



## AFROAMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES

Strengthening the study of Africa and its diaspora, its diverse cultures and peoples, and their changing relationship to the modern world

Endowed with a diverse faculty of African Americanist and Africanist specialists, the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS) at the University of Michigan is one of the foremost departments in the world for the study of people of African descent. DAAS embraced a comparative and diasporic framework of study long before most other Black Studies departments. It has three distinct geographical areas of focus—Africa, African America (U.S.), and the Caribbean (extending into Latin America)—and an interdisciplinary emphasis on research, instruction, and community outreach. The department's mission is to strengthen the fields of African American, Caribbean, and African Studies by encouraging the production and public dissemination of creative, original research and exceptional scholarly knowledge. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the goal is to train not only informed, productive, and active citizens, but also the next generation of leading scholars in these fields.

DAAS faculty are committed to innovative scholarship and teaching on the history, societies, and creativity of the peoples of Africa to capture and convey a sense of the holistic cultural history of Africa and the diaspora.

Undergraduate students participate in a comprehensive and rigorous program of study in courses examining the role of African-descended people in shaping the societies, cultures, religions, and political institutions of the Western world in such fields as history, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, literature, and the arts. The curriculum provides students with the critical and analytical facility that is central to liberal arts training. The department's study abroad programs have long played a pivotal role in providing students, both undergraduate and graduate, with unique and valuable opportunities for intercultural exchanges and experiential learning. Students also participate in community-engaged scholarship in Detroit focused on civic responsibility and social change. Both undergraduates and graduate students leave DAAS prepared for a wide range of careers in both the professions and public service.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING INITIATIVE

The DAAS Community Engaged Learning Initiative launched in 2011–12 to identify, strengthen, and highlight faculty research and teaching projects that move students beyond the classroom and into community spaces to foster civic responsibility and enact social change.

- Public Health Education—fostering HIV/AIDs prevention in Detroit, South Africa, and Jamaica; as well as malaria prevention in Nigeria
- Detroit Studies—investigating and analyzing the history and current state of Detroit
- Environmental Justice—identifying and combating race, class, and gender concerns in local and global environmental issues
- Mass Incarceration—studying and challenging the mass incarceration of people of color in American cities

Gifts of \$10,000 are needed to support undergraduate scholarships for travel by undergraduates to community sites, graduate student and staff assistance, and faculty research.

## GRADUATE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The DAAS Graduate Certificate Program (GCP) enrolls students whose major courses of study are in other U-M departments. A contribution of \$10,000 will provide vital resources that will strengthen and enrich the program and cultivate a vibrant community of scholars dedicated to African American, African diasporic, and African Studies. By bolstering our GCP, the department will foster interdisciplinary research and scholarship while providing invaluable opportunities for academic growth and community engagement. Gifts to support the program will enable us to enhance the educational experience of our students, expand program offerings, and further our mission of promoting understanding and appreciation of African American, African diasporic, and African cultures.



**“My experiences in the African Studies certificate program were foundational in building out my dissertation framework. It helped me to theorize and engage as an interdisciplinary scholar, invested in the lifeworlds of Black girls on the continent and in the African Diaspora. It also gave me the opportunity to build community with other critical, interdisciplinary colleagues and advanced scholars in meaningful ways. One of the most memorable experiences was the time I was able to present at the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA) in Kenya in 2019 among some brilliant Africanists and Black studies scholars. I was a second year student at the time, and this fellowship helped me to envision myself and my work as part of a radical, Black intellectual tradition that prioritizes the ‘margins.’”**

*–Sadiyah Malcolm, Sociology graduate student*



## GalleryDAAS

### ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

GalleryDAAS exhibits contemporary black visual art. Collaborating with artists, curators, critics and art historians as well as with DAAS/U-M faculty and students, the gallery celebrates and interrogates the creativity of artists of Africa and its diasporas, not only in our exhibitions, but through our artist residency program and by offering gallery-based learning opportunities for DAAS and the broader U-M community.

GalleryDAAS highlights the work of African American, Caribbean, and African artists. Nationally, it is the only art gallery attached to a Black Studies department. The gallery presents two main exhibitions each year during the fall and winter semesters.

A gift of \$10,000 would make possible a Visiting Artist Residency that combines a gallery exhibition with classroom and community talks about contemporary African art by the artist, while an endowed gift of \$200,000 would provide the resources for an annual event that would raise the visibility and prestige of the work of the gallery and department.

### STRATEGIC FUND

Expendable, undesignated gifts of all sizes are extraordinarily important to the continuing success and growth of the department. Contributions to the strategic fund make it possible to enhance the research and training of our undergraduate students, and to recruit, retain, and support our exceptional faculty. The strategic fund also provides resources for newly emerging and focused initiatives. Overall, this fund is an excellent way to make an investment in the future of the department.



DAAS had the privilege of hosting award-winning Nigerian actress, Omowunmi Dada as their 2023 Global Artist in Residence. Omowunmi Dada is a Nigerian-born, award-winning Nollywood actress, presenter, and model who has been gracing the screens and stages for nearly ten years. She is most well known for her roles as “Folake” in the popular M-Net Africa television series *Jemeji* and “Linda” in the Netflix Original Film *Òlòtūré*. Dada was also in the film *Eleshin Oba*, an adaptation of Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman*, nominated for a top 2023 Toronto Film Festival award.

While in Ann Arbor, Dada worked with DAAS Swahili and Yoruba language instructors in developing audio-visual materials for teaching African languages as well as engaging with elementary, middle, and high school students and teachers in Southeast Michigan. She was featured in a series of events—about Nollywood and African filmmaking—organized by the African Studies Center and DAAS and collaborated with the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, the Residential College, and the Department of Film, Television, and Media.



## NAMED PROFESSORSHIP

Endowed professorships, or chairs, have long been recognized as both a hallmark of academic quality and a means by which a university honors its most esteemed scholars and teachers. Professorships are reserved for scholars of national, or even international, stature, with highly distinguished records of teaching, research, and publication. In response to the urgency of this need, and to demonstrate LSA's commitment to being the leader and best in the field, the college is offering matching funds to endow the first professorship in DAAS. The standard investment of \$2.5M for a professorship in LSA would qualify for a \$250,000 match, enabling a gift of \$2.25M to establish an endowment to support a professorship. This investment would cement the University of Michigan's place at the forefront of original research and scholarly knowledge in this field, as well as excellence in instruction and community outreach.

## TRAVEL AND RESEARCH FUNDS

DAAS boasts a decade-long history of hosting study abroad trips to Africa and is committed to providing an increasing array of international and cross-cultural experiences for our students, who must be prepared to live and work in a complex global world. Gifts of \$10,000 or more designated for African and African diasporic studies would enable us to support student and faculty travel to Africa and the Caribbean, as well as visits to our department by African and African diasporic scholars. Study abroad opportunities to Africa and the Caribbean are estimated at \$3,500 per student.

## NAMED ANNUAL LECTURES

Three geographic sub-areas define the department's research and teaching: African studies, African American studies, and Caribbean studies. DAAS is seeking gifts of \$10,000 each year to support each of its two named lectures—the Zora Neale Hurston Lecture in African American Studies and the CLR James Lecture in Caribbean Studies—that are held annually, and an additional \$10,000 gift to create and support a new lecture in African studies.

## WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

## CONTACT INFO

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