

Integrated Baccalaureate Degree in African American Studies (BA) and Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS)



The Integrated Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies and Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences program at Western Illinois University provides an opportunity for outstanding undergraduate African American Studies majors to complete both the BA in African American Studies and master of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MLAS) degrees in five years. This program gives African American Studies majors, with a multidisciplinary orientation, an opportunity to explore selected philosophical topics more thoroughly and to develop an appreciation and understanding of the methodologies of a variety of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics as they pursue graduate-level study.

Admission Requirements

Undergraduate African American Studies students may apply for admission into the Integrated Baccalaureate and Master's Degree Program after completing 60 SH of undergraduate coursework. Application for admission to the integrated BA African American Studies/MLAS degree program requires a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher as well as a major GPA of at least 3.25.

To apply to the integrated program, students need to submit the following documents to the WIU School of Graduate Studies:

- A School of Graduate Studies application form (available at wiu.edu/grad)
- Official transcripts from each college or university previously attended
- A one- to two-page personal statement that explains their larger personal career goals, and how the MLAS degree will further those objectives
- An academic paper of at least 5-10 pages that demonstrates an ability to develop a thesis and make a sustained, well-researched argument
- Three confidential letters of recommendation

Benefits of an Integrated Degree

- **Start graduate courses earlier** – Upon acceptance, integrated degree students may take up to three graduate courses that can count toward both undergraduate and MLAS degrees (called “bridge” courses). As a result, integrated degree students get a jump start on their graduate degree and eventual career.
- **Save money** – Integrated degree students have 9 SH fewer of tuition/fee expenses, and they can lock in the tuition rate in the Graduate Catalog from when they first continually enroll at WIU.

- **Acquire a unique credential** – Integrated degree students acquire concrete, practical language skills while developing higher order analytical skills as they work across disciplines. This broad range of skills and flexibility is in demand by employers.

Integrated Degree Requirements

Students in the BA African American Studies/MLAS integrated program may use up to 9 SH of the following bridge courses in both the BA African American Studies and the MLAS degrees:

- AAS 420G/B (cross-listed with SOC 420G and WS 420G) Race, Class and Gender (3 SH)
- AAS 444G/B Teaching African American Studies (3 SH)
- AAS 445G/B Critical Issues in the Education of African Americans (3 SH)
- AAS 466G/B (cross-listed with GEOG 466G—Africa) Geography of Africa (3 SH)
- AAS 481G/B Postcolonial Theory and African Literature (3 SH)
- AAS 483G/B African Film and Cinema (3 SH)
- AAS 488G/B Black Speech and Language Communication (3 SH)
- AAS 491G/B Seminar in African American Studies (1-6 SH) maximum 3 SH for bridge credit
- AAS 494G/B Religion in African American Culture (3 SH)
- AAS 501B Africa and the African Diaspora World (3 SH)
- AAS 502B Research Methodology in Africana Studies (3 SH)
- AAS 571B (cross-listed with WS 571) Women in Anglophone Caribbean: The Jamaican Experience (3 SH)

If taken after the undergraduate degree has been completed, these courses should not be taken with the “B” designator.

Contact Information

Questions about the undergraduate portion of the program:

Ellen Poulter, academic advisor
Simpkins Hall 124, Macomb Campus
(309) 298-2189

Questions about the graduate portion of the program:

Liberal Arts and Sciences Program
Sarah Haynes, graduate director
Morgan Hall 203E, Macomb Campus
(309) 298-2214
grad-las@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/las

General admission questions:

School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad



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*Higher Values in
Higher Education*

Academic Excellence
Educational Opportunity
Personal Growth
Social Responsibility



**WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY**

Undergraduate Degree Requirements—Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies

The minimum semester hour requirement for the baccalaureate degree is 120 SH. All students seeking the integrated BA African American Studies/MLAS degree must fulfill the requirements for the BA in African American Studies (for a complete explanation of requirements, please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog):

- I. University General Education and College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Requirements (60 SH)
 - II. Core Courses: AAS 100, 145, 251, 281, 360, 451† (18 SH)
 - III. Directed Electives (15 SH)
Select 15 SH from one of the following emphases. Complete at least 6 SH of 400-level coursework within an emphasis.
 - A. Humanities Emphasis
AAS 260, 282, 283, 313, 314, 354, 380, 381, 402, 483, 484, 494, 499
 - B. Social Sciences Emphasis
AAS 270, 290, 310, 311, 312, 315, 320, 325, 336, 400, 420, 466, 488, 499
 - C. General Emphasis
15 SH of African American Studies coursework
 - IV. Minor* (16-20 SH)
 - V. Open Electives (7-11 SH)
- †AAS 451 fulfills the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement.

Graduate Degree Requirements—Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences

- I. Core Courses (9 SH)
 - LAS 501 Tradition and Change: Focus on the History and African American Studies of the Sciences (3 SH)
 - LAS 502 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Social Sciences (3 SH)
 - LAS 503 Tradition and Change: Focus on the Humanities (3 SH)
 - II. Electives (18 SH)
Any College of Arts and Sciences post-baccalaureate certificate and/or directed electives approved by the director of Liberal Arts and Sciences – no more than 3 SH of electives may be independent work. No more than 9 SH of bridge courses in African American Studies may count toward both the BA in African American Studies and the MLAS.
 - III. Select one of the following exit options (6 SH)
 - A. *Thesis*
LAS 667 Thesis (6 SH)
 - B. *Internship*
LAS 695 Internship Preparation (3 SH)
LAS 696 Internship (3 SH)
 - C. *Applied Project*
LAS 699 Applied Project (6 SH)
- Total Program: 33 SH**



Distinctive Features

The BA African American Studies/MLAS integrated program has many distinctive features and opportunities for its students:

- **Personalized Education**—The strong commitment to undergraduate teaching and student learning by African American Studies faculty is evidenced by its small class sizes, which make it possible for students to participate actively in class discussions and for faculty to get to know students on an individual basis. Faculty members are accessible to students, and individualized advising and career counseling are provided by the department.
- **Research and Scholarly Activities**—There are many activities in which students in the MLAS program can participate: annual departmental conferences; WIU Graduate Research Conference; departmental, College and University speaker events; professionalization workshops; and graduate organizations and clubs. LAS students are active in the LAS Graduate Student Organization (LASGO) in Macomb and the LAS Student Organization (LASSO) in the Quad Cities. For additional student organizations of interest to African American Studies majors, see wiu.edu/aas.
- **Flexible Program Structure**—For their exit option, students can write a thesis, develop an applied project or pursue an internship. Through a close mentoring relationship with a faculty director, individuals choose and tailor their exit options to meet their personal or professional goals, including preparation for further graduate work, a new career or advancement within a current career.

Career Opportunities

Most graduates pursue careers in social services, industries, communications fields, advertising, journalism and nonprofit agencies. The integrated program is one that prepares students for any field in which critical thinking skills and knowledge of traditionally underrepresented groups are important.

“The Liberal Arts and Sciences integrated program has provided me with many opportunities. I enjoyed taking graduate courses as an undergraduate because the courses were challenging and rewarding. Also, the dual credits and time length for the program were appealing because it allowed me to not only challenge myself as a student but also consider my financial needs. Overall, this program has allowed me to customize my degree without financially straining myself.”

— Ashley Clinton, BLAS/MLAS integrated degree student