

## SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

### AFRICAN STUDIES

The African Studies Programme at the University of Hong Kong offers a Bachelor of Arts Minor in African Studies, through which students can explore Africa as a study area from interdisciplinary perspectives.

#### **Minor (36 credits)**

To obtain a Minor in African Studies, students are required to take the prerequisite course AFRI1001 “Foundations in African Studies”, 12 credits from core courses, and 18 credits from the interdisciplinary elective courses listed below, totaling 36 credits.

A minor in African Studies consists of the following components:

- **Prerequisite course (6 credits):**  
AFRI1001. Foundations in African Studies
- **Core courses (12 credits):**  
Select two courses from the list below.  
AFRI2011. Kiswahili I (6 credits)  
AFRI2012. African soundscapes: Music and society in Africa (6 credits)  
AFRI3002. Africa studies workshop (6 credits)
- **Interdisciplinary elective courses (18 credits)**  
3 courses selected from the list below.

#### **Pre-requisite Course**

##### **AFRI1001. Foundations in African Studies (6 credits)**

This course will introduce the complex nature of the African continent from a wider interdisciplinary perspective. Students will be exposed to Africa's geo-political particularities; complex history (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial); diverse languages, peoples, culture and music, and rich literary and artistic traditions. The course is also designed to give an overview of major theoretical debates on Africa such as the questions of nation-building or the perception of Africa. It will also shed light on the current economic and socio-political challenges that the continent faces as well as the opportunities it presents.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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#### **Core Courses**

##### **AFRI2011. Kiswahili I (6 credits)**

Providing basic skills in an African language is one of the core objectives of the African Studies Programme. This course thus introduces our students to standard Kiswahili, which is the lingua Franca of

East Africa. It is specifically designed to help students who have no prior knowledge to begin carrying out basic conversations in Kiswahili. The course puts a special emphasis on the structural aspect of the language delivering the lexical and grammatical basis while at the same time enhancing the students' capacity to converse in Kiswahili. The cultural aspects of the language will also be introduced and highlighted since it is a necessary component used to enhance the communicative competence.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI2012. African soundscapes: Music and society in Africa (6 credits)**

This course builds up on the introductory courses of our programme to pursue the exploration of Africa by focusing on the music cultures of the continent. Lectures will discuss the cultural and historical contexts in which various musical and performance genres have emerged. The griot traditions, mbalax and high-life of Western Africa; the azmari tradition in Ethiopia; Rai in North Africa; Rhumba in Central Africa as well as Mbaqana in Southern Africa will be discussed in the exploration of what we call in this course African soundscapes. The course will enable students to critically view and challenge existing perceptions of African music, Africans and Africa. No previous musical experience is necessary.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3002. Africa studies workshop (6 credits)**

This course involves attending seminars and workshops on advanced topics in African Studies (including history, literature, linguistics, education, music, law, science, technology, and international relations) by leading Africanist scholars.

Prerequisite: **AFRI1001**

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**Interdisciplinary Elective Courses**

**AFRI2007. African Nobel Laureates in literature (6 credits)**

This course introduces students to the literature of Africa by way of its Nobel Prize-winning authors and their work, and will expose students to the major issues surrounding it. It will begin by questioning the very meaning of the term "African literature," before examining some of its most salient features and issues such as its complex relationship with colonialism that made languages of Europe become the literary languages of Africa; the various forms of narration in Africa; colonialism and resistance; the tension between traditionalism and the African novel; as well as the complex relationship between African continental and diasporic literature. It will also look at major contemporary African literary movements and their historical significance.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI2010. Introducing contemporary African literatures (6 credits)**

This course will expose students to the major issues surrounding it. It will begin by questioning the very meaning of the term "African literature," before examining some of its most salient features and issues such

as its complex relationship with colonialism that made languages of Europe become the literary languages of Africa; the various forms of narration in Africa; colonialism and resistance; the tension between nationalism and the African novel; as well as the complex relationship between African continental and diasporic literature. It will also look at major contemporary African literary movements and their historical significance.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI2014. African linguistics (6 credits)**

This course covers aspects of the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of major African languages. It also deals with vowel harmony, tone, click sounds, the noun class system, verbal extensions, serial verbs, and other complex constructions. The course will highlight important sociolinguistic features of various regions in Africa and include specific examples.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI2018. African Art(s) (6 credits)**

This course is focused on helping students develop skills to see through, think about, and communicate ideas about African arts. Students will combine visual, critical, and reflective modes of inquiry in approaching both African artworks and ensuing articulations—(audio)visual, literary, scholarly, and critical—of experiences/analyses triggered by those artworks. African arts will be considered from an experiential, contextual, and humanistic, perspective, and so, connections to geography, history, philosophy, and other arts will always be present. In this course students are thus expected to develop experiences, reflect and articulate them in oral, written, and/or (audio)visual form.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI2019. African cinema: “Film’in” Africa (6 credits)**

This course deals with the rich diversity of African cinema from an aesthetic and anthropological perspective. Students will focus on one specific film each week to delve into how cinematic artistic expressions articulate core issues of the human condition framed by specific socio-cultural and politico-historical circumstances. Questions of narrative and storytelling, representation and stylization, (inter)mediality, etc., in African cinema will frame their analyses of specific contexts of production. The course will disclose the different roles cinema plays in the African continent, provide a particular perspective to the topic of Africa-China relations, and help students consider the place of the audience in the African cinematic experience.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3003. Kiswahili II (6 credits)**

This course is a continuation of AFRI2011, Kiswahili I and continues to build on the previous work. Students will consolidate and develop their knowledge in the four areas of competence (speaking, writing, reading and listening), with an emphasis on communication skills in contextual situations. In this process, students will also get progressively acquainted with Kiswahili and its associated cultures. In addition, the course also seeks to expose learners to various rhetorical devices that are vital in Kiswahili discourse and culture.

Prerequisite: **AFRI2011**  
Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3005. Africa-China relations (6 credits)**

In recent years, Africa and China have renewed their relations at many different levels. From political engagement to increased trade and economic relations, and perhaps more importantly, to increased contacts between ordinary Africans and Chinese. The figures of Chinese living in Africa, and Africans living in China, have increased to a point that has no parallel in the history between these two regions. What are the implications of contemporary Afro-Chinese engagements? What does this mean for the future of these regions and the world? In order to provide answers to these questions, this course introduces the main debates around Afro-Chinese engagements and analyses some of the associated sociocultural, political and economic processes. Instead of simply reviewing the main literature on Africa – China relations, this course takes you into a critical and interdisciplinary journey in which crucial aspects of these relations are analysed through various texts and documentaries. Through discussion and analysis, this course will challenge extant narratives about Africa – China relations and will delve into the possibilities (i.e. opportunities and challenges) that this renewed engagement entails.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3006. Representations of Blackness in Asia (6 credits)**

This course introduces students to the ways in which blackness has been constructed and represented in Asia. While examining the historic involvement and place of Black people in the region, the course explores the politics and dynamics behind contemporary discourses and media representations of blackness. The course focuses on cases of regional and global media and literature considering them in light of narratives such as the ‘rise of Asia’ and ‘China in Africa’.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3007. African art(s): Articulating and performing human experiences (6 credits)**

This course introduces students to the role of art in human experience in the African continent. Students will delve into the anthropological and conceptual basis of African artworks in different media—audio/visual, musical, cinematic, literary, etc.—to examine the dynamism and diversity of African life and systems of thought as articulated in artistic expressions. Through this holistic approach, students will delve into the crucial and complex role that arts play in African life.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI3008. African arts in museums: Collecting and exhibiting "Africa" (6 credits)**

This course introduces students to the relevant role that exhibitions have played in the conceptualization of African arts and African art history during the 20th century, as well as how these exhibitions have in turn contributed to a reconceptualization of core concepts/issues in Western art history in the recent past. Students will start from a critical analysis of the politics of exhibiting cultures in museums and gallery collections through some of the most representative exhibitions of African arts during the 20th century. In the second half of the course, students will create their own virtual exhibitions of African arts as a means

to experience the complexity and relevance of curatorial work and to reflect upon the implications of their own representations of Africa.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI4001. Field trip to an African country (6 credits)**

In this course, an experienced faculty member will lead students on a supervised two-week educational field trip to an African country. The rationale is to closely observe and study an aspect of Africa introduced in one of the courses on Africa Studies or in a related course. Leading up to the field trip, students must participate in the intensive preparation that will take place in Hong Kong. After their return, students will be required to complete a written report of about 5,000 words based on the experience and knowledge they have acquired during the field trip.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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**AFRI4002. Readings in African Studies (6 credits)**

In this course, a student will work with a faculty member to read a selection of primary and secondary materials in an aspect of African Studies over a semester. Students will be required to complete a written report of about 4,000 words based on a review of the literature provided.

Assessment: 100% coursework

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The following non-AFRI advanced courses are also counted towards the minor:

- AMER2057. African American cinema (6 credits)
- EUST2018. Early modern Atlantic worlds, c. 1500-1800 (6 credits)
- EUST2019. Atlantic revolutions, c. 1760-1830 (6 credits)
- LING2064. Language in Africa (6 credits)
- SOWK3092. Migration and mobility (6 credits)