

# American Studies



College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

## The Field

American Studies is a field of study which examines the core values and ideas that define American culture, while at the same time emphasizing the diversity of its expressions in past and contemporary times. To do so, an approach that employs several traditional disciplines within the university is necessary. Students in American Studies will not only come to a deeper understanding of their own culture, but will gain an appreciation of the challenges involved in the understanding of any culture.

## Career Opportunities

American Studies provides a thorough training in the liberal arts and is an excellent preparation for the job market or graduate study in a variety of fields.

## The Major

*Degree-seeking students are required to fulfill the required courses in effect at the time admitted or readmitted to the program. Since these are subject to change, students should see an advisor for current requirements.*

American Studies draws on courses in a number of disciplines across the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters (CASL) for both its prerequisites and its upper-level requirements.

## Prerequisites

For the American Studies major, students are required to complete 4 prerequisite courses, 2 from Group A (below) and 2 from Group B, for a total of 12 credit hours:

### Group A

HIST 111, American Past I

HIST 112, American Past II

POL 101, Intro to American Government

### Group B

AAAS 275, Intro to Africana Studies

AAAS/ENGL 239, Intro to African American Literature

COMM 220, Survey of Mass Communication

ANTH/HUM/PSYC/SOC/WGST 275, Intro to Women's Studies (if adequate American content, please check with advisor)

## Upper Division

At the upper division level, students must complete 9 courses (a total of 27 credit hours), beginning with AMST 300, Comparative American Identities. This gateway course provides an introduction to the subject matter and methods of American Studies. The remaining 8 courses must be chosen from the tracks listed below. An American Studies advisor will provide guidance to students in their choice of courses, as there are additional courses not listed in the representative tracks which may be appropriate, some of which have their own discipline prerequisites. Students are strongly encouraged to take an internship or independent study course in their senior year.

### Track One: Comparative American Identities

One of the distinctive features of American culture is the multiplicity of subcultures it includes. A number of courses can give a further understanding of the historical development and intersection of the variety of racial, ethnic, gender, or class identities in American life. Some representative courses for this track are:

ANTH 455, Immigrants USA

SOC 403, Minority Groups

SOC 423, American Social Classes

ENGL/WGST 445, 20th Century Literature by Women Authors

AAAS/WGST 470, ENGL/HUM 4705 Black Women in Lit, Film, Music

HIST/AAAS 368, Black Experience in US, 1865-present

HIST/WGST 370, American Women's History

### Track Two: Work, Technology, and Globalization

Students will study how work and technology define and shape American culture — both in historic and in contemporary contexts. Students will explore how technology in America shapes both work identities and work environments. They will also consider how the American workforce is affected by the globalization of labor and other resources. Some representative courses for this track are:

STS 300, Introduction to Science and Technology

ECON 321, Labor in the American Economy

HIST 349, Thomas Edison and His Era

WGST 481, Gender and Globalization

SOC 460, America in a Global Society

HIST 3665, Automobile in American Life

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### **Track Three: Literature, Arts, Culture**

This track provides an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature, music, the visual and performing arts, popular culture, architecture and the environment, with the objective of understanding the arts in relation to major issues and themes in American social, political and historical development. The courses offered under this rubric feature a variety of historical periods as well as a diversity of gender, racial and ethnic special interests. Some representative courses for this track are:

ARTH 361, American Art  
COMM 420, Critical Media Studies  
ENGL 452, Major American Authors of the 20th Century  
FILM 456, American Cinema  
MHIS 331, Music of America  
MHIS 120, History of Jazz

### **Track Four: Society, Religion, and Politics**

This track examines the ways in which both personal and national identity are shaped through a dynamic process of interaction between American citizens and the broad array of civic, religious, and cultural institutions in American society. Students interested in sociology, history and political science will find this track a valuable complement to those disciplinary interests. Some representative courses for this track are:

HIST 363, Religion in American History, 1607-1865  
HIST 3695, The American City  
POL 304, American Political Thought  
POL 360, American Policy Process

### **Program Committee**

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### **For More Information**

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