



## College Board Adds African American Studies Advanced Placement Course

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The College Board is a non-for-profit organization, and one area the organization manages is the advanced placement program. Before 2022, the Board hadn't added an Advanced Placement (AP) course since 2014. However, 60 schools are piloting African American Studies, the College Board's 40th AP course.

When I heard the news, I said, "Amen." As an English education major at Purdue University, I took African American Literature. It was one of my favorite courses. I loved reading about Black people of the diaspora and reading and analyzing the works of Black writers.

I facilitated an after-school African American Literature course during my 2nd and 3rd years in the classroom. During those school years, I was also the lead yearbook advisor. One of my students in the yearbook club interviewed me for the yearbook about the club.

*"In African American Literature Club, students read, discuss and analyze literature written by African Americans. Mrs. Barnes, club sponsor, stated, 'I was disappointed when I discovered my club was composed of only African American students. I strongly recommend that students from other backgrounds join this club. This club is a great opportunity to focus on African American history/literature in depth. Although it is covered in the classroom, it is only surveyed. This club lets students have a choice of learning more about the areas they are interested in.'"*

Lately, some parents have been pushing back against certain initiatives involving learning about cultures that are not theirs. They believe focusing on African Americans is divisive. As I stated during the 2008-2009 school year for the school yearbook, I believe African American history and literature are good for all students.

Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr, a well-known African American history scholar, helped develop the new AP course. With the College Board adding African American Studies as an AP course, maybe this will open the way for more teachers to feel comfortable with covering a robust African American history within their courses.