

**Form 201BC: Assessment Report Form for Instructional Programs (Spring 2012)**

Name Dr. Kelly Harris

Program: African American Studies

**A. Outcomes**

1. Demonstrate a high level of knowledge in the subject fields of African American Studies as specified in the African American Studies Matrix (attached).
2. Evaluate the complexity of the historical and Contemporary African American experience within both a national and global context.
3. Use interdisciplinary academic preparation in African American Studies for further graduate education in African American Studies and various other liberal arts disciplines and diverse careers in both the public and private sector.

**B. Method of Assessment**

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Learning Outcome</u>	<u>Criteria</u>
1. Final Exam/paper from AFAM 1000, 1010, or 1020	1, 2,	70+
2. Final Exam/paper from AFAM 2020 or 3020	1, 2, 4, 6	A or B
3. A Term Paper from AFAM 3500 or upper level AFAM major course	1, 2, 6	A or B
4. Senior Assessment Portfolio	1, 2, 3	Satisfied or Very Satisfied

5. Alumni Survey

1, 2, 3

Satisfied or Very  
Satisfied

### **African American Studies Assessment Matrix (developed Spring 2008)**

1. Students will be able to demonstrate familiarity with the foundations of the discipline of African American Studies and identify key figures and events in the intellectual genealogy and development of the field.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 3500;**

2. Students will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of the general chronology of the global African experience, with particular emphasis on the period of late modernity and the experience of African people in the United States.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3020, 3500, 3510; HIST 2710, 2830, 2840; POL 3510; ENG 2910, 4322, 4382; ANTH 2120; ART 4121; GEOG 3060; SOC 4300; MUS 4040; PSYC 3200; ELCF 4610.**

3. Students will be able to identify and apply the theories, methods of inquiry, techniques, and procedures employed in African American Studies.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 2000, 2020, 3010, 3020, 3500, 4000**

4. Students will be able to identify and explain the universal abstractions of oppression, resistance, and liberation in studying phenomena or solving human problems, especially as they relate to the African American experience.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3020, 3500, 3510; HIST 2710, 2830, 2840; POL 3510; ENG 2910, 4322, 4382; ANTH 2120; ART 4121; GEOG 3060; SOC 4300; MUS 4040; PSYC 3200; ELCF 4610.**

5. Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills for studying institutional dimensions of African life and activity (i.e., environment, history, economic organization, social organization, political organization, ideology, aesthetics, language and literature and the dynamics of cultural continuity and change).

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3020, 3500, 3510; HIST 2710, 2830, 2840; POL 3510; ENG 2910, 4322, 4382; ANTH 2120; ART 4121; GEOG 3060; SOC 4300; MUS 4040; PSYC 3200; ELCF 4610.**

6. Students will be able to evaluate the African American historical experience as a discrete element of world history and integrate a comparative approach in understanding the impact of cultural differences on human interaction.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2010, 2450, 2900, 3020, 3500, 3510.**

7. Students will be able to summarize basic facts, principles, and methods in other disciplines, especially as they relate to African American subject matter, including history, political science, literature, sociology, anthropology, and geography, and the arts.

**Courses: 24 hours of elective courses listed under four rubrics: 1) African American history and politics, 2) African American literature, 3) Black music, art, and theatre, and 4) Black Africa.**

8. Students will be able to differentiate and contrast national and global issues related to issues of ethnic and cultural diversity.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2010.**

9. Students will be able to demonstrate reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3000, 3010, 300, 3500, 3510, 4000.**

10. Students will be able to apply information technology for engaging in qualitative and quantitative research.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3000, 3010, 3020, 3500, 3510, 4000.**

11. Students will be able to design a research paper and demonstrate library skills through the use of important bibliographic reference tools that display a wide variety of primary and secondary source material on the African-American experience.

**Courses: AFAM 1000, 1010, 1020, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2450, 2900, 3000, 3010, 300, 3500, 3510, 4000.**

12. Students will be able to assess the impact of public policy on African American communities and recommend public policy initiatives.

## **EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS**

### **INSTRUMENT #1**

Final exam or major assignment from AFAM 1000, 1010, or 1020.

### **INSTRUMENT #2**

Final exam/paper from AFAM 2020, the first required 2000-level course that satisfies African American Studies major requirements or AFAM 3020. For the term paper, a grade of A or B earned.

### **INSTRUMENT #3**

Term paper from preferably AFAM 3500 (Seminar in African American Studies) or from any upper level course (2000 or 3000) used to fulfill part of the requirements for the major in African American Studies. For the term paper, a grade of A or B earned. These high grades are demonstrated in the following ways:

**Grade of A:** An A paper is characterized by outstanding informative research and writing marked by superior readability and competent handling of content in African American Studies. The substance and organization follow a clear, logical sequence that makes the information easily accessible to the reader. The purpose is clearly expressed, and the selected details of the assignment reflect this purpose. The grammar, mechanics, and format of the research paper are flawless. Words are chosen and sentences are constructed to make the information easily understandable.

**Grade of B:** A B paper is characterized by excellent informative research and writing that successfully fulfills the requirements but contains some relatively minor, yet significant weaknesses. Although the research and writing is essentially well organized, the statement of purpose and/or the handling of African American Studies content is flawed. Although sentences are grammatically correct, their structure and/or length sometimes cause the reader to work unnecessarily hard in deciphering meaning. Some evidence of ambiguous or vague wording hinders precise communication. Evidence of some grammar, mechanics, and/or format flaws interferes with reading comprehension.

**Grade of C:** A C paper is characterized by satisfactory research and writing that is generally effective but contains some major weaknesses. Although satisfactorily written, the purpose is not clear and/or the body of the assignment is not clearly organized. There are fundamental problems in some aspect of the handling of African American Studies content in the paper. Frequent awkward sentences often make information and meaning difficult to extract. Wording interferes with readability, but the reader can still discern the basic meaning. Repeated errors in grammar, mechanics, and/or format mar the paper.

### **INSTRUMENT #4**

An assessment portfolio submitted to the Department of African American Studies at the time of graduation on computer disk (CDRW). The portfolio should consist of a current resume, personal statement and a table of contents. The resume is a chronological account (from recent to past events) of pertinent information including ones full name, current mailing address, phone number, and email, a brief statement of one's career objectives, educational background, employment history, organizational affiliations, awards, any special technical skills, and the names of at least three individuals who can provide references. The personal statement provides an overview of the students experience while at Chicago State University, especially in the African

American Studies major. The personal statement should explain 1) why one chose to major in African American Studies and 2) how well certain courses and experiences in African American Studies have met your academic goals and serve as preparation for the next step after undergraduate school (i.e. graduate studies or the job market). The table of contents should provide a detailed description of the coursework to be submitted from Assessment instruments #1, #2, and #3, demonstrating progressive academic achievement in 1000 level, 2000 level, and 3000 level course work in African American Studies. Each entry should include the course number and title, and the title of the assignment.

#### **INSTRUMENT #5**

Within one year after graduation, the coordinator will contact you to request information about your experience after completing the program, and in particular, to find out how well your education at Chicago State facilitated success in your subsequent occupation or pursuit of further education, as well as to what degree your education has instilled an ongoing interest in the study and appreciation of African American Studies. You will be mailed Alumni survey instruments designed to measure your level of satisfaction with the African American Studies program in academically preparing you for future academic and/or job success.

#### **C. Assessment Findings/Interpretations/Conclusion**

The Department of African American Studies has merged with Geography, History, Sociology, and Anthropology to form the GHSAA department. The African American Studies program has two full-time faculty members, of which one is tenure track. African American Studies is unique in the College of Arts and Sciences because it is significantly interdisciplinary, allowing student majors to select course offerings in various departments in addition to African American Studies to fulfill the requirements of the major. During the period from 2006-2010, data show that African American Studies had only one First-time Full-time freshman enrolled during the Fall 2010 semester. Fall enrollment for African American Studies majors from 2006 to 2010 is as follows: 10 (2006), 10 (2007), and 12 (2008), 15 (2009), and 15 (2010). This data indicates that students who pursue a major in African American Studies are either transfer students or students who have decided to change their major. The department formulated the assessment plan during the Spring semester of 2008, one year after the beginning of the tenure of the new Chairperson, and began to institute the assessment instruments in Fall semester of 2009. This assessment report marks the third year of the three year trend data reporting cycle. Students again were told of the various assessment instruments to be included in their respective assessment portfolios at the beginning of the academic year. In the initial assessment instrument, the department collected final exam/papers from four undergraduate majors who took the course AFAM 1000. Three out of the four students exceeded the criteria ( $\geq 70\%$ ) set for satisfactory performance. In the second assessment instrument, the department collected final exam/papers from three undergraduate majors who took the course AFAM 2020. Two majors received a grade of A on their papers and the other student received a grade of B. In the third assessment instrument, the

department collected term papers from five undergraduate majors, all of whom took the AFAM 3010 African American Research upper-division course. Faculty members examine student work in senior papers and there are specific written criteria that faculty use for assessment. One major received a grade of A on their paper, three majors received a grade of B, and the other major did not receive a passing grade and will have to repeat the course during the Fall 2011 semester. In the Fall 2011 semester six majors took AFAM 3010. Two of the majors earned a grade of A; two earned a grade of B; one earned a C grade and one student has to repeat the course during the Fall 2012 semester. Last year, the department began assessment portfolios for six undergraduate majors. We began portfolios for four new majors this academic year. Since African American Studies is currently a small program relative to enrolled majors, the Senior Assessment Portfolio is very important because it is able to provide a more complete picture of undergraduate major growth and development. The department met at the end of the academic year to assess and evaluate the current contents in the portfolios and to frankly discuss strengths and weaknesses. After reviewing the papers for undergraduate majors in the assessment portfolio, the department was satisfied with the overall knowledge of content demonstrated by students, but noted the continued need to place more emphasis on the mechanics of writing research papers in upper-level courses. Since the department currently has fifteen (15) majors, the department plans to take a more active approach to improving the writing skills of our student majors. This year, the department had a conversation with every major specifically directed towards improving their writing. As an outgrowth of these conversations, the department provided each student with a written, individualized and documented list of suggestions to improve writing. The students were requested to take active steps to improve their writing after these conversations and we will follow-up with the student after each semester. In the Fall 2011 semester, the department will also solicit information and advice from the English department to assist in these conversations. The fifth assessment instrument, the Alumni Survey, was administered for the second time this year to six graduates, one student in the Fall semester and five during the Spring semester. All graduates expressed satisfaction with their educational experience in African American Studies and one student has been accepted into the prestigious Chicago Theological Seminary, another student is in the process of selecting a graduate school, another student will be applying to graduate school in the fall, and the final three students will be pursuing various post-graduate employment opportunities.

#### **D. Decision-making Using Findings**

The program continues to acknowledge that further improvement of student learning could be achieved by enhancing the writing and research skills of our undergraduate majors. The program acted on the idea proposed in the previous assessment report to institute an annual meeting at the end of the academic year to discuss, in a more systematic way, the strengths and weaknesses in student's written work and make concrete recommendations on ways to improve. As an outgrowth of this meeting, the department met individually with each student this year to discuss these issues to further assist students in formulating a targeted plan for improvement. The program instituted a

change this year to integrate more writing and research in the 2000 level courses. The program was pleased this year with student major performances in the AFAM 2020 course. The program still has to seek ways to integrate more writing into the introductory AFAM 1000 course. The AFAM 1000 course requires students to write four essays for a unique active learning model created by the two full time faculty members.

In specifically assessing research papers from upper-level courses, the program has noticed that students continue to need greater assistance in writing in the discipline and formulating sound thesis questions for research papers. The program will continue to think about creative ways to include undergraduate majors in aspects of faculty research. The program made significant changes to the AFAM 3010 African American Research course to reflect a greater emphasis on the mechanics of writing research papers in the discipline. This change did not appreciably diminish the concern with improving student research and writing. Since the Senior Assessment Portfolio is serving a developmental purpose, the program put in place mechanisms for students to review their portfolios this year with faculty so that they can receive regular feedback in identifying specific skills needed to improve. This year, the program made the meeting with students more formal.. The program also developed a questionnaire for students last year that was used this year to reflect on each item in their Senior Assessment Portfolio to help facilitate dialogue in the meetings.

#### **E. Demonstrating Improved Learning**

In the collected papers of student majors last year in the AFAM 2020 course, three papers were collected and two received a grade of A and one a grade of B. This year, three papers were collected and two students received a grade of A and one a grade of B. The program believes that the targeted change last year to the AFAM 2020 course to make it more writing intensive has improved the quality of the final papers which demonstrated evidence of improved student learning.

#### **F. Publicizing Student Learning**

The program collected information from one alumnus this year and plans to publicize this information on the web site and other internal and external print materials. Phone calls were made and letters were sent out to alumni requesting this information. The program will continue to seek this information from alumni. The program has collected information to document student learning in the context of the student activities of the African American Studies Association, the departmental club. This information is ready to be posted on the web site at the beginning of the next academic year.

#### **G. Accomplishments and Challenges**

The program has accepted assessment as an important component of the teaching and learning process and looks forward to using the information to continuously improve student learning. The program has a number of major current challenges. The Chair of the

former department resigned for employment at another institution. This resignation left the program with one tenure tract member, two full time faculty, and no tenured faculty. The program continues to be challenged with a small program budget which impacts the ability to enhance student learning and creative recruitment and retention. Student enrollment numbers have remained steady each year for the past three years and could increase with more institutional support from the university. However, students continue to fill our courses, GenEd and non-GenEd alike.