Fall 2021
African American History Research Methods and Resources
Professors: Dr. Jajuan Johnson and Dr. Maria DiBenigno

Meeting Times: TBD online and synchronous
Email Contact: jsjohnson02@wm.edu; mdibenigno@wm.edu;
Virtual Office Hours: TBD

Course Overview:

Researching African American life, history, and culture requires going beyond traditional methods and warrants the use of sources beyond the conventional archives ranging from memory to physical spaces. This course addresses obstacles and opportunities to collect and interpret data specific to African American life, history, and culture.

Drawing on the Lemon Project's overarching goal to encourage and produce scholarship on the full range of the African American experience from slavery to the present, this class will enable students to consider how the past connects with the present.

The course will be a shared learning experience where we strengthen our use of digital archives, traditional repositories, field research methods such as oral history, genealogy research, and community engagement principles in research. Students will develop practical research skills and techniques as they survey various research designs and contemporary approaches to social phenomena. Ultimately, you will apply the skills gained in this course to your research project.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will know how to:

1. Develop an intellectual understanding alongside practical experiences in the use of research methods, and primary/secondary research material
2. Create an annotated bibliography and a research proposal related to African American history and culture by effectively researching library, archival, and internet sources.
3. Learn to interpret, evaluate, and critique research produced by others
4. Apply research to formulate an analysis that includes the intersections of class, culture, ideology, gender, and race and the impact of the structures and policies, western or otherwise, on African Americans' lives.
5. Students gain proficiency in community engagement models specific to public history