FROM STUDY TO SKILLS

All academic programs offered at the UM help students develop valuable transferable skills. In our increasingly global world, the interdisciplinary program offered by the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS) makes it an ideal liberal arts concentration. As a DAAS concentrator, you will be analyzing historical and contemporary cultures, concerns, perspectives, and accomplishments of peoples of African descent, particularly those in Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean. Thus, DAAS is a multi-disciplinary, interdepartmental program that will allow you to integrate historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, economic, and political concepts and perspectives. You will be encouraged to bring a critical approach to your studies, and, whenever possible, current issues will be linked with classroom work. This interdisciplinary approach will help you develop a wide range of skills.


SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Project Development Skills
- Assessing needs and interests
- Generating ideas
- Identifying resources
- Developing sound research designs
- Evaluating results
- Translating theory into action
- Working with community groups

Research/Analytical Skills
- Thinking and reading critically
- Identifying research topics
- Gathering information
- Examining evidence
- Comparing/contrasting ideas and concepts
- Solving problems
- Assessing alternative modes of analysis

Interpersonal/Cross-Cultural Skills
- Working with competing ideas
- Developing appreciation for racial, class, and gender differences
- Understanding society through culture
- Incorporating interdisciplinary methods
- Examining the relationships among historical, economic, political, and cultural forces
- Understanding the practical significance of academic experiences

Communication Skills
- Writing clearly
- Expressing ideas through several media (e.g. film or music)
- Listening to others
- Challenging conventional ideas
- Conveying ideas systematically

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Employers seek out individuals who can demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills, teamwork and interpersonal skills, initiative, and a strong work ethic. Student organizations and campus employment offer valuable opportunities to add to the skills you are developing in your classes. Most concentrations sponsor specific student groups like an undergraduate organization or an honor society. Other options include study abroad, off-campus employment or volunteering in the community. Finally, a summer internship may be the best way of all to test out a career field and develop marketable skills.
FROM SKILLS TO CAREER

DAAS concentrators develop both general and technical skills applicable to a wide range of careers. For example, examining evidence is a skill that professors, lawyers, health workers, or personnel directors use on a daily basis. Many concentrators go on to graduate or professional school. The list below is a sample of careers undertaken by DAAS graduates.

Project Development Skills
- Urban planner
- Museum curator
- Librarian
- Canvas director, organizer
- Export/import sales manager
- Administrative assistant
- Fundraiser

Research/Analytical Skills
- Health care professional
- Educational policy specialist
- Congressional staff member
- Public historian
- Lawyer
- Legal advisor
- Market researcher
- Bank management trainee

Interpersonal / Cross-Cultural Skills
- Social worker
- Consultant, cross-cultural relations
- Foreign service officer
- Affirmative action officer
- Staff training and development specialist
- Student services staff

Communication Skills
- Teacher, K-12
- College instructor
- Journalist
- Creative writer
- Visual/performance artist
- Media buyer, public relations
- Advertising copywriter
- Lobbyist
- Probation officer
- Community advocate

= Further Study Required

For more career information, see O*Net at http://online.onetcenter.org/

CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

DAAS offers either a concentration or a minor in Afroamerican and African Studies; students may also pursue Honors. Both concentrators and minors are required to take two core courses: AAS 111, “Intro to Africa and Its Diaspora” and AAS 495, “Senior Seminar.” Honors Concentrators fulfill the same requirements and complete a 40-60 page senior thesis.

By taking a range of courses at the 200, 300, and 400 levels, students gain a broad understanding of the African Diaspora—the varied cultures of African-descended people around the globe—while at the same time developing specialized knowledge about one of three major geographic areas: Africa, the Americas, or the Caribbean. For more information, contact caasadvising@umich.edu or consult the DAAS website (URL below).

Department for Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS)
4700 Haven Hall
734-764-0332
www.lsa.umich.edu/daas

Newman Advising Center
1255 Angell Hall
734-764-0332
www.lsa.umich.edu/advising

NEXT STEPS / RESOURCES

To identify internships or job opportunities, visit Career Center Connector: www.careercenter.umich.edu/c3student/

To begin connecting to professionals in fields that interest you, create your own LinkedIn account: www.careercenter.umich.edu/students/networking/linkedin_intro.html

On campus jobs (work-study and non work-study jobs) are listed at: https://studentemployment.umich.edu/JobX_Home.aspx

The Maize Pages list hundreds of organizations for students to get involved in: http://studentorgs.umich.edu/maize

Volunteer Connection lists volunteer opportunities in local organizations: http://volunteer-connection.umich.edu/

The Career Center
3200 Student Activities Building
734-764-7460
www.careercenter.umich.edu
www.facebook.com/careercenter.umich
http://twitter.com/careercenter

The Career Guide series was developed by the University of Michigan Career Center, Division of Student Affairs, in cooperation with the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. ©2011 Regents of the University of Michigan