



AFROAMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES

Strengthening the study of Africa and its diaspora, its diverse cultures and peoples, and their changing relationship to the modern world

Endowed with a diverse faculty of African Americanist and Africanist specialists, the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS) at the University of Michigan is one of the foremost departments in the world for the study of people of African descent. DAAS embraced a comparative and diasporic framework of study long before most other Black Studies departments. It has three distinct geographical areas of focus—Africa, African America (U.S.), and the Caribbean (extending into Latin America)—and an interdisciplinary emphasis on research, instruction, and community outreach. The department's mission is to strengthen the fields of African American, Caribbean, and African Studies by encouraging the production and public dissemination of creative, original research and exceptional scholarly knowledge. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the goal is to train not only informed, productive, and active citizens, but also the next generation of leading scholars in these fields.

DAAS faculty are committed to innovative scholarship and teaching on the history, societies, and creativity of the peoples of Africa to capture and convey a sense of the holistic cultural history of Africa and the diaspora.

Undergraduate students participate in a comprehensive and rigorous program of study in courses examining the role of African-descended people in shaping the societies, cultures, religions, and political institutions of the Western world in such fields as history, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, literature, and the arts. The curriculum provides students with the critical and analytical facility that is central to liberal arts training. The department's study abroad programs have long played a pivotal role in providing students, both undergraduate and graduate, with unique and valuable opportunities for intercultural exchanges and experiential learning. Students also participate in community engaged scholarship in Detroit focused on civic responsibility and social change. Both undergraduates and graduate students leave DAAS prepared for a wide range of careers in both the professions and public service.

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING INITIATIVE

The DAAS Community Engaged Learning Initiative launched in 2011–12 to identify, strengthen, and highlight faculty research and teaching projects that move students beyond the classroom and into community spaces to foster civic responsibility and enact social change. Through a grant from the Center for Research, Learning and Teaching (CRLT), a new course on community engaged scholarship and action is being developed, as is a DAAS Race and Social Justice internship program for undergraduate students. Internships focus on:

- Public Health Education—fostering HIV/AIDs prevention in Detroit, South Africa, and Jamaica; as well as malaria prevention in Nigeria
- Detroit Studies—investigating and analyzing the history and current state of Detroit
- Environmental Justice—identifying and combating race, class, and gender concerns in local and global environmental issues
- Mass Incarceration—studying and challenging the mass incarceration of people of color in American cities

Gifts of \$10,000 are needed to support undergraduate scholarships for the residential Semester in Detroit program, travel by undergraduates to community sites, graduate student and staff assistance, and faculty research. Student scholarships for the Semester in Detroit are \$2,000 per student.

CARIBBEAN TRAVEL AND RESEARCH FUNDS

DAAS boasts a decade-long history of hosting study abroad trips to Africa and is committed to providing an increasing array of international and cross-cultural experiences for our students, who must be prepared to live and work in a complex global world. Gifts of \$10,000 or more designated for Caribbean studies would enable us to support student and faculty travel to the Caribbean, as well as visits to our department by Caribbean scholars. Study abroad opportunities to the Caribbean are \$2,500 per student.



“It’s one thing to be a Black person and another thing to be learning about Blackness in a different way or in a diasporic sense. I’ve always wanted to learn more about the African American experience in being able to articulate the experience, not to other people but to understand what it meant to be Black for myself in a way that looked beyond my own experiences.”

–Ashley Hayes, A.B. '21



DAAS MUSIC SALON

The DAAS Music Salon was created to encourage informal talks, accessible to students and non-experts, about different musical genres as well as the poetic arts. Held in the Lemuel Johnson Center, a newly designated DAAS space for students, community, and the arts, the impetus behind the salon is the belief that people connect across cultures through the language of art. The strong tradition of music in Africa and its diasporas makes music the perfect catalyst for fostering creativity and connectivity for the department's various communities. A gift of \$5,000 or more each year would ensure the growth of the DAAS Music Salon to foster connection, inspiration, and intellectual improvisation in the unit and across the campus community.

VISITING ARTIST RESIDENCY: DAAS ART GALLERY

GalleryDAAS highlights the work of African American, Caribbean, and African artists. Nationally, it is the only art gallery attached to a Black Studies department. An gift of \$10,000 would make possible a Visiting Artist Residency that combines a gallery exhibition with classroom and community talks about contemporary African art by the artist, while an endowed gift of \$200,000 would provide the resources for an annual event that would raise the visibility and prestige of the work of the gallery and department.

NAMED PROFESSORSHIP

Endowed professorships, or chairs, have long been recognized as both a hallmark of academic quality and a means by which a university honors its most esteemed scholars and teachers. Professorships are reserved for scholars of national, or even international, stature, with highly distinguished records of teaching, research, and publication. They constitute a time-honored way to recruit or retain highly distinguished scholars with exceptional records of achievement. A gift of \$2.5M would establish the first endowed professorship in the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies and could recognize an individual that the donor wishes to honor. This investment would cement the University of Michigan's place at the forefront of original research and scholarly knowledge in this field, as well as excellence in instruction and community outreach.

NAMED ANNUAL LECTURES

Three geographic sub-areas define the department's research and teaching: African studies, African American studies, and Caribbean studies. DAAS is seeking gifts of \$10,000 each year to support each of its two named lectures—the Zora Neale Hurston Lecture in African American Studies and the CLR James Lecture in Caribbean Studies—that are held annually, and an additional \$10,000 gift to create and support a new lecture in African studies.

GRADUATE PROGRAM FEASIBILITY STUDY

The DAAS Graduate Studies Certificate Program enrolls students whose major courses of study are in other U-M departments. DAAS faculty members are engaged in strategic discussion about the feasibility of launching a graduate program or programs in African, Africana, and/or African American studies. DAAS would benefit greatly from a gift of \$10,000 in seed funding to support the exploration and development of an M.A. or Ph.D. program, including further internal preparation and planning, external consultation, and inaugural graduate student scholarships.

STRATEGIC FUND

Expendable, undesignated gifts of all sizes are extraordinarily important to the continuing success and growth of the department. Contributions to the strategic fund make it possible to enhance the research and training of our undergraduate students, and to recruit, retain and support our exceptional faculty. The strategic fund also provides resources for newly emerging and focused initiatives. Overall, this fund is an excellent way to make an investment in the future of the department.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

CONTACT INFO

LSA Advancement // College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
101 N. Main Street, Suite 850 // Ann Arbor, MI 48104

P. 734.615.6333 // F. 734.647.3061 // lsa.umich.edu/daas