

**Independent Work in the
Department of African American
Studies**



Princeton University 2024-2025

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Departmental Coursework

The Department of African American Studies (AAS) offers an undergraduate major in the study of the historic achievements and struggles of African-descended people in the United States and their relationship to African and African-descended people around the world. Drawing on methodologies from the humanities and social sciences and spanning areas of inquiry across different fields, the AAS major emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary research and analysis to its scholarly mission.

Departmental Subfields

The AAS program of study is organized into three thematic subfields. Majors take courses in each subfield and then choose one as a primary area of inquiry.

1. African American Culture and Life (AACL): Students encounter the intellectual tradition and cultural practices that inform the emergence and development of African American studies as a field of study in the academy. Focusing on aesthetic repertoires and historical dynamics situated primarily in the United States, students learn how to examine the patterns and practices that have defined and transformed Black people's lives. Courses in the AACL subfield are typically cross-listed with English, History, Religion, and American Studies.
2. Race and Public Policy (RPP): Students deploy and interrogate social science methodologies to examine the workings of the American state apparatus and other social and political institutions. Fostering critical approaches to empirical research and analysis, students examine the formation and development of racial and ethnic identities in the United States, with a particular focus on different perceptions and measures of inequality. Courses in the RPP subfield are typically cross-listed with the School of Public and International Affairs, Sociology, and Politics.
3. Global Race and Ethnicity (GRE): Students take up comparative methodologies in studying inter- and intraracial group dynamics in a global frame. Comparison yields an understanding of the aesthetic repertoires and historical dynamics of African and African-descended people in the diaspora outside the United States, as well as non-African-descended people of color within the United States. Courses in the GRE subfield are typically cross-listed with Comparative Literature, Art & Archaeology, and African Studies.

Departmental Junior Seminar

The Junior Seminar, AAS 300: Research and Writing in African American Studies, is required for all majors. During the fall semester, all juniors enroll in a seminar led by one or two members of the faculty. This course introduces students to theories and methods of research design in AAS. Drawing on methodologies from the humanities and social sciences, students learn to develop a research question animated by their interests and identify which types of evidence are most suitable for answering their questions. Students compose several short exploratory papers to "write their way" to their junior project research question. By the end of the semester, juniors are expected to be in a strong position to begin their independent work.

Goals for Student Learning and Independent Work

Coursework in AAS prepares students to conduct independent work in their junior and senior years. The goals for student learning through coursework and independent work are to:

- build a comprehensive base of knowledge of African-descended peoples in the United States and in the diaspora, and explore how this background facilitates a critical approach to dominant knowledge formations;
- understand what interdisciplinary research and analysis entails in an educational context of disciplinary knowledge formation, and explain why interdisciplinarity is essential to the study of African-descended peoples in the United States and in the diaspora;
- identify methodologies from the humanities and social sciences that may be applied to one's area of inquiry, and propose how these methods might be revised or combined to address interdisciplinary research questions;
- hone skills in primary-source research, analytical interpretation, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning as components of interdisciplinary study in AAS; and
- demonstrate these skills through written and verbal communication, with the option of pursuing other means of communication such as performance, media-making, and creative writing as they relate to the scholarly mission of AAS.

Methods of Inquiry in Independent Work

AAS' institutional origins may be traced the Black studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In keeping with that movement's effort to challenge dominant modes of inquiry as it pertains to race and racial inequality, AAS identifies itself as an interdisciplinary field that revises or combines disciplinary methods to address the experiences and perspectives of minoritized subjects. Methods of inquiry may include textual analysis, historical and archival research, philosophical inquiry, and ethnographic or sociological fieldwork. Note that some methods of inquiry, primarily pertaining to fieldwork, require the approval of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research involving human subjects (<https://ria.princeton.edu/human-research>). This process may delay the start of field research, so planning ahead is required.

Creative Components of Independent Work

Students may pursue creative options for independent work, including, but not limited to: performance, dance, fashion, art installation or exhibition, film and visual arts, and creative writing.

Creative independent work plans must be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) before the beginning of the term in which the work is launched. If the assigned adviser states that they are incapable of appropriately evaluating the creative component of the independent work, then the student will be asked to identify a faculty mentor or practitioner who will agree to consult with the adviser on the merits of the project. Students must then notify the DUS and the Undergraduate Administrator of their selection.

Depending on the nature of the creative work, the total word count of the Junior Paper or the Senior Thesis will be adjusted to reflect the combination of creative and scholarly components. The DUS will consult with the adviser to come up with a satisfactory word count that will fairly assess the scholarly components of the project. All creative projects must contain scholarly writing of at least half the listed word counts (for the Junior Paper and the Senior Thesis) to satisfy the requirements for independent work in the major.

The Junior Paper

During the spring semester, juniors conduct independent research and writing toward the completion of the Junior Paper (JP). Juniors are assigned JP advisers after the completion of the Junior Seminar and before the start of Wintersession. Juniors submit at least two drafts of the JP to their advisers over the course of the spring semester (see the benchmarks below). The final JP is due on the date set by the University, which this year is **April 29, 2025**. Review the Department's [extension policy](#) on page 10 for details on when and how extensions to this deadline can be made. Failure to meet the deadline without permission will result in an "F" grade.

PROSPECTUS

Excluding tables, figures, images, bibliography, and appendices, the text of the JP prospectus should be between 3,000 and 4,000 words. The document should contain the following:

1. a title page, including working title; student's name; Department; date; signed honor pledge;
2. the main body of the prospectus:
 - an introductory section in which the topic and its significance are presented through a primary research question;
 - a discussion of existing research on the topic and how the work contributes to this scholarly conversation; and
 - a consideration of the methods and sources to be used in the course of research;
3. a tentative outline of the argument; and
4. a working bibliography.

FORMAT

Excluding tables, figures, images, bibliography, and appendices, the text of the final JP should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words. The document must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. After the title page, all pages should be numbered. The title page should contain the same information and signature as the JP prospectus.

Note that the page count may be changed to account for any creative components that are included in the work. This change must be done in consultation with the adviser and the DUS.

CITATIONS

All independent work should be appropriately cited and attributed to document the sources for any ideas and information that do not belong to you. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Discuss the ideal citation style for your topic with your adviser. Unless otherwise specified, your documentation system should be Chicago-style footnotes as detailed in the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

GRADING

The JP is graded by the student's adviser. The adviser is responsible for assigning the final grade for the work and providing substantive feedback on it.

Benchmark Dates for the Junior Paper, 2024-2025

FALL TERM

- October 21 Submit [Junior Paper Adviser preferences, JP Topic, and subfield track selection](#)
- January 10 Submit your JP prospectus to your adviser and ask to schedule a day and time to meet in the first week of class in the spring term.

SPRING TERM

- During the spring term, you are strongly encouraged to have at least three sessions with your Writing Coach. Coaches will be assigned in January.*
- Week 1 Meet with your adviser, no later than Friday, January 31, to:
1) discuss your prospectus;
2) discuss how frequently you will meet, and best ways to check-in; and
3) plan your next research/writing task.
- Week 4 Submit partial first draft (10 pages) to your adviser, no later than Friday, February 21.
- Week 5 Students receive first drafts back, with comments from advisers, no later than Friday, February 28.
- SPRING BREAK* March 8 – 16
- Week 7 Submit partial second draft to your adviser (20 pages) no later than Friday, March 21.
- Week 8 Students receive second drafts back, with comments from advisers, no later than Friday, March 28.
- Week 10 Submit third and mostly complete draft to your adviser no later than Friday, April 11.
- Week 11 Students receive third drafts back, with comments from advisers, no later than Friday, April 18.
- April 29 Upload your JP by 5:00 pm on this date. You will receive a link and instructions on uploading the paper to Google Drive.
- May 16 Students receive JP grades and comments.

NOTES:

The Senior Thesis

Throughout the senior year, seniors conduct independent research and writing toward the completion of the Senior Thesis. Seniors are assigned thesis advisers in the summer leading up to the fall semester, no earlier than July 1. Seniors submit multiple drafts of the thesis to their advisers over the course of the fall semester, Wintersession, and spring semester, with grade penalties assigned for missing early deadlines (see the benchmarks below). The final Senior Thesis is due on the date set by the Department, which this year is **April 21, 2025**. Review the Department's [extension policy](#) on page 10 for details on when and how extensions to this deadline can be made. Failure to meet the deadline without permission will result in an "F" grade.

PROPOSAL

Excluding tables, figures, images, bibliography, and appendices, the text of the Senior Thesis proposal should be 1,000 to 1,500 words. The document should contain the following:

1. a description of the topic, the scope of the project, and the methodological approach you plan to take;
2. a discussion of how your coursework at Princeton or elsewhere has prepared you to pursue the topic;
3. a survey of relevant sources and a review of the kinds of evidence you plan to use;
4. a discussion of the contribution your work will make to the existing scholarship in your area;
5. a working bibliography; and
6. a preliminary writing plan or chapter outline.

FORMAT

Excluding tables, figures, images, bibliography, and appendices, the text of the final Senior Thesis should be between 24,000 and 30,000 words. The document must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. The thesis should begin with a title page with the following information: title; student's name; Department; date; signed honor pledge. After the title page, all pages should be numbered.

Note that the page count may be changed to account for any creative components that are included in the work. This change must be done in consultation with the adviser and the DUS.

CITATIONS

All independent work should be appropriately cited and attributed to document the sources for any ideas and information that do not belong to you. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism.

Discuss the ideal citation style for your topic with your adviser. Unless otherwise specified, your documentation system should be Chicago-style footnotes as detailed in the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

GRADING

The Senior Thesis is graded by the student's adviser as well as a second reader assigned by the Department's Curriculum Committee. The adviser and the second reader independently submit comments and suggest a grade. If the grades differ, then the adviser and the second reader confer and collectively decide the final grade.

Benchmark Dates for the Senior Thesis, 2024-2025

FALL TERM

- Week 1 Schedule a meeting with your adviser to discuss the thesis topic and plan for the semester, including tentative meeting times, no later than Friday, September 6.
- Week 5* Submit the Senior Thesis proposal to your adviser and independent work coach no later than Friday, October 4.
- Week 11* Submit a partial first draft (20 pages) of the thesis to your adviser and to the DUS no later than Friday, November 15.

WINTERSESSION

- January 24* Submit an *additional* 20 pages of your draft to your adviser and to the DUS no later than this date.

***Students must submit these benchmark assignments to their adviser and to the DUS by their respective due dates. Each missed deadline will result in a 1/3 of a grade penalty to the final grade. If all three deadlines are missed, the final grade will be reduced by one letter.**

SPRING TERM

- Week 2 Submit an *additional* 20 pages of your draft to your adviser and to the DUS no later than Friday, February 7.
- Week 3 Review your degree progress in [TigerHub](#) and submit your online [Degree Progress Check-In](#) by Monday, February 10, at 5:00 pm.
- Week 8 Submit a draft of the entire thesis to your adviser no later than Friday, March 21.
- Week 11 Last day to receive feedback from your adviser is Friday, April 11.
- Week 13 Upload your thesis via [Thesis Central](#) by April 21 at 12:00pm.
- May 1 Submit your [Senior Comprehensive Statement and Honors Calculation](#) by 5:00 pm.
- May 5 Students receive reader reports and grades.
- May 8-9 [Senior Comprehensive Exams](#)—BLOCK BOTH DAYS ON CALENDAR

NOTES:

Grading Practices for Independent Work

The scholarly component of independent work in AAS possesses three distinguishing qualities:

- it develops a research question out of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of African-descended peoples in the United States and in the diaspora;
- it presents an argument about the research using different methods of inquiry and drawing on sufficient sources of knowledge; and
- it exhibits care for the craft and style of argument in the execution of the analysis.

The [Undergraduate Announcement](#) assigns each letter a verbal equivalent ranging from "excellent" to "failure." For the scholarly component of the JP or Senior Thesis, the letter grade may be broken down into the following expectations:

An **A or A-** JP or Senior Thesis is excellent in that it develops an original and well-rounded research question based on existing knowledge about the topic; presents a persuasive and well-sourced argument based on interdisciplinary research on the topic; and exhibits clarity and elegance of thought in its written expression and/or other modes of communication.

An **A+** JP or Senior Thesis would have all these features and exhibit in at least one way a quality that lifts it above other excellent submissions. It exceeds the highest expectations for independent work at the undergraduate level.

A **B+ or B** JP or Senior Thesis is very good in that it satisfies the baseline expectations of the various components of independent work. However, this JP or Senior Thesis falls short of A-level work in the formulation of its research question, presentation of its argument, or quality of research overall. On a stylistic level, while there may be moments of insight and evidence of independent and creative thinking, the argument is not presented lucidly or convincingly.

A **B-** JP or Senior Thesis exhibits the characteristics of B+ or B work but provides a less-than-convincing presentation of the argument developed out of the research question. This may be owing to weaknesses in writing, gaps in argumentation and organization, oversights in research, and errors in the use and understanding of evidence.

A **C+, C, or C-** JP or Senior Thesis is satisfactory in that it shows evidence of sustained effort to engage the subject matter but demonstrates modest or uneven success in developing a research question or presenting an argument. Usually C-level work offers little more than a summary of ideas and information of existing bodies of research. On a stylistic level, the writing tends to suffer from poor organization, lack of proofreading, and errors in citations and references.

A **D** JP or Senior Thesis is well below average and only minimally acceptable. D-level work shows serious deficiencies in all of the criteria outlined above. The lack of a viable research question feeds into unsatisfactory argumentation using scant or unsuitable evidence. Typo- and error-filled prose is often accompanied by lack of attention to formatting and documentation.

An **F** JP or Senior Thesis fails to meet the requirements of independent work as outlined by the Department.

Sample Independent Work Evaluation Rubric

In spring 2023, AAS faculty adopted a rubric that standardizes the practices outlined above in a clear and concise manner. The rubric distills the expectations for scholarly research in independent work at the same time that it identifies creative components that may be factored into the final assessment. Faculty use the rubric as a guide for their reading and evaluation; it does not appear as part of the official Junior Paper report or Senior Thesis readers' reports.

I. Evaluation of Content and Organization

Advancement of core idea or practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Originality of research or creative project	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Situation of idea or practice in relevant scholarship or repertoires	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Orientation to and outline of work in introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Description of method(s), explaining relevance to AAS	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Progression of work across sequence of chapters	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Summary of and takeaways from work in conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor

II. Evaluation of Technical Features and Documentation

Proofread to eliminate typos and misspellings	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Correct document formatting	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Edited for concision	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Quality of writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Complete and consistent citations	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Degree of engagement with cited scholarship or repertoires	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor

Extension Policy

Extensions of independent work deadlines may be granted only under extraordinary circumstances, usually involving documented medical conditions or disability accommodations. Students must petition the DUS in writing, via email, in advance of the deadline. Students requesting extensions must also notify the Department by copying the Undergraduate Administrator and Department Manager on all requests, including updates.

Individual advisers cannot grant extensions by themselves but must be included in the conversation among administrators.

For extensions beyond Dean's Date, students must gain the permission of their Residential College Dean or Director of Studies to support their petition to the DUS.

Working with Your Adviser

Advisees should expect to meet with their advisers regularly to have drafts read within a reasonable, agreed-upon amount of time. Advisees should expect to receive detailed and constructive feedback. Your adviser should be expected to be given a reasonable amount of time to read and comment on drafts.

Although your adviser is your primary sounding board in this process, you should take advantage of the resources at Princeton and seek advice from other members of the faculty within the Department, [the Librarian](#) in AAS, and beyond.

In turn, advisers should expect an advisee to take the initiative. Advisers should expect an advisee to cooperate in setting up a detailed work schedule in coordination with departmental benchmarks for the completion of independent work. Advisers should expect advisees to show up punctually for scheduled meetings.

Senior Comprehensive Statement

The [Senior Comprehensive Statement](#) consists of a short essay with four sections.

Section one, "Scholarly Development," should narrate the student's scholarly development in the Department. For example, the student might ponder some of the following questions: What led you to choose AAS as your major? What courses have made the most impact on your thinking and why? Are there any courses not on offer that you wish had been? This essay is meant to encourage self-reflection, and it may be written as a meditative first-person narrative. It is also used to help faculty reflect on what works well and where we can improve course offerings, course design, advising, and the overall coherence and rigor of the AAS major. Section one should be between 700 and 900 words.

Section two, "Beyond the Classroom," should describe any work beyond the classroom that reflects the student's commitment to the intellectual, political, and artistic traditions in AAS. This may include activist, organizing, or creative work, for example. The Department will give this section special attention in our deliberations for the Distinguished Senior Prize in African American Studies. Section two should be no longer than 500 words.

Section three, "Departmental Works," is a list of all departmental courses, as well as the title and advisers' names for the JP and the Senior Thesis.

Section four, "Honors Calculation," is a list of how you understand your coursework to fulfill the major's requirements. Because some AAS courses can fill more than one subfield or requirement, we need to confirm which courses you want to fulfill each section for the honors calculation.

Senior Comprehensive Examination

The University's requirement for a senior comprehensive examination is satisfied in AAS by a formal presentation of the thesis, followed by a more open conversation. The exam lasts approximately 50 minutes. Three people are present for the entire examination: the student, the adviser, and second reader.

The student begins the examination by delivering a formal 10-minute presentation. This should give a crisp articulation of the thesis's main argument. The student is encouraged to deliver a stylized selection of material rather than an overview of the entire thesis, focusing on, for example, the thesis's major finding, most original interpretation, or the best chapter. It should thoroughly respond to any questions or concerns raised in the readers' reports. It should be crafted and practiced as an oral

essay, not exceeding more than 10 minutes. It will be graded for clarity, persuasiveness, and elegance in its execution.

After the presentation, the adviser and second reader engage the student in a wide-ranging discussion of thesis research. They will then turn to the student's course of study in the Department, following up on reflections offered in the Senior Comprehensive Statement. This part of the conversation encourages self-reflection, as well as honest and potentially critical feedback for the Department.

Departmental GPA Calculation

Departmentals (8)	50%
Junior Paper	15%
Senior Thesis	30%
Senior Comprehensive Examination	5%

Funding for Independent Work

Majors who require research funding for independent work may apply to the Department of African American Studies, other individual academic departments, and other offices and programs on campus through the Student Activities Funding Engine (SAFE). To apply for this funding, eligible students need to complete a funding application in [SAFE](#) that includes a comprehensive project statement, a detailed budget outlining the proposed usage of the funds, and a letter of support written by your adviser. We encourage you to start working on your application materials early so that you have ample time to meet the strict deadlines set by the various funding sources. In addition, make sure you list the correct adviser and Departmental Representative to prevent any unnecessary delays in having your request reviewed.

The following are some of the research funding opportunities provided by the Department:

JUNIOR PAPER RESEARCH FUNDING

To assist AAS Majors in building their expertise and library, the Department of African American Studies will provide funding for books that are essential to junior independent work. You are encouraged to request funding before the deadline for the JP partial first draft. The absolute latest date to request funding is one week after that deadline date.

SPRING BREAK RESEARCH FUNDING

Spring break research funding awards provide financial support to AAS Majors to pursue worthy projects that provide important opportunities for research and/or personal growth, foster independence, creativity, and leadership skills, and broaden or deepen their understanding of the historic achievements and struggles of African-descended people in this country and their relation to others around the world during spring break. Funding of up to \$1,000 is available.

WINTERSESSION RESEARCH FUNDING

Wintersession funding awards provide financial support to AAS Majors to pursue worthy projects that provide important opportunities for research and/or personal growth, foster independence, creativity, and leadership skills, and broaden or deepen their understanding of the historic achievements and struggles of African-descended people in this country and their relation to others around the world over the summer. Funding of up to \$1,000 is available.

SUMMER RESEARCH FUNDING

Summer research funding awards provide financial support to AAS Majors to pursue worthy projects that provide important opportunities for research and/or personal growth, foster independence, creativity, and leadership skills, and broaden or deepen their understanding of the historic achievements and struggles of African-descended people in this country and their relation to others around the world over the summer. Funding of up to \$1,000 per summer is available.

SUMMER STUDY ABROAD SUPPORT

The Summer Study Abroad Support supplements other funding provided to AAS Majors as they study abroad over the summer. Funding of up to \$1,000 per summer is available.

SENIOR THESIS RESEARCH FUNDING

Senior thesis research grants of up to \$3,000 are available to AAS Majors to supplement specific research needs. Research funds may be used to support travel, the purchase of books, supplies, and materials needed to complete the Senior Thesis.

SENIOR COLLOQUIUM THESIS RESEARCH FUNDING

The Department of African American Studies offers AAS Senior Colloquium students up to an additional \$750 in Senior Thesis research grants. Research funds may be used to support travel and/or the purchase of books, supplies, and materials needed to complete the Senior Thesis.

CONFERENCE FUNDING

This opportunity provides funding up to \$1,500 to AAS Majors to attend relevant academic conferences.

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION AND RELATED EXPENSES GRANT

The Department of African American Studies at Princeton University offers funding grants up to \$2,300 to AAS Majors planning to pursue a graduate degree. These grants are intended to defray the cost of graduate school application-related expenses not covered by the recruiting institution. Eligible expenses include application fees, post-graduate exam fees, travel expenses associated with admissions interviews, etc.

AAS Majors who have been accepted to doctoral and non-professional masters' programs may also request funding to visit prospective schools. Funding may be used for travel, lodging, and meals. Personal items, entertainment, and social activities will not be covered.

NOTES:

Resources

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES LIBRARIAN

The African American Studies Librarian, Steven Knowlton, is available for guidance and to offer suggestions regarding resources for research in African American Studies.

Steven A. Knowlton
A-17H-2 Firestone Library
609-258-0496
steven.knowlton@princeton.edu
[Make an Appointment](#)

Fall 2024: 110B Morrison Hall | Tuesdays 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Spring 2025: 110B Morrison Hall | Hours: TBD

INDEPENDENT WRITING COACHES

During your independent work journey, majors will have the opportunity to work with graduate students hired to serve as writing coaches. The seniors will be assigned a coach at the start of the fall semester, and juniors will be assigned a coach prior to the spring semester. The coaches will work with the major on discussing ideas, research strategies, and give feedback. Additional details will be sent out with the coach assignments.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center offers free one-on-one conferences with experienced fellow writers trained to consult on assignments in any discipline. Specialized 80-minute conferences are available for Junior Paper and Senior Thesis writers at any stage in the writing process, who may sign up to work with a graduate student fellow from the department of their choice on the [Writing Center Appointments Page](#)

AAS Writing Center Liaison
Ben Fancy, Associate Director for the Writing Center
Princeton Writing Program
223 New South
bfancy@princeton.edu

Additionally, Independent Work Mentors from the Writing Center prepare workshops and programming to aid juniors and seniors in their research. Our Department liaison can provide programming on a range of issues to meet student demands. Students should also regularly check or subscribe to the [Princeton Undergraduate Research Calendar](#) (PURC) for upcoming programming, which covers topics ranging from preparing funding proposals, to note-taking and making an argument to draft review.

STUDENT CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES

The Department of African American Studies is committed to a productive and positive classroom environment. If a student is concerned about an incident, comment, or exchange in the classroom, please reach out directly to the professor involved. We, the faculty of African American Studies, welcome this feedback, and we take student concerns very seriously. We will listen, be non-defensive, and address the situation. If the concern is not resolved, or if the student feels uncomfortable pressing the matter with the professor, then we strongly encourage the student to bring the issue to the Department Chair or DUS. If the matter remains unresolved after talking to the Chair or DUS, then the student should bring the issue to the Dean of the College. (For additional details see the University's [Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities 1.7.4](#)).

HELPFUL LINKS

Mr. Knowlton has compiled a research guide which Majors may find useful.

[Princeton University Library Research Guide: African American Studies](#)

Perdue University's Online Writing Lab offers a Chicago Style Writing Guide, which is updated regularly.

[Perdue University OWL – Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition](#)

Advice from Alumni

"Treat the J.P. like it is its own class! The longer you wait to start it, the harder it gets. I would also say that if you get stuck in the brainstorming phase like I often do, the best advice I received was to just start writing!"

"Keep your head up and don't be afraid to ask for help! Also, really take advantage of the Junior Seminar; if you put in work in those drafts, you can use that content in your official JP when it applies."

"The sooner you write, the sooner you'll re-write, the better you'll feel and the sooner you will be done. Force yourself to write, even if it's terrible drafts, two-page memos, or just taking notes on sources. The sooner you get into the PRATICE of writing, the more confidence you will build about your project. The hardest part is just getting thoughts on the page. Everything else is just refining and adjusting."

"Work weekly on it and meet weekly with your adviser. If you work consistently for the whole year, starting the first week in September, it will not be super painful."

Appendix

JUNIOR PAPER TITLE PAGE SAMPLE

TITLE

By

Student's Name '26

Submitted to

The Department of African American Studies, Princeton University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Adviser: Professor's Name

Date and Year

Please sign the honor code on each of your junior papers on the last page of the document.

I pledge my honor on that this junior paper represents my own work in accordance with University regulations.

SENIOR THESIS TITLE PAGE SAMPLE

TITLE

by

Student's Name '25

Submitted to

The Department of African American Studies, Princeton University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Adviser: Professor's Name

Date and Year

Please sign the honor code on each copy of your Senior Thesis on the last page of the document.

I pledge my honor on that this Senior Thesis represents my own work in accordance with University regulations.