

**State University of New York at New Paltz**

**Assessment Plan**

**Department: Black Studies**

**Years: 2005-2009**

**Developed by Linda Benbow and Margaret Wade-Lewis**

## State University of New York at New Paltz

### Assessment Plan

***Department: of Black Studies***

**Assessment Year: 2005-2009**

#### ***I. A. Mission Statement***

The Department of Black Studies, in support of the central liberal arts mission of the College, seeks to define the Black experience from an African and Afro-American centered perspective rather than Euro-centric perspective. Toward this end, the Department illuminates the contributions of people of African ancestry to world culture by focusing on the Black Diasporic experience. The curriculum is comprised of a diverse range of courses and utilizes various pedagogical techniques to facilitate students' ability to describe and critically analyze the historical, political, economic, psychological, and social forces that shape the Black experience and to develop a concrete conception of the range of contributions persons of African ancestry have made to world civilization.

The curriculum advances students' abilities to identify and synthesize national and global forces that have shaped the institutions, social dynamics, and perspective of others towards people of African descent. It also enhances students' understanding of people of African ancestry as actors, rather than victims, on the stage of history. The challenging, multi-disciplinary course of study encourages students to develop competence in theoretical models and content that delineate the perspectives, cultures, and institutions of the people of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.

The Department of Black Studies supports the mission of the General Education 3 Program through the offering of several courses in several categories. Among them are 17100 Introduction to Black Studies (SSCI), 17200 Introduction to Africa (WRLD), 17201 Black History I (DIVR), 17268 Survey of Black American Literature (HUM), and 17330 Race and Racism (USST). These courses offer both theory and content related to the experiences of persons of African ancestry about which broadly educated persons should be conversant as they attempt to gain an accurate image of world history and culture.

### ***I. B. Scope of the Black Studies Department***

The Department of Black Studies offers undergraduate interdisciplinary programs comprised of four cores--historical, humanities, political-economic and socio-psychological--so that students gain perspective in multiple areas of the Black experience while developing an area of concentration. The cores are the stabilizing framework for the curriculum. Students can pursue a Black Studies major or minor with a Liberal Arts Curriculum, or a major with an Elementary Education Curriculum. The Liberal Arts Curriculum offers a large number of courses, across the major disciplines of history; literary, language and artistic studies; political science; economics; sociology and psychology (33 credits). The cultures included are from Africa, the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

The four cores are designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore and analyze the history and culture of people of African ancestry in the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa, from an African-centered perspective. A Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts/Black Studies prepares students for graduate school and opportunities in a number of areas, including law, careers in academic counseling, human services, social services, and government. As the majority of other undergraduate bachelor's degree majors, it also prepares students for a broad range of entry-level employment opportunities that require a degree and good speaking and writing skills.

The Elementary Education Curriculum requires courses on Black education, Black child psychology, the Black family, and Black language patterns, then ensures that teacher candidates gain depth in a disciplinary area--either Black history or Black language arts (30 credits). The Bachelor's degree in Black Studies/Elementary Education leads to temporary certification and careers in teaching from nursery school to grade eight. Graduates with Bachelor's degrees are eligible to enter Master's of Teaching and other Master's degree programs that lead to permanent teacher certification.

The Black Studies capstone course, Senior Seminar, is designed to enhance research, public speaking, and writing skills. In the graduate area, the Black Studies Department offers four courses: African and African American History, Blacks in New York, African Women, and Contemporary Black Women's Literature. One of the future goals is to offer a Master's degree in Black Studies.

The Department of Black Studies enriches the entire campus community through an impressive number of programs that aid in student academic and extra-curricular development. It is the home department for the award-winning Voices of Unity Gospel Choir (offered each semester as a two-credit course), the Scholar's Mentorship Program (which offers five courses), the M R P Scholarship Program, and the Linguistic Program, which serve a campus-wide student body.

Department members actively serve the mid-Hudson community through speaking engagements, interviews with newspapers and media on current topics, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day programs, Black History Month programs and other voluntary activities. Several members of the Department also command national attention, maintaining brisk publication agendas, especially on Black history, Blacks in New York, African American literature and American linguistic history.

The Department is currently comprised of one professor, one associate professor, and one assistant professor. It expects to search for a full-time faculty member for its Socio-Psychological Core for Fall, 2006 and for its Political/Economic Core for Fall, 2007. Because of its advantageous geographic position eighty miles from New York City and sixty miles from Albany, and its place in the mid-Hudson valley near several other colleges, it is able to command an impressive coterie of adjunct faculty with expertise that would otherwise be unavailable in New Paltz. For example, the Black dance professor is a professional dancer with a degree from the New York University School of the Arts and her own professional dance troupe. The two professors specializing in law both actively practice law, one in New York, and the other as the first Black Judge of Newburgh. The Department also draws faculty from mid-Hudson secondary schools. The Black music professor is a high school music teacher. The professor of Black poetry and drama is a high school English teacher, and the professor who teaches Psychology of the Black Child and Education in the Black Community is a public school assistant principal.

The Black Studies faculty is comprised of creative teachers, experienced in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Utilizing a variety of pedagogical philosophies and tools, the faculty provides students with opportunities to actively apply the theories and concepts they learn in classes. Furthermore, students are encouraged to engage in research, independent study, fieldwork, and service learning.

Although the Department's offerings are rich and varied, there are gaps in the offerings because of insufficient full-time faculty lines. As a consequence, the Department is unable to provide comprehensive undergraduate training in sub-disciplines that are available in departments of Black Studies in larger universities, among them courses such as Blacks and the Business World, Blacks and Technology, Black Social Movements, and Blacks and the Rural Experience.

### **I. C. Activities/Processes of the Black Studies Department**

The following activities promote the learning objectives of the Department:

- **Teaching** – Faculty present lectures, discussions, seminars, and theoretical models from a holistic African-centered perspective, utilizing diverse pedagogical approaches, guided by syllabi that identify student-learning objectives and goals. Faculty incorporate the use of modern technology in the classroom, when possible, to facilitate teaching, and arrange for library lectures at which state of the art media tools are demonstrated.
- **Curriculum Design and Development** – Faculty have established a process of regular review of programmatic requirements relative to developments in the discipline. The reviews critique the learning outcomes expected, and the resources available. Courses are regularly developed based on the interests of faculty, the national standards for Black Studies curricular, and the General Education requirements. Courses are submitted and evaluated through the campus governance processes.
- **Advising** – The Department continuously develops materials that communicate programmatic requirements to students and faculty. Student are advised of the appropriate courses in the major and General Education requirements; students and faculty file appropriate paperwork. The Department was the first at the College to adopt the new Progress Report that documents student advancement through both General Education and Black Studies major and minor requirements.
- **Mentoring** – Not only does the Department of Black Studies administer the Scholar's Mentorship Program for the entire College, it also mentors additional students to enhance their academic and leadership development and work toward a program of study that ensures timely graduation. The award winning Scholar's Mentorship Program, founded in 1988, is a networking vehicle that connects faculty mentors and peer mentors with general admission first year students of color. In 1998, The Scholar's Mentorship Program was featured as the lead article in a national magazine. See: Kelly Clark, "Mentorship Program Motivates Students," *Access*. March/April, 1998: 1, 5. It has also been designated by the University Faculty Senate of SUNY as one of the "outstanding student life programs of the State University of New York."
- **Professional Development** – The developmental needs of the faculty are regularly identified and are met through support for faculty development from the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, small grants administered by the Office of the Provost, local or off campus resources,

and informal mentoring. They attend national and international conferences in their specialties, deliver scholarly papers, and publish books and articles. Faculty members are assessed for the degree to which each has developed and maintained a progressive publication agenda. They apply for discretionary salary increases, promotions, and tenure.

- **Marketing and Recruitment** – Faculty in the Department work with student organizations and high schools to recruit students. They develop marketing strategies to ensure that majors and minors are increasingly marketable. The Department requires students to attend career development workshops, seminars, and job fairs. Faculty members liaison with the Career Services Office, and sponsor Major Connections lectures on a regular basis, to raise student awareness of opportunities and to highlight career opportunities for students.
- **Service** – Faculty participate in community service on campus and in the Mid-Hudson region through public lectures and workshops, interviews with the press, lectures in the courses of other professors, presentations for campus student organizations, presentations for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Black History Month and for various other occasions. They hold elective positions and appointed positions on a variety of campus committees

## II. A. *Priority Goals*

### 1. **Student Goals**

Black Studies seeks to prepare undergraduate students who:

- Are reflective and critical thinkers
- Can identify and synthesize national and global influences
- Are sensitive to and have an appreciation for the perspectives, cultures, and institutions of the people of African descent
- Are well-versed in research, academic writing, and public speaking
- Are engaged in student leadership activities on campus and in the region.

## 2. Program Goals

The Department of Black Studies:

- Maintains a coherent, multidisciplinary, pedagogically sound curriculum which attracts demographically diverse majors and minors
- Offers a diverse range of courses utilizing various pedagogical techniques
- Maintains effective mentoring and advising procedures
- Recruits and retains students to graduation and encourages them to attend graduate school
- Retains faculty who are involved in cutting edge research on historical/ contemporary national and international issues.

### II. B. 1. *Student Performance*

Students who have completed the Black Studies Undergraduate Program should be able to:

- a. Describe the historical, social, cultural, psychological, or political perspective of people of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa
- b. Identify national and/or global forces that have shaped the perspective of others towards people of African descent
- c. Describe some of the major contributions of persons of African descent to world civilization, citing reliable sources
- d. Compare and contrast different theories or research methods that have been utilized to explain the institutions and experiences of people of African descent
- e. Evaluate issues central to the experiences of African people in Africa and in the Western hemisphere and discuss possible solutions to these issues.

**II. B. 2. Program Performance****Diverse Curriculum:**

The well-structured curriculum offers a rich and diverse range of courses to a demographically diverse student population.

**Out of Class Experiences:**

The curriculum advances students' abilities to engage in discipline-relevant experiences outside of their general coursework that allows them to apply knowledge, and to engage in leadership positions on campus and in the community.

**Recruitment and Retention of Students:**

The faculty in the Department of Black Studies will continue to coordinate with student organizations and high schools to recruit students and develop other marketing strategies to attract students to the majors, as well as to be available to provide academic advising and guidance to current, incoming, and transfer students.

**Effective Teaching:**

The faculty in the Department of Black Studies utilizes various pedagogical techniques (lectures, discussion, seminars, and presentations) guided by syllabi that identify course objectives and student-learning outcomes.

<b>III. Methodology</b>	
<b>Assessment Methods</b>	5 Year <del>4/06, 4/07</del>
<p><b>From Students:</b></p> <p><b>Senior Seminar Essays:</b> The essays are designed to measure students' abilities to describe the historical, social, cultural, psychological, or political perspective of people of African descent in the United States, Caribbean, or Africa, citing reliable sources, and to suggest solutions to pressing societal issues. Through a progressive series of assignments and library workshops, students prepare for a final 20-page research paper, which they present at a public forum.</p> <p><b>Student Focus Groups:</b> Focus groups will be conducted biennially with representatives from each major. Questions will include suggestions for improvements to the Department, including satisfaction in advising, course scheduling, course offering, course content, career support, and general preparation for Bachelor's degrees in Black Studies or Black Studies/Elementary Education.</p> <p><b>Research Papers-Race and Racism:</b> The papers are designed to assess students' abilities to compare and contrast different theories utilized to explain the institutions and experiences impacting people of African descent. Students' final examinations will be evaluated.</p> <p><b>Final Exam-Blacks in the Caribbean:</b> These examinations will be designed to measure students' abilities to evaluate issues central to the experiences of African people in the Western hemisphere and discuss possible solutions to these issues. Students' final examinations will be assessed.</p>	<p>5/06, 5/08</p> <p>12/06, 12/07</p> <p>12/05, 12/06</p> <p>10/06, 10/08</p>

<p><b>From Faculty:</b></p> <p><b>Faculty Focus Group:</b> Faculty will review students' suggestions and discuss the feasibility of the suggestions. Responses will be recorded and ranked in terms of departmental priorities.</p> <p><b>Syllabi Review:</b> Faculty will document their course offerings in terms of quality of textbook materials, intensive writing, African centered perspectives, degree of critical thinking required, and research and leadership opportunities provided to students. Syllabi will be assessed to document the range of relevant and current course materials utilized in various courses.</p> <p><b>Out of Class Experiences Survey:</b> Faculty will generate a "folder of events" for three years. These will be counted and rated by Black Studies faculty for the level of their disciplinary relevance. Relevant "events" are those that allow students to apply their knowledge and engage in leadership positions on campus and in the community.</p>	<p>11/07, 11/09</p> <p>4/06 through 4/08</p> <p>4/06 through 4/08</p>
---	---

II. B. Performance	III. A. Aspect of the performance to be measured	III. B. Means of Gathering and Evaluating Data	III. C. Start of Assessment	III. C. Assessment Coordinator(s)
<p><b>Student Performance 1:</b></p> <p>Describe the historical, social, cultural, psychological, or political perspective of people of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean, or Africa, utilizing contemporary theories and resources.</p>	Retention of Information	<p><i>Senior Seminar Essays:</i> Assess student essays for their ability to describe the historical, social, cultural, or psychological perspectives of people of African descent, utilizing contemporary theories and resources.</p>	4/06, 4/07	Margaret Wade-Lewis
<p><b>Student Performance 2:</b></p> <p>Identify national and/or global forces that have shaped the perspectives of others towards people of African descent, as well as the economies and political activities of various countries in the Caribbean.</p>	Assimilation of concepts	<p>Final Exam- Blacks in the Caribbean: Assess research papers to measure students' abilities to identify national and/or global forces that have shaped the perspectives of others towards people of African descent, as well as the economies and political activities of various countries in the Caribbean.</p>	12/05, 12/06	Zelbert Moore
<p><b>Student Performance 3:</b></p> <p>Compare and contrast different theories utilized to explain the institutions and experiences of people of African descent.</p>	Evaluation of theories through comparison and contrast.	<p>Research Papers-Race and Racism: Evaluation of final examinations to measure the extent to which the majority of students conduct excellent research on topics covered during the course.</p>	12/06, 12/07	A. J. Williams-Myers

<p><b>Student Performance 4:</b> Evaluate issues central to the experiences of African people in the Western hemisphere and discuss possible solutions to these issues.</p>	<p>Synthesis of concepts</p>	<p><i>Senior Seminar Essays:</i> Students' final examinations will be assessed to measure students' abilities to evaluate social issues that impact the experiences of people of African descent and discuss possible solutions.</p>	<p>4/06, 4/07</p>	<p>Margaret Wade-Lewis</p>
<p><b>Department Performance 1:</b> Curriculum: Offer a rich and diverse range of courses to demographically diverse students.</p>	<p>a. Availability of courses that meet the National Council of Black Studies standards for a well-constructed curriculum.</p>	<p><i>Student Focus Groups:</i> Students will be asked for suggestions for improvements to the Department including advising, course scheduling, course offering, course content, career support, and general preparation for a BA in Black Studies or Black Studies/ Elementary Education.</p>	<p>5/06, 5/08</p>	<p>Margaret Wade-Lewis</p>
	<p>b. Availability of courses that suit student interest. c. Variety in course offerings. d. Variety in the range and depth of teaching/learning resources such as textbooks, journals, video tapes, and library databases.</p>	<p><i>Syllabi Review:</i> Identification of the different courses offered over a one-year period. Revision of courses as needed, occasioned by new theories and resources.</p>	<p>11/07, 11/09</p>	<p>All Faculty Members</p>

<p><b>Department Performance 2:</b></p> <p>Out of Class Experiences:</p> <p>Advance students' abilities to engage in discipline-relevant experiences outside of their traditional coursework that allows them to apply their knowledge, and to engage in leadership positions on campus and in the community</p>	<p>Discipline relevant opportunities outside of classroom (field work, independent study, attendance at conferences, presentations at conferences, and educational trips)</p>	<p><i>Out of Class Experiences Survey:</i> Faculty will generate a "folder of events" for three years, which will be counted and rated by Black Studies faculty for the level of their disciplinary relevance.</p>	<p>4/06 through 4/08</p>	<p>Margaret Wade Lewis</p>
<p><b>Department Performance 3:</b></p> <p>Students Recruitment and Retention:</p> <p>Work with student organizations and high schools to recruit students and develop other marketing strategies to attract students to the majors as well as be available to provide academic advising and guidance to current, incoming, and transfer students.</p>	<p>a. Perceived benefits by students.</p>	<p><i>Student Focus Group:</i> Faculty will evaluate the advising experiences of students and consider their recommendations for course and Department development.</p>	<p>5/06, 5/08</p>	<p>Margaret Wade-Lewis</p>
	<p>b. Perceived benefits by faculty.</p>	<p><i>Faculty Focus Group:</i> Faculty will review students' suggestions and discuss their feasibility, evaluate marketing strategies, and advising experiences of faculty members.</p>	<p>10/06, 10/08</p>	<p>Chair will coordinate the assessment activities of the Black Studies Department members.</p>

<p><b>Department Performance 4:</b></p> <p>Effective Teaching:</p> <p>Utilize various pedagogical techniques (conduct lectures, discussion, seminars, and presentations) guided by syllabi that identify course objectives and student-learning outcomes</p>	<p>Variety in pedagogical methods</p>	<p><i>Syllabi Review:</i> Identification of the different pedagogical approaches used over a one-year period.</p> <p>The Department members will develop a rubric to guide the evaluation of essays and examinations.</p>	<p>11/07, 11/09</p>	<p>Chair will coordinate the assessment activities of all Black Studies Department Members.</p>
--	---------------------------------------	---	---------------------	---

### III. D. Additional Resources Needed to Carry Out Assessment

In order to carry out assessment, the Department of Black Studies is in need of the five full-time faculty members who usually deliver the curriculum and meet extra curricular obligations. Presently, there are only three. It will also need an increase in its supplies and expenses budget to provide for additional materials, such as Xerox paper and toner.