

Area Major Proposal:

African Studies

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My interest for proposing this area major comes from the years I lived in Zambia and Kenya during my childhood. During the nine years I lived in Africa, I was fortunate to interact with a variety of cultures and peoples. I fell in love with Kenya which has since become my home, and I return to the country at least once every two years. In my future, I plan on returning to Africa to pursue a career as a physician by helping impoverished communities. I want to pursue an African Studies major because the subject matter is something that I am very passionate about learning, and such a major would not only enrich my undergraduate education but pave the groundwork for my future. Even though there are many courses on Africa offered at Rice, they are scattered over various departments. An area major in African Studies is necessary because it provides more breadth and balance than choosing a standard major from a department that offers some Africa content courses. Thus the current Rice curriculum does not meet my goals and interests, and an area major in African Studies is the only and best way to provide me with the education and knowledge that I seek from my undergraduate experience, which is a well-rounded and detailed understanding of African and African issues.

A major in African Studies exist in other prestigious universities such as University of Pennsylvania, Emory University, Michigan State University, Ohio University, and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. The curriculum at these universities usually consists of at least 12 course units/36 credit hours, including introductory overview courses on Africa, a language component, and a choice of electives that offer Africa content in different disciplines, enabling the student to pursue a balanced education including a broad spectrum of information on Africa as well as courses concentrating on a particular geographical area or subject [Major requirements for the major in African studies at University of Pennsylvania and Emory University are included as appendices to this proposal].

Even though Rice offers various interdisciplinary majors, it is quite surprising that African Studies is not one of them. Africa is the second largest continent and the second most populous continent, and African Studies deserves attention in a world-class university such as Rice, and such a major will help students become better global citizens.

In order to construct this major, I have followed the format of the Asian Studies major offered at Rice, as the components of the major were easily translatable to my proposed African Studies major. I have met with numerous faculty members at Rice who have advised me on shaping this curriculum, including, Dr. Elias Bongmba (Professor of Religious Studies), Dr. Kerry Ward (Professor of History), Dr. Alexander Byrd (Professor of History), Dr. Jeffrey Fleisher (Professor of Anthropology), and Dr. Susan McIntosh (Professor of Anthropology). As you will see below, there are plenty of courses that I could take for this major, making the curriculum flexible, varied, and challenging. In addition, the curriculum provides a balanced education by allowing for breadth as well as depth of study in the topic of Africa.

Bachelor of Arts in African Studies – Proposed Curriculum

Minimum Hours: 36 (a maximum of 15 hours taken at (an)other university/ies may be counted towards the major)

Core (6 hours): Two courses that offer 100% Africa content by covering the whole continent geographically over a considerable chronological time span, including, but not limited to:

RELI 348 – Christianity and Islam in Africa
HIST 231 – Africa to 1884
HIST 232 – The Making of Modern Africa
ANTH 312 – African Prehistory

Any other survey courses offered that deal with all of Africa both geographically and chronologically can be taken as part of the core requirement, with advisor's consent and consent of the undergraduate curriculum committee (this provision is necessary in view of the fact that the instructor for History 231 and 232 is currently on medical leave, and the specific courses that will be taught by his replacement next year have not been specified by the History Department).

Language Requirement: One year of an African language or an official language spoken in Africa. Rice currently offers Arabic, French, and Portuguese. I am especially interested in learning Swahili, and although it is not offered here, it is offered at the University of Houston, Texas Southern University, and numerous study abroad programs, and I would like the major to allow for transfer credits.

Electives (minimum 30 hours): 10 additional courses with Africa content drawn from at least three different departments. Electives chosen must meet the following additional requirements:

- A minimum of two courses must be taken in each of the three different departments
- At least 6 of these courses must be at the 300 level and above.
- Six courses must have 100% Africa content (Rice courses meeting this requirement are preceded by an asterisk in the list below).

The following is a list of courses obtained from the Course Catalog, but this list is by no means exhaustive, as new courses on Africa are offered each year. The courses that qualify as Core Courses that are not used as part of the two Core courses requirement can be counted in this category. In the case of cross listed courses, any one of the departments or programs appearing in the cross-listing can be used to satisfy this particular requirement (this is similar to how the Asian Studies major is constructed). Up to 2 independent study/reading courses taught by Rice faculty who teach other core or elective courses in the major may be counted towards the major. Up to 6 hours of credit for courses with African content taken at another university (not in Africa) may be transferred with advisor's consent provided that proper transfer credit procedures and departmental approval (for example, the ANTH department if the course is an anthropology course related to Africa) is obtained. Up to two language courses at the 200-level and above may be counted toward the 10 electives. Rice courses that may be counted as language electives are listed below.

*ANTH 312 – African Prehistory

*ANTH 343/RELI 342– New Religious Movements in Africa

*ANTH 423 /RELI 343– African Myths and Ritual

*ANTH 463—West African Prehistory

*HIST 231 – Africa to 1884

*HIST 232 – The Making of Modern Africa

HIST 270 – South Africa and Indonesia: Empire to Nation

*HIST 387 – Life on the Nile

HIST 389 – Migrations and Diasporas in the Indian Ocean World [includes Swahili]

*HIST 409 – History of East Africa

*HIST 410 – Kenya in Modern History

HIST 439 – Comparative Slavery from Antiquity to the Present: Africa, Asia, and Europe

HIST 452 – Comparative History: The US and South Africa

*RELI 111 – Introduction to African Religions

*RELI 113 – Introduction to Christianity in Africa

*RELI 338 – The Church of Africa

*RELI 340 – Theology in Africa

*RELI 348 – Christianity and Islam in Africa

*RELI 424 – Religion and Politics in Africa

*RELI 425 – Africana Philosophy & Thought

*RELI 426 – Religion and Literature in Africa

ENGL 379 – Introduction to Third World Literature

ENGL 474 – Problem of Knowledge in the Study of Global Cultures (Black Diaspora)

*HART 128 – Introduction to African Art History

FREN 201 – Intermediate French Language and Culture I

FREN 202 – Intermediate French Language and Culture II

FREN 301- Advanced French for Written and Oral Communication

FREN 332 – French Phonetics

FREN 336 – Writing Workshop

ARAB 201 – Intermediate Modern Arabic Language and Culture I

ARAB 202 – Intermediate Modern Arabic Language and Culture II

ARAB 301 – Seminar in Arabic

ARAB 302 – Seminar in Arabic

ARAB 398 – Independent Study

ARAB 399 – Independent Study

PORT 201 – Intermediate Portuguese Language and Culture I

PORT 202 – Intermediate Portuguese Language and Culture I

PORT 400 – Independent Study

PORT 401 – Independent Study

Study Abroad: Studying abroad is one of the best opportunities for undergraduates at Rice to experience a different culture and gain the knowledge to become better global citizens.

Therefore, study abroad credits should count toward this major for the elective and language requirements (core courses must be taken at Rice). However, a maximum of 12 (essentially one semester worth of credits) can transfer as major credit.

Appendix A

University of Pennsylvania's Curriculum for B.A. in African Studies

- 1) **Two semesters of an African language** (Intermediate or Advanced Level, not including French or Portuguese) or the successful completion of a language proficiency exam. (2 c. u.)
- 2) **Proseminar** : AFST 190 "Introduction to Africa" (must be taken at Penn) taken no later than the junior year.(1 c.u.)
- 3) **Eight African Studies courses** with Africa content. (at least 5 must be taken at Penn), (8 c.u.)
 - 6 courses must have 100% Africa content
 - 2 courses must have at least 25% Africa content
- 4) **Senior thesis** written on an Africa-related topic under the supervision of an African Studies faculty member. (1 c.u.)

Majors focus on one of **two tracts**: Social Science or Humanities: Social Science majors are required to take 6 courses in the social sciences and two in the humanities; Humanities majors are required to take 6 courses in the humanities and two in the social sciences.

Appendix B

Emory University's Curriculum for B.A. in African Studies

A total of nine courses is required, of which six must be courses with wholly African content. The remainder may be courses that feature a theoretical or thematic focus with 1/3 to 1/2 African content as case studies or other examples in course listing. Students are encouraged to study abroad in Africa and courses taken as part of study abroad that meet the above content requirements are accepted, with the approval of the Director of African Studies, as credit for the major.

In addition to the course requirements, students are required to demonstrate competence (as a minimum through the 102 level) in a language other than English that is widely used in Africa. Emory currently offers three such languages: French, Portuguese and Arabic. Students who already know an African language may petition to demonstrate competence through testing.