

What can I do with this degree?

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

AREAS

GOVERNMENT

EMPLOYERS

Federal agencies including: The Smithsonian Institute, National Archives and Records, Library of Congress, National Park Service, Intelligence services, Foreign service

State and local agencies including: Archives and libraries, Museums, parks, and historic sites, Municipal archives, Arts and humanities councils

STRATEGIES

Gain relevant experience in student government or other related organizations.

Complete an internship with a government agency. Maintain a superior academic record. Plan on obtaining an advanced degree. Develop foreign language skills.

Become familiar with specialized government hiring procedures. Consider a variety of entry-level positions in all branches of local, state, and federal government.

AREAS

POLITICS

EMPLOYERS

Elected or appointed public officials (i.e., legislators, governors, mayors, judges)

National political party headquarters

Public interest/advocacy groups

Political campaigns

STRATEGIES

Gain experience and make contacts through internships with government agencies or public officials. Volunteer to work with public interest groups, political campaigns, political associations, or community service projects.

Participate in student government and campus politics.

AREAS

LAW

EMPLOYERS

Law firms

Corporate legal departments

Government agencies

Public advocacy groups

STRATEGIES

Obtain paralegal training or law degree. Gain experience through summer or part-time work in a law firm. Volunteer with a public advocacy group. Participate in mock trial and pre-law associations.

AREAS

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

EMPLOYERS

History museums and historic sites
Historical associations and societies
Cultural heritage organizations
Historical projects
Research and service institutions

STRATEGIES

Volunteer with various nonprofit organizations of interest. Consider supplementing curriculum with relevant course work in anthropology, sociology, art history, or foreign languages.

AREAS

CURATORIAL AND ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT

EMPLOYERS

Museums
Historical homes
Art galleries
Special collections
Historical societies
Libraries
Universities and colleges
National, state, and local government
Corporations
Non-profit organizations
Research institutes

STRATEGIES

Acquire strong computer knowledge and experience. Obtain an internship or volunteer in a related organization. Develop excellent written and oral communication skills. Hone organizational skills and develop attention to detail.
Earn a master's degree in information sciences for advanced opportunities in data management.

AREAS

JOURNALISM

Broadcast
Print

EMPLOYERS

News departments of local, public, and commercial radio and TV stations
Syndicated radio services
Newspapers
National, state, and regional radio networks

STRATEGIES

Work on campus newspaper, TV, or radio.
Find summer or part-time work with local commercial TV or radio station.
Volunteer with public TV or radio.
Consider obtaining a minor or double major in journalism or broadcasting/electronic media.

AREAS

EDUCATION

Teaching: Elementary, Middle, or Secondary, Higher Education
Community Education

EMPLOYERS

Public and private schools
Colleges and universities
Museums
Zoological parks, aquariums, wildlife refuges, and bird sanctuaries
Aboretums, gardens, and conservatories
Camps
National and state parks

STRATEGIES

Develop excellent presentation skills. Become skilled in the use of multimedia.
Learn how to develop curriculums and workshops. Become an "expert" in a particular subject.
Obtain teaching certificate for public school teaching. Obtain a graduate degree for college and/or university teaching. Gain experience as a tutor, camp counselor, church schoolteacher, etc. Build strong relationships with professors, supervisors, or other community leaders for strong personal recommendations. Complete an internship or volunteer in a setting of interest.

GENERAL INFORMATION

An undergraduate degree in African American Studies is good preparation for graduate study in history as well as other areas such as psychology, law, or business.

Research the prerequisites of the area of interest and tailor program of study to meet curricular and skill needs.

Part-time, summer, internship, and volunteer experiences are critical.

Develop skills by obtaining a leadership role in a school or community organization.

Get involved in Student Government.

Excellent verbal and written communication skills are imperative for most careers related to history, politics, or government.

Become familiar with the government application process for opportunities in federal, state, or local government.

Prepare to develop a specialty area including both academic training and work experience for African American Studies related careers.

Develop patience, persistence, and drive in obtaining African American Studies related positions.

For careers in politics, be prepared to volunteer extensively before being hired or elected as an employee or official. Begin by working with the campaign or official of choice while in college. For careers in arts and humanities, obtain a broad liberal arts background including knowledge of the arts, personal and mass communication, and foreign languages.

Join related social and/or professional organizations.

Develop a network of both formal and informal contacts.

Research websites and books that address various job opportunities, pay structure, and hiring processes.

Prepared by the Career Planning staff of Career Services at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. (2005) UTK is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer