contemporary Theory; 331, Survey Analysis on Inequalities and Movements; 333, Survey Seminar on Cultural Sociology; 345, Survey Seminar on Social Stratification.


WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES: 301, Gender and Sexuality: Feminist Approaches; 302, Gender and Pedagogy.
The Committee on Graduate Education has approved the attached proposal from the Program in African American and Diaspora Studies. The proposal is for a new graduate certificate in African American and Diaspora Studies.

Two additional documents, which constitute the proposal and a catalog-ready copy, are attached.