

AFRICAN STUDIES

The African Studies Programme at the University of Hong Kong offers a Bachelor of Arts Minor in African Studies, through which students can explore Africa as a study area from interdisciplinary perspectives.

To obtain a Minor in African Studies students are required to take AFRI1001 “Foundations in African Studies,” 12 credits from introductory courses, and 18 credits from advanced courses, totaling 36 credits.

Pre-requisite Course:

AFRI1001. Foundations in African Studies (6 credits)

This course will introduce the complex nature of the African continent from a wider interdisciplinary perspective. Students will be exposed to Africa's geo-political particularities; multiple histories; diverse languages, peoples, culture and music, and rich literary and artistic traditions. The course is also designed to give an overview of major theoretical debates on Africa such as the questions of nation-building or the perception of Africa. It will also shed light on the current economic and socio-political challenges that the continent faces as well as the opportunities it presents.

Assessment: 100% coursework

Introductory Courses:

AFRI2003. Proficiency course in an African language Kiswahili I (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the basic components of standard Kiswahili. It is specifically designed to help students who have no prior knowledge of Kiswahili to begin carrying out basic conversations in Kiswahili about themselves, their world, their friends and Swahili land. Whereas the course has a special place for structural and cultural aspects of the language, emphasis is particularly placed on the four language skills namely: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Basic lexicon, grammatical structures and aspects of Swahili/African culture will be introduced and highlighted as necessary components towards achieving communicative competence.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI2004. Introduction to African linguistics (6 credits)

This course will cover basic aspects of the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of major African languages, such as vowel harmony, tone, click sounds, the noun class system, verbal extensions, serial verbs, and other complex constructions. Some sociolinguistic features about various regions in Africa will also be included.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI2006. Music and society in African (6 credits)

This course will introduce various music cultures and traditions from Africa. Lectures will discuss the cultural contexts in which various musical and performance genres have emerged in the African continent. It will include an exploration of the musical landscape of the continent by discussing in detail

the griot traditions, mbalax and high-life in Western Africa; the azmari tradition in Ethiopia; Rai in North Africa; Soukous in Central Africa as well as Mbaqana in Southern Africa. The course will enable students to critically view and challenge existing perceptions of African music, Africans and Africa. No previous musical experience is necessary.

Assessment: 100% coursework

Advanced Courses:

AFRI2007. African Nobel Laureates in literature (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the literature of Africa by way of its Nobel Prize-winning authors and their work, and will expose students to the major issues surrounding it. It will begin by questioning the very meaning of the term “African literature,” before examining some of its most salient features and issues such as its complex relationship with colonialism that made languages of Europe become the literary languages of Africa; the various forms of narration in Africa; colonialism and resistance; the tension between traditionalism and the African novel; as well as the complex relationship between African continental and diasporic literature. It will also look at major contemporary African literary Movements and their historical significance.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI2008. Introduction to African Art(s) (6 credits)

In this course, students will develop skills for seeing through, thinking about, and communicating about African arts. We will combine visual, critical, and reflective modes of inquiry in approaching both artworks and ensuing articulations—(audio)visual, literary, scholarly, and critical—of experiences/analyses triggered by those artworks. By delving into the symbolic and meaningful dimensions of African artistic expressions, students will acquire a deeper understanding of the complex and diverse cultures of Africa.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI2009. Introduction to African cinema: “Film’in” Africa (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the rich diversity of African cinema from an aesthetic and anthropological perspective. Students will focus on one specific film each week to delve into how cinematic artistic expressions articulate core issues of the human condition framed by specific socio-cultural and politico-historical circumstances. Questions of narrative and storytelling, representation and stylization, (inter)mediality, etc., in African cinema will frame their analyses of specific contexts of production, disclose the different roles cinema plays in the African continent, provide a particular perspective to the topic of Africa-China relations, and help them consider the place of the audience in the African cinematic experience.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI3002. Africa studies workshop (6 credits)

This course involves attending seminars and workshops on advanced topics in African Studies (including history, literature, linguistics, education, music, law, science, technology, and international relations) by leading Africanist scholars.

Prerequisite: **AFRI1001**

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI3005. Africa-China relations (6 credits)

In recent years, Africa and China have renewed their relations at many different levels. From political engagement to increased trade and economic relations, and perhaps more importantly, to increased contacts between ordinary Africans and Chinese. The figures of Chinese living in Africa, and Africans living in China, have increased to a point that has no parallel in the history between these two regions. What are the implications of contemporary Afro-Chinese engagements? What does this mean for the future of these regions and the world? In order to provide answers to these questions, this course introduces the main debates around Afro-Chinese engagements and analyses some of the associated sociocultural, political and economic processes. Instead of simply reviewing the main literature on Africa – China relations, this course takes you into a critical and interdisciplinary journey in which crucial aspects of these relations are analysed through various texts and documentaries. Through discussion and analysis, this course will challenge extant narratives about Africa – China relations and will delve into the possibilities (i.e. opportunities and challenges) that this renewed engagement entails.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI3006. Representations of Blackness in Asia (6 credits)

This course introduces students to critical issues in considering the concept of blackness being represented in Asia. It concerns the ways in which blackness has been constructed, represented, and re-represented in the region. While examining the historic involvement and place of Black people in the region, the course explores the politics and dynamics behind contemporary discourses and media (re)representations of blackness. The course focuses on cases of regional and global media and literature considering them in light of narratives such as the ‘rise of Asia’ and ‘China in Africa’.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI3007. African art(s): Articulating and performing human experiences (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the role of art in human experience in the African continent. Students will delve into the anthropological and conceptual basis of African artworks in different media—audio/visual, musical, cinematic, literary, etc.—to examine the dynamism and diversity of African life and systems of thought as articulated in artistic expressions. Through this holistic approach, students will delve into the crucial and complex role that arts play in African life.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI3008. African arts in museums: Collecting and exhibiting "Africa" (6 credits)

This course introduces students to the relevant role that exhibitions have played in the conceptualization of African arts and African art history during the 20th century, as well as how these exhibitions have in turn contributed to a reconceptualization of core concepts/issues in Western art history in the recent past. Students will start from a critical analysis of the politics of exhibiting cultures in museums and gallery collections through some of the most representative exhibitions of African arts during the 20th century. In the second half of the course, students will create their own virtual exhibitions of African arts as a means to experience the complexity and relevance of curatorial work and to reflect upon the implications of their own representations of Africa.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI4001. Field trip to an African country (6 credits)

In this course, an experienced faculty member will lead students on a supervised two-week educational field trip to an African country. The rationale is to closely observe and study an aspect of Africa introduced in one of the courses on Africa Studies or in a related course. Leading up to the field trip, students must participate in the intensive preparation that will take place in Hong Kong. After their return, students will be required to complete a written report of about 5,000 words based on the experience and knowledge they have acquired during the field trip.

Assessment: 100% coursework

AFRI4002. Readings in African Studies (6 credits)

In this course, a student will work with a faculty member to read a selection of primary and secondary materials in an aspect of African Studies over a semester. Students will be required to complete a written report of about 4,000 words based on a review of the literature provided.

Assessment: 100% coursework

The following non-AFRI introductory courses are also counted towards the minor:

ENGL1044. Introduction to literary theory (6 credits)

LING2064. Language in Africa (6 credits)

SOWK1013. Introduction to social policy and development studies (6 credits)

The following non-AFRI advanced courses are also counted towards the minor:

ENGL2155. Literature of the African city (6 credits)

EUST2018. Early modern Atlantic worlds, c. 1500-1800 (6 credits)

EUST2019. Atlantic revolutions, c. 1760-1830 (6 credits)

SOWK3092. Migration and mobility (6 credits)