

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program African and African Diaspora Studies

- 1) **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

We are in the process of developing formal learning outcomes for AADS 1110 Introduction to African Diaspora Studies, which is the only non-CD course that counts toward the Core. Since most of the AADS courses that do satisfy the CD requirement initiate in other departments and are only cross-listed with AADS, we do not think we should develop formal learning outcomes for these courses unless other departments are required to do so as well.

AADS 1110 satisfies the Social Science core requirement. We envision three broad learning outcomes for this class:

i) **Comprehension of the historical development of African and African Diaspora Studies.** After completing AADS 1110, students will understand how AADS (variously termed Black Studies, Africana Studies, African and African American Studies by different university programs over time) emerged and has developed as an interdisciplinary field since the 1970s. Assessment of this comprehension will be based on students' ability to identify important figures and the intellectual contributions that they have made to the field.

ii) **Ability to apply an intersectional analysis to a text.** One of the core intellectual organizing principles of AADS is intersectionality, or an approach to studying race (as an identity category) and racism (as a mode of oppression) that emphasizes their interconnectedness with other identity categories and axes of difference, including gender, class, national identity, age, sexuality, political ideology, and spiritual beliefs. After completing AADS 1110, students will demonstrate competence in explaining how race is operating with other identity categories in authors' approaches to a particular historical, social, or cultural problem. Assessment of this outcome will be based on students' written work.

iii) **Ability to think critically.** After completing AADS 1110, students will demonstrate competence in a taxonomy of thinking skills, including understanding of material and concepts under study and the ability to do the following: identify underlying assumptions in an argument; identify and understand the various components of an argument; evaluate strengths and weaknesses of an argument; identify features of various written and visual forms; identify relationships between written forms and content; and express orally and in writing their ideas in a clear and distinct manner. Assessment of this outcome will be based on students' written work, class presentations, and classroom discussion.

- 2) **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes appear on the AADS 1110 syllabus as well as the AADS website:

<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/sites/aads/program/learning-outcomes.html>

Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

The instructor assesses whether students have achieved the stated outcomes. The assessment is based on the quality of the written work and oral contributions of the students. The assessment instrument is a rubric that allows the instructor to rate each student from unsatisfactory (1) to excellent (5) in the following seven areas: 1) comprehension of development of African and African Diaspora Studies as a field; 2) ability to apply an intersectional analysis to a text; 3) ability to identify and understand various components of an argument; 4) ability to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of an argument; 5) ability to identify features of various written and visual forms; 6) ability to identify relationships between written forms and content; and 7) ability to clearly express ideas both orally and in writing.

- 3) **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The faculty member responsible for teaching AADS 1110 interprets the evidence in consultation with the Director of the AADS Program.

The program still needs to regularize this process. It is anticipated that interpretation of the data will occur in the early part of the spring semester. Findings will be shared with AADS core faculty in our spring semester meeting, giving us an opportunity to recommend any curriculum or assignment changes to the faculty member who will be responsible for teaching the course the following fall.

- 4) **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

The average ratings for each area ranged from a low of 3.533 (learning outcomes #2, #4, and #6) and a high of 3.8 (learning outcome #5). This falls between Good and Very Good. At this point, we do not feel the need to make any changes to our curriculum or the assignments that we use to measure our students' achievements of the learning outcomes.

- 6) **Date of the most recent program review.** (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

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