

# CRITICAL BLACK STUDIES (CBST)

## Faculty

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Critical Black studies is devoted to the critical examination of the artistic, historical, literary, political and theoretical developments of the global Black experience. As a discipline, critical Black studies explores racial blackness and its relationship to the making of the modern world. It is a discipline that continues to grow out of the Black freedom struggle and is therefore committed to rigorous scholarship, community development, and ethical responsibility grounded in the histories and lived experience of Black people.

Critical Black studies offers majors a robust and interdisciplinary curriculum that engages both historical and contemporary issues from a liberal arts perspective. It allows students to ask questions about the production of knowledge and the world around them, while developing critical analytical skills. Majors will develop an understanding of the vital issues, questions and debates driving theory and research in the discipline through written and oral discourse. Critical Black studies provides students significant preparation for careers in education, the arts, social work, public policy, law, community development, medicine, international affairs, academia and much more.

Critical Black studies **majors** must complete nine courses from the following categories, including an independent study, the object of which is to complete a thesis that will fulfill the Culminating Experience. Courses must be selected in consultation with a departmental adviser.

Critical Black Studies Major Requirements (nine courses)

CBST 199	Introduction to Critical Black Studies	1
CBST 250	Approaches to Critical Black Studies	1
One course in history (Africa, African American or Caribbean)		1
Five courses in area specialties: social sciences, humanities, and arts; of these courses, two must be at the 200 level and at least one course must be at the 300 level.		5
CBST 399	Independent Study	1

Courses in area specialties are distributed both by division and geographically. Students must take the following number of courses out of the approved list of critical Black studies divisional courses: two in social sciences, two in humanities, and one in the arts. These courses must include the following geographic groupings: one course on Africa, one course on African America, and one course on either the Caribbean or Afro-Latin communities. Courses may count simultaneously for the division and region/spatial community requirements. (As such, a single course may fulfill both a humanities and an Africa requirement.)

Students will fulfill the Culminating Experience by completion of a thesis in an area of critical Black studies. Students will register for an independent study in the fall of their senior year with their faculty adviser. The thesis topic must be confirmed in writing in consultation with the faculty adviser by the end of a student's junior year. (See Honors Council website for consideration as an honors thesis; however, theses do not have to be submitted to the Honors Council to count as the Culminating Experience major requirement for critical Black studies.) Faculty advisers will determine successful completion of the thesis/Culminating Experience requirement by submission of the grade for the independent study.

Critical Black studies majors will become competent writers through their engagement with the wide array of writing tasks required in our courses. Public speaking instruction will occur as a facet of the oral presentation assignments in many of our courses, but specifically required in our two core classes. Through the research skills acquired in our foundational classes (the classes that constitute the major), students will gain information literacy and will be required to demonstrate that literacy through completion of a thesis in their senior year.

**\*\*For a current list of courses that contribute to the Department of Critical Black Studies, please visit the Critical Black Studies webpage at [www.bucknell.edu/criticalblackstudies](http://www.bucknell.edu/criticalblackstudies) ([https://www.bucknell.edu/academics/college-arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/critical-black-studies/?utm\\_source=news&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=pr](https://www.bucknell.edu/academics/college-arts-sciences/academic-departments-programs/critical-black-studies/?utm_source=news&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=pr)).**

Students majoring in critical Black studies are strongly encouraged to spend a semester or a summer abroad, preferably in Africa or the Caribbean. Bucknell in Ghana is particularly encouraged.

## Critical Black Studies Minor

Critical Black studies is the study of the global Black experience. As a field of inquiry, critical Black studies critically examines the intellectual traditions and experiences of Black people and Black communities from intra- and interdisciplinary perspectives. Critical Black studies **minors** must complete a minimum of five courses.

Critical Black Studies Minor Core Requirements (two classes)

CBST 199	Introduction to Critical Black Studies	1
CBST 250	Approaches to Critical Black Studies	1

Three additional courses from the following list:

CBST 199	Introduction to Critical Black Studies	1
CBST 201	Introduction to Black Performance	1
CBST 220	Race, Riots and Resistance	1
CBST 221	Introduction to African American Literature	1
CBST 222	Caribbean Literature	1
CBST 223	Questioning the Post-Racial	1
CBST 227	Race and Sexuality	1
CBST 229	Philosophy and Race	1
CBST 230	Black Radical Politics	1
CBST 235	Black Radical Thought & Art – Multi-disciplinarily Considered	1
CBST 238	Vampire & Zombies	1
CBST 240	Inventions of Black Culture	1
CBST 248	Music and Culture: Jazz and Social Justice	1
CBST 250	Approaches to Critical Black Studies	1
CBST 255	Radical Black Drama & Performance	1
CBST 257	Music and Culture: Jazz, Rock, and Race	1
CBST 263	Conservation in Africa	1
CBST 265	(Really) Reading Black Plays: August Wilson, Part 1	1
CBST 266	Black Africans in the Hispanic Black Atlantic: Then and Now	1
CBST 267	(Really) Reading Black Plays: August Wilson, Part 2	1
CBST 268	Migrations: Africa to America and the (Re)Making of Culture	1
CBST 271	Politics of Anti-Blackness	1
CBST 274	Africa and International Relations in Historical Perspective	1
CBST 278	Photographing Race	1
CBST 280	Race, Violence & Incarceration	1
CBST 290	Topics in Critical Black Studies	1
CBST 291	Africa: Ancient to Early Modern Times 4000BCE-1400CE	1
CBST 292	Making Contemporary Africa: 'Early Modern' to the 'Post-Modern' World - 1400 to the Present	1
CBST 295	Hip-Hop and Blackness	1
CBST 302	Contemporary Africa & Colonial Pasts: Investments and Re-Emergences	1
CBST 310	Racial Capitalism	1
CBST 315	Race, Sports, and Rebellion	1
CBST 319	African-American History	1
CBST 322	Haiti and the American Imagination	1
CBST 333	Black Feminisms	1
CBST 399	Independent Study	1

Other courses may be selected in consultation with program director.

Critical Black studies often stands in critical relation to other disciplines and fields of knowledge for the ways in which blackness and the Black experience is primary, rather than secondary, if at all, to the critical exploration and engagement of this world. Critical Black studies utilizes multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, methods and theories to illustrate the primacy of blackness and the global Black experience. Despite the complexity,

enormity, and diversity of the Black world, several learning objectives unify our teaching in critical Black studies at Bucknell University. Students graduating with a major in critical Black studies will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of critical Black studies as a long-standing and exciting field of knowledge and inquiry;
- identify the important contributors to the field, and explain the relevance of the field for both the academy and community;
- demonstrate an understanding of the historical dimensions of the Black experience as well as the cultural, social, political and economic forces that have helped shape these experiences;
- demonstrate an understanding of the major approaches and methodologies of critical Black studies; and
- apply appropriate theories and methodologies for understanding the global Black experience.

## Courses

### **CBST 199. Introduction to Critical Black Studies. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

The course introduces students to concepts, theories, and debates of the vibrant discipline of Critical Black Studies. It surveys major themes, questions, concerns, and events of African, African American, and other African diasporic communities. The course examines the making of the modern world through the lens of black global experience.

### **CBST 201. Introduction to Black Performance. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will introduce students to the field of performance theory as it is engaged through the lens of the Black World. It will place scholars in Black performance theory in conversation with scholars working in the black radical tradition whose work raises important questions about performance, blackness, and more.

### **CBST 202. Black Film and Antiblackness. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course samples Black filmmakers' work from the 70s into the present, examines how their films analyze the persistence and specificity of antiblack animus, and how Black people navigate that animus. Sometimes, they achieve this on their own terms, other times, they must work under the press of Hollywood's demands. Crosslisted as ENFS 202.

### **CBST 204. Racism(s) Across the Americas. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

We explore how the idea of the Americas as a "new world" of discovery and wonder was (and is) entangled with racialized systems of domination. Looking into anti-racist ideas and actions today, the course critically explores the shared histories and common futures of diverse peoples across the Americas. Crosslisted as LAMS 204.

### **CBST 220. Race, Riots and Resistance. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course introduces students to how race riots and resistance shaped American politics. We will study how political violence shaped the racial identity of American citizens and Black people's struggle for freedom. If you are wondering what can be done about systemic racism, this class provides a helpful critical perspective.

### **CBST 221. Introduction to African American Literature. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Provides a selection from across the vast array of examples collected under the inadequate rubric "African American Literature." We'll read poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama in order to understand how a group of people who have been written out of American history and culture write themselves back into these stories. Crosslisted as ENLS 221.

### **CBST 222. Caribbean Literature. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Fall, Spring or Summer; Lecture hours:3**

Introduction to selected literatures, cultures, and histories of the Caribbean, with close analysis of text and context. When taught in the summer, the course is the core of the Bucknell in the Caribbean summer study abroad program. Crosslisted as ENLS 227.

### **CBST 223. Questioning the Post-Racial. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

The term "post-racial" has emerged within public discourse from time to time over the course of America's existence. From Frederick Douglass to Barack Obama, this expression has described an American aspirational goal. Our class will take a contemporary and literary approach to understanding the limits of the term. Crosslisted as ENLS 223.

### **CBST 227. Race and Sexuality. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the constructions of and intersections between race and sexuality. It also investigates the ways that these identities/locations have informed understanding of inequality in the U.S. Crosslisted as WMST 227.

**CBST 229. Philosophy and Race. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Critical examination of the nature and meaning of "race" in terms of conceptual analysis, experience, social constructionism, feminism, class, ethnicity, politics, colonialism, violence, and redress. Crosslisted as PHIL 229 and POLS 259.

**CBST 230. Black Radical Politics. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course introduces students to the historical formation of the Black Radical Tradition. It focuses on the historical context that shapes Black people's varying forms of organized resistance and on how political practice shapes the formation of different political ideologies, knowledge, and thought.

**CBST 235. Black Radical Thought & Art – Multi-disciplinarily Considered. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

W.E.B. DuBois' assertion of the color-line as the 20th century problem now speaks to this century. We will examine Black Radical Thought as it is enacted through the Arts and host a series of renowned guest artist-activists whose works intervene in the ongoing problem of racism on a global scale. Crosslisted as ENLS 235.

**CBST 238. Vampire & Zombies. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Summer Session Only; Lecture hours:3**

This course is designed to (1) introduce the fundamentals of cinematic elements and strategies; and (2) provoke a conversation and several key questions related to the vampire and zombie myths, why their cinematic performances remain so popular and what the implications are of that popularity.

**CBST 240. Inventions of Black Culture. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Explore the relationship between technological invention and Black culture. We will think through how technology reshaped Black culture – for instance how the phonograph changed Black music. We will also consider how Black people have created new forms of culture as technologies and inventions for life, resistance, and revolution.

**CBST 248. Music and Culture: Jazz and Social Justice. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Alternate Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

A critical examination of musicians, movements, and cultural intersections within the development of jazz. Crosslisted as MUSC 248.

**CBST 250. Approaches to Critical Black Studies. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will provide students with an introduction to the key intellectual approaches and methods specific to Critical Black Studies.

**CBST 255. Radical Black Drama & Performance. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course focuses on a variety of playwrights who examine the predicament of blackness across a little more than a century. We pay particular attention to plays not just as artistic creations and entertainments, but also as political gestures that address that predicament. Crosslisted as ENLS 254.

**CBST 257. Music and Culture: Jazz, Rock, and Race. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

A thorough examination of historically important musicians and movements within the context of race and culture. Crosslisted as MUSC 257.

**CBST 263. Conservation in Africa. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Through a series of case studies and a final research project, students will gain in-depth knowledge of conservation efforts on the African continent. Emphasizing local and global contexts, course themes include the colonial origins of protected areas, African environmental activists and scholars, and the multiple methods used in political ecology. Crosslisted as ENST 263.

**CBST 265. (Really) Reading Black Plays: August Wilson, Part 1. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will examine the plays of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, August Wilson and by extension explore what is so often referred to as the "Black experience" in a regional, national, and global context.

**CBST 266. Black Africans in the Hispanic Black Atlantic: Then and Now. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

This course examines the variety of artistic, cultural, historical, and literary representations of black Africans and their descendants across the Spanish-speaking world, Africa, and the variety of Afro-Latina/o communities of the United States. Prerequisite: SPAN 208. Crosslisted as SPAN 266.

**CBST 267. (Really) Reading Black Plays: August Wilson, Part 2. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

In Part two of our focus on renowned playwright August Wilson's examination of Black life, we will read the second half of his 10-play cycle: Fences (1957), Two Trains Running (1969), Jitney (1977), King Hedley II (1985) and Radio Golf (1997).

**CBST 268. Migrations: Africa to America and the (Re)Making of Culture. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course examines forced and voluntary migrations of Africans and their North American descendants. It will begin with an analysis of west and central African history and will then focus on the period from the beginning of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade to the present. Crosslisted as ECON 268.

**CBST 271. Politics of Anti-Blackness. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will introduce students to the political history of anti-black racism as a contingent, but consistent formation of domination that shaped the modern world. In particular, this course will help students to form a critical vocabulary for how anti-black racism inform or interact with many political crisis.

**CBST 274. Africa and International Relations in Historical Perspective. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

From popular culture: music, film, fashion to digital technologies: cell phones, computers, fit-bits, and GOOGLE-glass to our food: morning coffee, sugar, and spices, we rely on African ideas and resources. Through novels, films, and scholarly articles we examine how International Relations across Africa and with Africa matter in our lives. Crosslisted as HIST 274 and IREL 274.

**CBST 278. Photographing Race. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

The history of photography is inseparable from histories of race, imperialism, and slavery. This course examines how camera and film technologies affected depictions of race globally. Beginning with the invention of the modern camera, this course traces dynamics of voyeurism, othering, and personhood in photography to the present day.

**CBST 280. Race, Violence & Incarceration. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the dynamic convergence of race, violence, and criminal justice. More specifically, it explores policing and punishment from Reconstruction to contemporary mass incarceration. Police practices, political imprisonment, abolition, and more will also be examined.

**CBST 290. Topics in Critical Black Studies. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

A variable topics course in which students will take a critical and empowering look at various expressions of Black culture, experience, and thought.

**CBST 291. Africa: Ancient to Early Modern Times 4000BCE-1400CE. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Survey of Africa from Ancient economic, social, cultural, economic, and political developments to the Early Modern Era and the rise of Atlantic era trade. This course focuses on social, cultural, political, and economic changes generated by populations across the continent. Crosslisted as HIST 291 and IREL 291.

**CBST 292. Making Contemporary Africa: 'Early Modern' to the 'Post-Modern' World - 1400 to the Present. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Survey of African history from the 15th century to the contemporary period. We explore six major themes in African History: The Indian Ocean World, Making of the Atlantic World, Colonialism in Africa, Nationalism and Independence Movements, Post-Colonialism and Issues in the Making of Contemporary Africa. Crosslisted as HIST 292 and IREL 293.

**CBST 295. Hip-Hop and Blackness. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will explore the ways in which hip-hop culture has impacted global youth culture, particularly within the realms of music, film, television, clothing styles, politics, language, public policy, race, gender and sexuality. In summary, it will provide a much-needed perspective on the intersection of hip hop and blackness.

**CBST 302. Contemporary Africa & Colonial Pasts: Investments and Re-Emergences. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Globalized investment, oil extraction, Oprah and Bono-endorsed RED products, a rising middle class: This course addresses contemporary political economy, meanings of 'the continent', and colonial legacy in Africa. We draw on human geography, African history, postcolonial and feminist studies, and literature to understand a rapidly changing continent. Crosslisted as GEOG 302.

**CBST 310. Racial Capitalism. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the historical and contemporary relationship between race and capitalism. It will also explore the culture and politics of anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism and more.

**CBST 315. Race, Sports, and Rebellion. 1 Credit.****Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the nuanced and controversial relationship between race and sports worldwide. Topics will include social justice and rebellion; political economy; mass media and popular culture; and globalization.

**CBST 319. African-American History. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Focuses on recent developments in the field. Topics vary but may include slavery; African-American intellectual history; black feminism; race, class and gender; social and political movements; and cultural criticism. Crosslisted as HIST 319.

**CBST 322. Haiti and the American Imagination. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Study of selected thematic, aesthetic and ideological issues in writing from the Americas. Crosslisted as ENLS 322 and ENLS 622.

**CBST 333. Black Feminisms. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Occasionally; Lecture hours:3**

This course explores the context, development, and outcomes of black feminists in the United States during the second half of the 20th century. Crosslisted as WMST 333 and WMST 633.

**CBST 399. Independent Study. 1 Credit.**

**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:4; Repeatable**

Individual study or project, supervised by instructor. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.