

A Blueprint for Africana Studies: An Overview of African/African American /African Caribbean Studies¹

by

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Abstract

In the 1960s and 1970s several historical phenomenon contributed to the emergence of the study of people of African descent inside of universities and colleges. As a response to the constant demand for a more inclusive curriculum, faculty, and students, universities and colleges across America launched the development of the discipline of Black Studies (Afro-American, Africana, and African American Studies). The aim of this blueprint for Africana Studies is to interrogate previous blueprints, to establish a foundation and create a universal framework for the future of the discipline. The purpose of this blueprint is to (1) formulate a functional model and definition; (2) create a universal program structure; (3) develop a core curriculum model; (4) determine faculty appointment; (5) establish criteria for scholarship; (6) establish a research agenda; and (7) determine community responsibility.

Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s several historical phenomenon contributed to the emergence of the study of people of African descent inside of universities and colleges. As a response to the constant demand for a more inclusive curriculum, faculty, and students, universities and colleges across America launched the development of the discipline of Black Studies (Afro-American, Africana, and African American Studies).² Ironically, however, no two programs developed along the same structural or organizational lines. According to Darlene Clark Hine in *Black Studies: An Overview*, “today it seems that no two Black Studies programs are alike. Their diversity is evidenced in faculty size and composition, relations with university administrators and more traditional departments, curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach” (Hine, 7). In effect, the lack of universality across the field has lead to continued questions and debate over the legitimacy and future of the discipline. Such questions are: Is it a discipline or field of study? What nomenclature is most appropriate? Is it interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary? Should it focus solely on African Americans or include the experiences of the continent of Africa and the African Diaspora? What ideology, methodology, and theoretical construct(s) should inform and dictate the content and structure of African American Studies? Has the mandate of community responsibility been followed and/or efficiently maintained? The goal of this blueprint is to formulate a coherent criterion by which Africana Studies departments across the nation can structure their programs.

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Rationale for Blueprint

At the dawn of the Twenty-First Century, we embark on the twentieth-year anniversary of the first doctoral degree-granting program in African American Studies. It is at this time that the discipline evaluates how far it has come and where it is going. A new generation of scholars has joined to build on a great legacy of ‘scholar activism,’ and thus a new and united mission for the future of Black Studies must be formulated.

Seeing the need for Black scholars to create our own discipline and produce new knowledge about ourselves, Black scholars joined together and brought about a forced entry into academia; as a consequence, came the emergence of Black Studies departments and programs throughout America.

Upon this victory, scholars sought to draft proposals for the development and function of the discipline. Some of these works include theory building, paradigm structure, curriculum development, the establishment of the master's and doctoral degree, guiding principles and frameworks, and introductory texts. In 1995 Manning Marable in *Beyond Black and White: Transforming African American Politics*, dedicates a chapter to the development of a blueprint for the discipline entitled *Blueprint for Black Studies*. Here Marable outlines a brief historical overview of the discipline and charges it with a new mission for the 21st Century, and the centuries to come. In *Blueprint for Black Studies*, Marable declares that "African American Studies is at the cutting side of a second Renaissance, a just discovered level of growth, institutionalization and theoretical advancement" (109). In essence, he advocates a framework for African American Studies with a decisive role in debate surrounding multiculturalism; however, he does not offer a comprehensive framework for the total discipline. In fact, no comprehensive blueprint has been developed nor implemented on a universal level for Black Studies across the world. It is therefore the aim of this blueprint to create a universal model and foundation for the future of Africana Studies.

Accordingly, the rationale for developing this blueprint is to promote excellence in education, research, and service. Since Africana Studies is concerned with the study of the experiences of African peoples, through the study of such subject areas as history, politics, economics, culture, literature, sociology, and psychology, the aim is to engender an appreciation of oneself and culture and emphasize the ways in which people of African descent have constructed and interpreted their own lives and cultures. In turn, this blueprint provides students with a multidisciplinary understanding of the Black experience in Africa, the United States, and other areas of the Diaspora. As Karenga states in *Afrocentricity and Multicultural Education*, "thus the inclusive approach of Black Studies commits it to a multidisciplinary educational process" (81).

Creating this blueprint also fosters research on Africans and African-Americans and provides conceptual frameworks to address the causes and effects of Africana people's struggle for liberation. In addition, it equips students for critical thinking and creatively. Fourth, a critical component is the creation of new knowledge and research paradigms. Utilizing different paradigms and disciplinary modifications in the discipline of Africana Studies, provides a framework for observations and understandings, which in turn shapes both what we observe and how we understand those observations. In this regard, paradigms serve as a structuring of concepts, theories, and methodologies. In effect, constructing paradigms play a vital role in Africana Studies; and those paradigms should orient the study of people of African descent from a location of African centeredness. Thus, it is Afrocentric in its nature. According to Molefi Asante, Afrocentricity establishes,

A frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person...It centers on placing people of African origin in control of their lives and attitudes about the world. This means that we examine every aspect of the dislocation of African people; culture, economics, psychology, health and religion...As an intellectual theory, Afrocentricity is the study of the ideas and events from the standpoint of Africans as the key players rather than victims. This theory becomes, by virtue of an authentic relationship to the centrality of our own reality, a fundamentally empirical project...it is Africa asserting itself intellectually and psychologically, breaking the bonds of Western domination in the mind as an analogue for breaking those bonds in every other field. (1991, 171)

In turn, by centering the African at the core of his/her own reality, enables the Afrocentric study of African peoples. Conversely, an Afrocentric orientation is rooted in self-conscious action. In *Afrocentricity*, Asante states that there are two aspects of consciousness: 1) toward oppression: where one is able to verbalize the conditions of oppression; 2) toward victory: where a victorious historical will is emphasized. Through consciousness, agency is enacted and liberation can be brought about. Thus, the direction of Afrocentric consciousness is liberation, and thus a key concept of Africana Studies. In creating this blueprint, Afrocentricity will serve as a central component to the development and reconstruction of the discipline.

Another reason for developing this blueprint is to encourage a functional relationship between faculty, students and the community, which entails maintaining a community commitment/responsibility component that promotes collaborative work; and contributes to educational and cultural enrichment which in turn supports the implementation of academic and practical knowledge into the Africana community. Fundamentally, we must keep the Africana community's needs present and the discipline's obligation in aiding to liberate the masses of Africana people. Finally, Africana Studies is imperative in order to reinforce the study of Africana cultural ideals. For these reasons Africana Studies is distinguished from all other disciplines, and this blueprint serves as a critical framework for the future of Africana Studies.

Nomenclature, Definition and the Organization of Knowledge

One of the most pressing issues, that affect the uniformity of Africana Studies, is the issue of nomenclature. It is argued that nomenclature is insignificant, but the fact that a consensus has not been reached about what to entitle the discipline exhibits what Adams argues is the "youthfulness" of the discipline (33). We understand that in its original form, Africana Studies, termed 'Black Studies' was a reflection of the historical, political, and cultural struggle of a people; however, the discipline cannot end there.

It must resurrect the full history and culture of people of African descent while at the same time venerating our historical struggles. In his article *Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge, and Conflict*, John Henrik Clarke gives reasoning for the departure from the concept of “Black” stating:

“Black, or Blackness, tells you how you look without telling you who you are, whereas Africa, or Africana, relates you to land, history, and culture” (Clarke 1984, 292).

To accurately study Africana people, researchers must understand the essential interconnectedness of Africana people and thereby locate them under the nomenclature of “Africana.” This connection to Africa is very important to a discipline which is supposed to approach scholarship from an Afrocentric perspective (Nelson 1997). It is also important because it more accurately describes what and whom the scholars explore. Darlene Clark Hine states, “Africana Studies encompasses a broader geographical, if not disciplinary, reach spanning the North and South America, the Caribbean, and the African continent—in short, the African Diaspora...” (Hine 1990, 8). Since these areas are all explored by the discipline, it is imperative that the name of the discipline account for these geographical locations. James E. Turner sums it up when he states, “Africana Studies is a teaching and research enterprise that is committed to the interpretation and explication of the total phenomenon called the Black experience” (Turner 1984, 74-75). When Turner says “total phenomenon called the Black experience” he alludes to the inclusiveness of Africana as compared to the narrowness of Black or African-American Studies.

In order to build a sense of African community globally, the best appropriate name for discipline is Africana Studies. Under the nomenclature of “Black Studies” Vivian Gordon argues that the discipline is “an analysis of the factors and conditions which have affected the economic, psychological, legal, and moral status of the African in America as well as the African in the Diaspora” (231). While I agree with Gordon’s definition of the discipline, I however disagree with the nomenclature used to classify the discipline, and in addition advocate for adding additional dimensions to the overall definition of the discipline. In effect, Africana Studies additionally should locate Africa at the center and ideologically focus on improving the global conditions of the African community.³ African Studies “seeks not simply to offer information, but also to teach critical thinking and knowledge from an African-centered standpoint. It is at this point that Afrocentricity becomes an indispensable aspect of the Africana Studies project and contributes to the enrichment and expansion of education discourse and practice” (Karenga 2002, 76). In this sense, Africana Studies should remove the Eurocentric worldview and produce corrective truth reflecting the experiences of Africans and an African worldviews; thus liberating and redefining their existence and experiences.

Still, the most effective Africana Studies department must be disciplinary with multidisciplinary structure; in the sense that multidisciplinary encompasses approaches across all disciplinary lines within its own discipline (i.e. the inclusion of Black psychology, Black economics, etc). In turn, a fully functional multidisciplinary Africana Studies department should be broken up into areas of concentration which would include; Africa, North America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia. These areas contain large populations of African descendent people and therefore are valid areas of study. Most departments today deal with almost exclusively African-Americans, with a trivial reference here and there about Africa and other African people in the Diaspora. To truly become a discipline dedicated to the total African experience, it is imperative that more focus be put on the interconnectedness of all African people and also on these areas specific contributions and problems. Thus, functioning first as an independent discipline, Africana Studies must embody a multifaceted structure.

Subsequently, the definition that is most appropriate to define Africana Studies is to conceive of Africana Studies as an instrument whereby knowledge, consciousness and liberation of the global Africana community can transform and decolonize the Africana mind and liberate the Africana community. Within the academic community, the purpose is to serve as an avenue where new methodologies and new technologies relevant to the proper study of people of African descent can develop socially, politically and intellectually, after which the transformation of new knowledge into practical social application is administered to and by the community. In effect, as a critical component of Africana Studies the mandate of community responsibility and empowerment of the Black community “there is a need for African American Studies to fulfill its original mission to liberate African American people and to commit itself to the communities’ needs. In this connection, African American Studies must once again become committed to addressing the consciousness, realities, and urgencies of the life situations of African Americans” (Norment, 839). Moreover, the original mandate of community responsibility and empowerment have not been effectively maintained, and there still remains a need for Africana Studies to provide sources of liberation to the Black community outside of the academic walls, and create agency whereby the current political, economic and social issues can be addressed. To accomplish this goal, departments would have to set out to hire scholars with broad research foci (which is exhibited in those who hold Africana Studies degrees). Each department should hire faculty so that each of these areas could be covered to some degree until this system is fully developed; yet, at the same time not forming a strict ‘model’ department or duplicate departments. In this sense, departments will still maintain some autonomy while at the same time adhering to a broader disciplinary structure. Once it has been settled that Africana Studies should be multidisciplinary, in a department structure and with specific areas of concentration, the next issue becomes the methodology.

In terms of ideology, methodology, and theoretical constructs, it is imperative to address the role of the researcher and the purpose of an Africana Studies method. Accordingly, James E. Turner in *Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge*, correctly states, “as a methodology, history, in Black Studies, constitutes the foundation for the construction of an analysis of the fundamental relationship between the political economy of societal developments and the racial divisions of labor and privilege, and the common patterns of life chances peculiar to the social conditions of Black people” (77). In this regard, the evaluation of people of African descent from a historical background serves as informative force dictating the content and structure of African American Studies. In addition, Abdul Alkalimat and Associates in *Toward a Paradigm of Unity in Black Studies*, defines an ideology as “a set of beliefs that serve to define physical, social, mental, and spiritual reality” i.e. when constructing the content of Africana Studies, the discipline must incorporate the beliefs systems and social and mental patterns from an Afrocentric standpoint (493). Furthermore, the proper study of Africana people entails an Afrocentric approach in the creation of knowledge and methodologies based in a historical context.

The discipline of Africana Studies must give Africana scholars a venue through which we can properly analyze the dynamics surrounding Africana people’s history and its link to their everyday experiences. It must provide us with the capacity to ask and answer thought provoking questions based on the phenomenon which people of African descent experience. In order to achieve this goal, the discipline must be cognizant of the historical, empirical, and analytical subject matter of African descended people. Under this umbrella, the scope includes the study of all people of African descent as well as subjects relevant to these people (i.e. history, art, literature, mathematics, philosophy, etc.); while at the same time allowing for the intersectionality of the subject areas to emerge for a more inclusive study. As William E. Nelson correctly cites “according to Professor Maulana Karenga, a discipline is by definition a self-conscious, organized system of research and communication in a defined area of inquiry and knowledge” (Nelson 1997, 60). Subsequently, the content of the discipline of Africana Studies is understood as the conscious Afrocentric investigation of Africana phenomena, whereby the interrogation of issues affecting people of African descent are explored/examined using an Afrocentric framework, which allows studies to develop from an Afrocentric perspective. In this regard, Africana Studies also encompasses the exploration of current issues affecting people of African descent and offering solutions to those problems. In addition, the discipline must also create an academic environment which nourishes the intellectual growth and development of both undergraduate and graduate students, which will in turn equip them with the proper knowledge and skills to critically assess the study of people of African descent. Finally, Africana Studies is the analysis and dissemination of knowledge about African people, the creation of Afrocentric methodologies, and the instituting of consciousness ‘toward oppression’ and ‘toward victory’ throughout the Africana community (Asante 1988).

The mission of Africana Studies is the liberation of both the mind and the community. While the mind receives it freedom through intellectual work, the community is liberated through a conscious effort to decolonize the minds and to tackle the everyday realities of the Africana community, thereby transmitting knowledge into practical social/cultural application. Thus, allowing studies to occur from an Afrocentric perspective which provides the opportunity to combine the mission, course content, methodology, pedagogy, and research in the development of undergraduate and graduate curricula in Africana Studies. Subsequently, the construction of a curriculum guide for the discipline of Africana Studies must be ordered and arranged according to the principles of Maat, “the central moral and spiritual concept in Kemetic society. Maat means many things, including truth, order, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order—in a word, rightness in the divine, natural and social realms” (Karenga 2002, 95). In this regard, Africana Studies must emphasize its focus on justice and truth—while at the same time intellectually stimulating the minds of Africana people and liberating the Africana community. Accordingly, as Darlene Clark Hine articulates, “the curriculum should reflect an ordered and arrangement of courses progressing from the introductory through the intermediate to advanced levels. In terms of content, a sound Black Studies curriculum must include courses in Afro-American history, and Afro-American literature, sound literal science, psychology, and economics. A cluster of courses in art, music, and language or linguistics should be made available to the student” (10). The fusion of the mission, course content, methodology, pedagogy, and research in the development of undergraduate and graduate curricula will produce a functional model for the design and implementation of a curriculum which will provide both a theoretical and methodological foundation while at the same time offering the practical application of the courses into society for the advancement and liberation of people of African descent. For example, offering a course in religion will entail historical context such as African religions, along with the role of the Black church and Islam; it would also encompass the presence of religion in the lives of people of African descent today: i.e. the past, present, and future. Furthermore, developing a curriculum that encompassing the historical, theoretical, and analytical dynamics of the subject area provides Africana Studies with the opportunity to critically assess the current knowledge base, develop methodologies, and apply those skills and knowledge to the Africana community.

Foundations and Structure

The most practical structure of Africana Studies would be a department in a College of Arts and Sciences—and possibly in the future a College of Africana Studies or University of Africana—utilizing a multidisciplinary approach of study. Departmental status will allow for full time resident Afrocentric scholar/faculty from different disciplines to receive tenure and build careers for their contributions to Africana Studies, thus increasing stability in the discipline and training of graduate students.

The foundation of Africana Studies lies within the structure of the discipline and the practical application of the research statistics to the Africana Diaspora. In this sense, the framework provided by James E. Turner in *Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discipline in the Sociology of Knowledge*, provides the foundation to formulate the structure of the discipline. According to Turner there are four basic tenants:

- (1) To defend (legitimize) against racism and intellectual chauvinism the fundamental right and necessity of Africana studies;
- (2) To disseminate (teach and publish) Black studies social theory and analysis, criticism, and historiography and to reference the work of pioneering Black scholars;
- (3) To generate (new) knowledge (research) and codify existing information and predicate contemporary study upon the truths formulated by our mentors;
- (4) To preserve the acknowledged value of rare and classical texts in the field, and maintain the scholarly tradition and rich heritage of African peoples and their descendants (Turner 1984, 75).

In addition to these four basic tenants four additional tenants must be included: (1) To apply and implement community based programs for the revitalization of the Africana community; (2) To facilitate the development of education programs and curriculum for all-grade levels; (3) Provide conceptual frameworks to illuminate the causes and effects of Africana people's struggle for liberation in the global community; and (4) theory building. At this point, focus will be shifted to detail the necessity of theory building in Africana Studies. Theory is defined as a systematic explanation of phenomena as it relates to specific facets of life. Theories decipher human patterns which lead to the investigations of human subject matters; they also shape and direct or reshape and redirect research approaches.

In Africana Studies, in order to combat the domination of outside theories, internal theories emerge which seek to shape the scholarly discourse and provide some parameters for the broad undertaking. To differentiate between Africana Studies and the studying of Black people, Azibo comments that Black Studies departs from the assumptions of Eurocentric universalism and “at the heart of Afrocentric analysis of any phenomena lies the African worldview [which]... comprises the natural/indigenous/authentic conceptual framework of African people growing out of their history, culture and philosophy” (Azibo 1992, 64). As one of the foremost advancer of African centered theory, Molefi Asante calls the “metatheory” of Afrocentricity, “a theoretical instrument for the examination of phenomena,” which seeks to view “African people as subjects of historical and social experiences rather objects in the margins of European experiences” as in traditional Eurocentric disciplines (Asante 1992, 98). Placing African people and their social and historical experiences at the center of the discipline allows for the discipline to grow and unlock the chains of bondage of European knowledge and become the purveyors of the Africana way and an Africana theory of knowledge production.

Continued development and redevelopment of Afrocentric theories and methodologies will move closer to what Outlaw calls Africana Studies' "normative theory," rules that "mark off the field of its operation, set its boundary conditions, and steer the practices executed in its name"; thus moving the field towards standardization and meters of relevance (1996, 10)). Outlaw believes the two pillars for theory in Africana Studies are "knowledge development or consciousness raising" and "the liberation of black peoples," which set forth the directions of applying the academic exercise of Africana Studies to the praxis of serving and improving the African community (Outlaw 1996, 113). Although the extent to which theoretical work needs advancement, it provides a foundation, which if built upon will wean Africana Studies from its intellectual dependence on traditional social and human science theories.

According to McWhorter and Bailey as summarized in *The African American Studies Reader*, there are three basis of theory in Africana Studies, first, to maintain scholarship; second, to produce radical critiques; and finally, to analyze Black intellectual history. The first function of theory building in Africana Studies is that theory serves as an opportunity to provide a general orientation to the important concepts central to the discipline. In this regard, the notions and ideas that shape the development of theories in Africana Studies can be understood at the macro and micro levels. Take for instance the concept of Africology, Lucius Outlaw in *Africology: Normative Theory*, asserts that "Africology can be taken to mean theoretical discourse about norms in general—what they are, their basis, etc.—but discourse steered by partisan foreconceptions about 'Africans.' On the other hand, it can be understood as referring to the specifications of particular norms for Africology as a disciplinary complex" (Outlaw 1996, 97). Moreover, allowing the opportunity for a general orientation to Africology at both the macro and micro level affords theory building in Africana Studies the opportunity to create essential definitions of important concepts that are central to the discipline.

Second, establishing parameters regarding form and content serves as a venue through which Africana Studies can establish a direction and boundaries that will encompass the shaping of the structure and substance of theories within the discipline. Observe Terry Kershaw's (1989) development of a methodology in Africana Studies, he states that "the purpose is to identify the fundamental contradictions between theory and practice, to help develop tools to bring harmony between theory and praxis, and to help in the scholarly study of Black life experiences. The oppression of Black people is not a prerequisite of a Black Studies discipline although oppression led to it" (50). The parameters that Kershaw outlined for the creation of methods in Black Studies illustrates how the establishment of boundaries regarding form and content in theory building serve a functional role in the development of theories in Africana Studies.

Third, formulating empirical generalizations by fusing qualitative and quantitative methodologies allows for both numerical and non-numerical examinations and interpretations of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships in order to build theory in Africana Studies.

The combination of both these methodologies aid in the formulization of empirical generalizations, which in turn support the role of theory building in Africana Studies. Thus, since the discipline of Africana Studies is unlike any other discipline, it must fuse both qualitative and quantitative methodologies from an Afrocentric framework in order to build effective theories in Africana Studies.

Utilizing different paradigms and disciplinary modifications in the interaction of theory and practice, is the fourth and final function of theory building in Africana Studies. Paradigms are the framework for observations and understandings, which in turn shape both what we observe and how we understand those observations. In this regard, paradigms serve as a structuring of concepts, theories, and methodologies. According to Kershaw (1989), “paradigms in Black studies will determine the proper subject matter as well as the appropriate methodology” (46). Thus, when Africana Studies uses various disciplinary modifications in the interplay of theory and practice it should revolve around the understanding of Afrocentricity and utilizing an Afrocentric approach in creating theories for the study Black people. Moreover, Afrocentricity refers to the lived experiences of people of African descent as the center of analysis from an African standpoint. It emphasizes an analysis rooted in the historical reality of Black people. Constructing Afrocentric paradigms plays a vital role in the function of theory building in Africana Studies, in that they orient the researcher to approach the study of people of African decent from an African perspective.

Furthermore, the four above mentioned tenants combined with these four tenants foster the groundwork whereby the structure of Africana Studies can be laid (See the structure below).

Table 1: Africana Studies Structure-Sample Framework

Africana Studies Structure (Sample Framework)				
	Sociological Studies	Cultural Studies	Psychological Studies	Historical Studies
Africa	African Sociological Studies	African Cultural Studies	African Psychological Studies	African Historical Studies
Asia	Asian Sociological Studies	Asian Cultural Studies	Asian Psychological Studies	Asian Historical Studies
Caribbean	Caribbean Sociological Studies	Caribbean Cultural Studies	Caribbean Psychological Studies	Caribbean Historical Studies
Europe	European Sociological Studies	European Cultural Studies	European Psychological Studies	European Historical Studies
France/Spain	French/Spanish Sociological Studies	French/Spanish Cultural Studies	French/Spanish Psychological Studies	French/Spanish Historical Studies
Latin America	Latin American Sociological Studies	Latin American Cultural Studies	Latin American Psychological Studies	Latin American Historical Studies
North America	North American Sociological Studies	North American Cultural Studies	North American Psychological Studies	North American Historical Studies
Russia	Russian Sociological Studies	Russian Cultural Studies	Russian Psychological Studies	Russian Historical Studies

Under the umbrella of Africana Studies fall three fields: African Studies, African American Studies, and African Caribbean Studies, this allows for a comparative analysis of African people around the globe. In addition to these three major fields, Africans in Asia and Europe will also be studied. The inter-sectionality of these three fields encompasses the study of the Africana family, the Africana male/female, and the Africana community. In terms of major areas of study, students will be afforded the opportunity to chose an area of concentration-such as Cultural Studies-along with a geographic location-such as one of the countries in Africa, say Nigeria-and combine the two within their major area of study. Take for example, a student in Africana Studies department who seeks to study Music in Nigeria. If that student chooses to focus on popular music such as Hip Life, he/she would be classified as a student in the department of Africana Studies majoring in Music with a concentration in African Cultural Studies (See sample outline below).

Table 2: Africana Studies Sample Student Profiles

Africana Studies Student Profiles Based on Majors Areas of Study and Concentrations				
	Student A/B	Student C/D	Student E/F	
Africa	African Musical Art forms	African Dance	African Religious Practices	Cultural Studies
North America	African American Political Practices	African American Social Movements	African American Educational Developments	Sociological Studies

Core Curriculum (graduate and undergraduate)

In 1981 the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) published what was to be the standardized version of an Africana Studies core curriculum, unfortunately this has been loosely followed at best (Adams, 38). What follows is a synthesis of the curriculum at Temple University, Cornell University, Ohio State University and San Diego State University in an attempt to outline a core curriculum for Africana Studies.⁴ For the discipline of Africana Studies, the core curriculum must be formalized to a periodically updated curriculum set forth by the National Council for Black Studies, because Africana Studies encompasses a vast group of scholars, foci should geographically as well as sectioned off by related subject matters. However, it should be noted that the curriculum outlined by NCBS should serve as a guide and should be more in tune with the nomenclature outlined above. For these reasons, undergraduate and graduate curricula should be grounded historically by the courses: Ancient Africa Civilization, Africana Research Methods, Introduction to General Africana Studies, and introductory courses in the student's subject focus and geographic area specialty. The suggested subject focuses currently presented by NCBS are Social Behavioral, Historical, and Cultural Studies (Adams 36). Additionally, undergraduate and graduate students will specialize further in an area of expertise, one of the geographic differentiations and one of the subject areas.

The following is a suggested core curriculum guide for Africana Studies:

Core Curriculum

1. African Civilization: An exploration of the origins of Africana people.
2. African Religion: Examining indigenous African religions as well as Africana peoples participation in Christianity and Islam, etc.
3. African Aesthetics: An exploration of Africana aesthetics (dance, music, totems, etc).
4. Pro-Seminar in Africana Studies: Historical formation of Black Studies. In addition, for undergraduate students at least one of the following:
 - i. Introduction to African Studies
 - ii. Introduction to African American Studies
 - iii. Introduction to African Caribbean Studies
5. African Literature: An exploration of written and oral forms of Africana people.
6. African Language Requirement: (Ibo, Kiswahili, Yoruba, etc.) Two Semesters.
7. The Africana Experience: Explores the shared historical and lived experiences of Africana people.
8. Applied Africana Studies: The implementation of Africana Studies into the community.
9. Africana Philosophical Thought: Examining Africana philosophical and political thought.
10. Research Methods: Studying and applying of Africana research methods (at minimum one year).
11. The Slavery Experience: Examines the enslavement of Africana people's historiographical experiences.
12. Race Theory and Social Thought: Systematic examination of the theories of non-Africana social thinkers.

It is important to note that there are no gender specific courses in this curriculum. It is imperative that Africana Studies scholars get away from the Eurocentric construct of gender and marry Africana Womanism to Africana Studies (Aldridge 1992). As Aldridge correctly states, "integrating Africana women into Africana Studies should not need to be a topic for dialogue. For the incorporation of Africana women should be as natural to the field as breathing is to living" (153). Therefore it is vital in each one of these courses that instructors take close care to deal with all aspects, perspectives and viewpoints and make sure to include the vast contributions of African children, women and men.

The completion of these lower division courses would constitute 36 credit hours (including two semesters for Research Methods and one language requirement). At the upper division level, students would be required to take an additional 10 courses in their area of concentration. Therefore a student would complete 60 credit hours and the general requirements of the university to receive a B.A. in Africana Studies.

The construction of a core curriculum for the discipline of Africana Studies must be ordered and arranged according to the principles of Maat: order, balance, harmony, justice, righteousness, truth, and reciprocity. In this sense the curriculum must start with introductory courses to the discipline and the fields within the discipline, then advance to intermediate and advanced levels. It must include courses in history, literature, science, math, psychology, sociology, political science, and economics; along with art, language, and Africana biology. A cluster of minor areas of study for both undergraduate and graduate students are as follows:

Areas of Study Concentration

- Africana Psychology
- Africana Political Science
- Africana Literature
- African Arts
- African Dance
- Africana Philosophy (sample courses below)
- - Introduction to Black Philosophy
 - Ancient Black Philosophy
 - Studies of Alain Locke
 - Studies of Angela Davis
 - Studies of W.E.B. Dubois
 - Contemporary Black Philosophers
 - Comparative Black Philosophers
 -
- Topics in Africana Biology (sample courses next)
- - Ancient Black Biology
 - Race and Biology
 - Re-evaluation of the Racial Myths in Biology
 - Addressing Health in the Black Community
 - Africana Applied Biology
 - Exploring Biological Studies of People of African Descent
 - Africana Medicine

- Topics in Africana Mathematics
- Africana Economics
- Africana aspects in Anthropology
- Africana Humanities
- Africana Social Science
- Africana Linguistics
- Pan-Africanism
- Afrocentricity
- Africana Education
- Africana Public Health
- Africana Public Policy

Faculty

Faculty formally or informally trained in Africana Studies must show scholarly expertise in some component of the multidisciplinary nature of Africana Studies and be Afrocentric in their approach. In reference to versatility Henderson suggests:

The Department of African American [Africana] Studies must be truly interdisciplinary and its members must be meta-disciplinarians. They must be academically and intellectually able to range across a variety of traditional areas with facility and sophistication. (Henderson 1971, 16-17)

In this sense, professors in the discipline must be capable and willing to teach in a multidisciplinary capacity in that they must be intellectually equipped with the knowledge and skills to properly teach in their area of expertise. Such qualifications for faculty are present in those who have earned degrees in the discipline; therefore, faculty search committees should first seek the scholars who have graduated from the discipline since they have been trained in the discipline's multidisciplinary structure thereby making those graduates most qualified to govern the future of our discipline. Moreover, faculty should be informed scholars, thus insuring production of competent future scholars for the discipline.

Not only must the discipline of Africana Studies adhere to the principles of Maat, the faculty and staff must also adhere to these principles in order to properly administer course offerings. Accordingly, Dr. Nathaniel Norment Jr., in "Needed Research and Related Projects in African American Studies," "scholars must adhere to the highest possible ethical and technical standards that are reasonable and responsible in research, teaching and service.

They must rely on scientifically, professionally and culturally derived knowledge; act with honesty and integrity; and avoid untrue, deceptive or undocumented statements in under taking disciplinary-related functions or activities” (835). Furthermore, faculty members who adhere to these Afrocentric principles are qualified to teach and research within the discipline of Africana Studies.

Criteria for Scholarship

Africana Studies is systematic and works within the discipline must use a systematic approach to derive conclusions about Africana phenomena. As such, NCBS should define and regulate the standards, thus creating a system of checks and balances for the disciplinary range and codes of the discourse. Also, as stated above, scholarship within Africana Studies must adhere to the principles of Maat. Upon review of scholars’ works, their scholarship shall be permitted to be published in journals, and they will also be afforded the opportunity to publish introductory textbooks, as well as other texts. After meeting the criteria outlined throughout this blueprint scholars’ research will receive the official seal of approval for Africana Studies. This seal will serve as a symbol to the global community that only the works that are branded with this seal truly embody that which is the proper study of people of African descent—and since NCBS will be defining and upholding the standards, and be mandated with the authority to grant the official seal of approval.

Additionally, in terms of funding, Africana Studies scholars shall be offered scholarships based on their level of education, their academic history, their work with the Africana community, and their overall growth and performance. Also, all scholars accepted into Ph.D. programs will be fully funded; and a select number of Masters students should also receive full funding.

Research Agenda

With the nomenclature, department structure and core curriculum now set up the question of research agenda now comes to the forefront. As Adams has argued core curriculum alone does not constitute a fully developed discipline, teaching and research further reinforce it goals (Adams 1993, 38). Over time most scholars hired into Africana Studies departments should have a Ph.D. in the actual field. Understanding that the field is relatively new, the hiring and continued mentorship of our founders and elders is also critical. It is also crucial that the faculty in the discipline in general and specifically at individual universities be guided by the best interests of Africana people and do not allow individual differences to interfere with the duty to their students and community. The research agenda itself should be fully geared towards the accurate documentation of the Africana world experience, the destruction of white racism and to solving the problems of the Africana community (Hare 1969, 167). Again it is imperative that Africana Studies not just be corrective, but innovative and strongly tied to the Africana world community.

In order to expand and authenticate Africana Studies, research centers must be developed as a priority of the discipline. In these institutes and policy centers, scholars will produce “reliable knowledge that can guide and support our discipline” and “should link the academic and social communities” (Norment 837). Research in Africana Studies should be concerned with producing knowledge to transform the community as well as address the biases and inaccuracies in traditional Eurocentric paradigms. In addition, more Introductions to Africana Studies text should be produced through collective efforts on the part of Africana Studies scholars.

The discipline of Africana Studies is a multidisciplinary field of study that allows for a wide range of research to be conducted in order to fully analyze knowledge about Africana people—this range would include historical, cultural, socio-behavioral, and political aspects of the global Africana community—create new Afrocentric methodologies and epistemologies, and stimulate consciousness throughout the Africana community. Consequently, this research must adhere to the previously mentioned Maatian principles.

Community Responsibility

Fundamentally, African Studies must keep the Africana community’s needs present and the discipline’s obligation to join in the liberation of the masses of Africana people. As Dr. Ama Mazama notes in *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, “Afrocentrism, as an ideology committed to the liberation of African people from the destructive grips of the West, involves the displacement of the European mode of thinking and being, and its replacement by concepts, attitudes, and behaviors in tune with African values and the ultimate interest of African people” (201). Thus, “Afrocentrism places Africa at the center of African people’s world, while stressing all people’s entitlement to practice and celebrate their own culture, as long as it does not interfere with the collective wellbeing” (Mazama, 6). In effect, Mazama is arguing that this paradigmatic approach does not seek to apply itself to world, but instead is the centrality of Africa for the African and therefore applied to the African for the total liberation of African peoples. In this regard, there should be no separation of the community as explained in the definition of Africana Studies; this allows for the foundational connectedness of the Africana academy and the global community. Specialist in every area of the field must play an essential role in the community of scholars and in the larger Africana community. To truly reflect the mission of the discipline, the Africana professional answers “the call to be the scholar/activist” that Gordon mentions (Gordon 1981, 232). Instead of seeking validation in the academy, the discipline should assert its pertinence and validity through work uplifting and positively shaping the Africana experience, and creating solutions, policies, and research focused on the Africana masses.

Hence, the academic realm is only one portion of the discipline of Africana Studies. The application of knowledge into practical social function is the other section of the discipline. The mission of Africana Studies is the liberation of both the mind and the community. As mentioned above, the mind receives its freedom through intellectual work, and the community is liberated through a conscious effort to decolonize the minds and to tackle the everyday realities of the Africana community.

Conclusion

The future of Africana Studies depends on the scholars in the discipline today. If stringent boundaries are not set, the discipline runs the risk of becoming integrated into some form of “multi-cultural” studies entity where the African experience cannot be accurately explored (Adams 1993, 49). The focus should be primarily on the global Africana experience and the similarities between Africans worldwide. Although it is important for all departments to adhere to a set core curriculum, there should definitely be room for individuality in the areas of concentration that the department decides upon. It is also significant that the community connection be upheld and that the research is conducted on the basis of improving the state of Africans in the world. If the discipline develops along these lines it should have a very prosperous future.

Uniting the discipline around Afrocentric perspectives will allow for more efficient intellectual exchange and thus increased results for the community. Additionally, an established blueprint, such as this, will leave the next generation of scholars a solid foundation from which to expand and shape Africana Studies to address future issues. With growing affronts to social sciences in academia, specifically ethnocentric fields, Africana Studies must solidify its place and purpose or face an eminent devaluation and relegation to novelty. Furthermore, the widespread crises in the Africana world require solutions from within; and indeed, the production of these solutions should be the primary objective of those who claim to be an Africana activist/scholar. Forming a unified community of well-educated and liberation-driven scholars remains a vital part of hope for the Africana world.

In short, I hope this blueprint serves a model and guide for the future of the discipline of Africana Studies, and for the total liberation of the global Africana community.

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Endnotes

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² Here after Black, Afro-American, African American Studies and Pan African Studies will be referred to as Africana Studies.

³ Please see section on “Community Responsibility.”

⁴ Note that these schools were chosen for their close compliance with NCBS standards, but due to the fact that the author chose to alter the NCBS standard of area of specialization, it may not meet NCBS standards.