Theme: Post-Blackness: Contemporary Issues in the Development of African Diaspora English

This course, African American Language, examines the cultural and linguistic characteristics which define and connote language use among people of African descent in America and the diaspora. This course is organized as a round-table style seminar. Each part of the study is guided by a set of questions, and the discussion utilizes content from the course’s primary texts and other researched sources.

This study examines four questions: (1) Can African American English (AAE) be a language—its structure and use? (2) Where did AAE come from—origin and development? (3) What is the pedagogical effect of AAE on education within the African American speech community? and (4) How have African American varieties of English maintained their existence in the 21st century?

As an ethno-linguistic study of African American language (AAL), the course includes descriptions of vernacular language communities, theories of origin, internal aspects of vocabulary, pronunciation, morphology, and syntax; discourse varieties; and the issues surrounding language variation in African America.