Course of Study for a Graduate Certificate in Black Studies

Black Studies is a liberal arts specialty that typically draws from multiple fields of inquiry. The Graduate Certificate in Black Studies advances student awareness of the multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary character of the field, key theoretical issues that form the parameters of this specialty, and important tools for producing knowledge in Black Studies. The Graduate Certificate familiarizes students with the expansive character of existing knowledge in Black Studies and shows how this knowledge can be used to understand the human experience generally.

Admission Criteria: To be admitted to the Graduate Certificate program in Black Studies, students may be enrolled in a graduate or professional program at UMKC, or be admitted to the UMKC Graduate School, and they must have had an acceptable introductory course in the field of Black Studies (which may come from programs or departments of Black Studies, African American Studies, Africana Studies, Pan African Studies, and the like) from an accredited college or university. The director of the Black Studies Program at UMKC will determine if applicants have had an acceptable introductory course. If a student has not had an introductory course in the field, he or she must pass BLKS201, Global Systems and the Origins of Black American Culture and Institutions, with a grade of “C” or better.

Program Description: To earn the Graduate Certificate in Black Studies students must complete 18 hours of graduate course work in Black Studies, which does not include BLKS 201. At least 12 hours must be at or above the 500 level. Students must maintain a 3.0 grade-point average while enrolled. The requirements for the certificate must be completed within two (2) years. The 18 hours of course work must include the three core courses in Black Studies listed below. Students who may have taken undergraduate versions of these courses must complete them at the required graduate level. The three required core courses are:

- **BLKS 5502 – Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations in African American Studies (3hrs).** This course provides an in-depth examination of the theoretical and conceptual parameters of African American Studies.

- **BLKS 5503 – Writing for African American Studies (3hrs).** This course instructs students in how to produce advanced knowledge in the field of African American studies through the construction of high quality research papers, and it exposes students to a wide array of scholarly journals, databases, and authoritative resources in African American studies. Student develop their research papers around a specific topic defined by the instructor.

- **BLKS 5504 – Research Seminar (3hrs).** This course introduces the logic, theory, and techniques of empirical research and applies them to African American Studies. Students engage in projects involving oral history and ethnography. They learn the parameters and theory behind qualitative and quantitative research and connect empirical research with critical theoretical issues in African American studies.
Additional permanent graduate courses in Black Studies are:

- BLKS 5510 – African American Art History: Part II, 1960 to Present Day
- BLKS 5520 – Critical Health Issues in Black Communities
- BLKS 5521 – The Black Family & Male-Female Relationships
- BLKS 5525 – African American Business Development
- BLKS 5534 – From Field Shout to Hip Hop: African American Poetic Traditions
- BLKS 5535 – Stages Toward Freedom: African American Dramatic Traditions
- BLKS 5537 – The Civil Rights Movement in African American Literature
- BLKS 5538 – Women’s Literature in Africa and the African Diaspora
- BLKS 5549 – Symbols and Codes from the Diaspora: African American Visual Arts Survey
- BLKS 5551 - African American Art History: Part I, 1600 – 1960
- BLKS 5596 – Internship in Black Studies

Beyond the three required core courses, students must complete 9 hours of electives in Black Studies, which includes any graduate-level course with a Black Studies prefix (BLKS). Thus electives may also be special topics courses, BLKS 5580, or directed study, BLKS 5590. At least one of the elective courses must have a humanities focus, and at least one of the elective courses must have a social science focus. Students should seek advising from the Black Studies Program to make sure that they have met these requirements. Examples of graduate-level topics courses offered under BLKS 5580 are:

- Black Creativity and Cultural Productions (emphasis on visual art) of the Harlem Renaissance,
- Introduction to Caribbean Literature and Film,
- Race, Class & Justice (through Criminal Justice),
- Hip-Hop’s Influence on African Americans and American Culture,
- Women’s Literature in Africa and the African Diaspora: A Comparative Study,
- African American Business Development,
- Kansas City and the Black Experience,
- African American Experience in Literature (1773-1960),
- African American Migrations in Literature,
- The Harlem Renaissance (emphasis on literary production),
• Film Adaptations of African American Literary Texts, and
• From Vaudeville to Rhythm and Blues.