

American Studies

Department of Transnational Studies

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Overview

American Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that awards BA, MA, and PhD degrees. We take a global and hemispheric approach to the study of the Americas, examining local cultures, nations, and regions within their larger geopolitical contexts. Building on our traditional strengths in American Indian studies, critical race theory, feminism, class analysis, and community engagement, we encourage scholarly work on history, politics, visual cultures, literary and oral cultures, environmental and agricultural practices, religions, gender, sexualities, kinship systems, geography, and economics.

We are a vibrant and diverse community of faculty and students committed to rigorous, socially engaged scholarship. Reclaiming the repressed voices, histories, and cultures of marginalized peoples in the Americas has been a central mission of our program since the 1960s. UB American Studies coordinates one of the strongest American Indian studies programs in the United States. In addition, our faculty's creation and implementation of new technologies for accessing and documenting history has situated us at the forefront of American studies.

We seek students who wish to pursue a coherent program centering on the vigorous multidisciplinary study of the Americas. We also welcome international students who seek to deepen their understanding of the cultural, historical, and natural complexity of the United States, or the Americas more generally.

About our Degrees

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum 2.0 GPA overall.

Minimum 2.5 GPA in these courses:

[AMS 107](#) Introduction to American Studies

[AMS 113](#) American Lives and Environments (before 1900)

[AMS 114](#) American Lives and Environments (after 1900)

Acceptance Information

Deadlines: Rolling

Degree Requirements

Please see [Degrees and Policies](#).

Minor

Complete at least six American Studies courses, including at least three at the 300-400 level.

Degree Options

The American Studies program offers the American Studies major (36 credits) and minor (18 credits) in collaboration with the African and African American Studies Program, the Asian Studies Program, the Cuban and Caribbean Program, the Indigenous Studies Program, the Latino/Latina studies program, and Global Gender Studies Program, all of which share our commitment to an interdisciplinary approach.

Indigenous Studies (not a baccalaureate degree program). Indigenous American traditions provide a unique cosmological vision and an irreplaceable source of knowledge about social relationships and the natural environment.

Courses and activities are open to all, but for students pursuing an American studies BA degree with a focus in indigenous studies, the following courses are recommended: [AMS 100](#) Indian Image on Film, [AMS 179](#) Introduction to Native American History, [AMS 231-AMS 232](#) Survey of Native American History, [AMS 279](#) Contemporary Problems of American Indians, [AMS 281](#) Native Americans and the Colonist, [AMS 282](#) American Indian Identity Crisis, [AMS 301](#) Introduction to Indigenous Women, and [AMS 306-AMS 307](#) Native American Art. [AMS 162](#) New World Imaginations is a cognate intercultural studies course.

American Studies

[About our Courses](#)

American Studies

The typical class size for:

Freshman/introductory courses is: 20-25

Sophomore/intermediate courses is: 15

Upper level/advanced courses is: 10-15

For course descriptions, please see [Courses](#).

About our Faculty

The faculty consists of internationally and nationally renowned scholars who have been awarded prestigious awards for advocacy work, writing various texts and articles, and teaching cross-cultural courses.

See a list of our [Undergraduate Faculty](#).

Extracurricular Activities

An indigenous undergraduate group exists and is open to all students who are interested in indigenous cultures and events in the area. They hold several social events during each semester.

See the [UB Student Association](#).

Practical Experience and Special Academic Opportunities

We encourage internships in community, labor, racial and social justice organizations such as People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH) Buffalo and the Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ). There are many Native American grants through foundations and the U.S. government as well as Native American community organizations in Western New York.

Internships

American Studies faculty and lecturers encourage internships and community service. In addition, community-based research may be included into courses.

Honors, Awards and Scholarships

Past undergraduate students have received the College of Arts & Sciences Honors Award.

Career Information and Further Study

American Studies seeks to understand the American experience as a whole and as a part of modern world history where one examines the diversity of cultures within the USA, as well as the country's relationship with other nations. We take a transnational and global approach to the Americas, examining local cultures, nations and regions within geopolitical contexts. Building on our traditional strengths in American Indian studies, critical race theory, feminism, class analysis and community engagement, American Studies encourages scholarly investigations into history, politics, visual cultures, literary and oral cultures, environmental and agricultural practices, religions, gender, sexualities, kinship systems, geography, economics, law and public policy. Theme areas of study at UB include Intercultural Studies, Native American Studies, Latino Studies, Asian American Studies, African American Studies and Women's Studies. American Studies graduates have pursued positions in diverse areas including admissions and employment counseling, community organizing, law, real estate, social program directing, teaching, curriculum designers, working in media, and the arts.

Skills gained in this program:

- Interpreting policy
- Directing individuals to resources that can assist them
- Organizing community action, and collecting funds to support an action
- Analyzing policymaking processes, behaviors, and power struggles
- Dealing effectively with individuals or groups to obtain information, and using surveys and interview techniques for research
- Using mathematical methods to analyze data
- Writing clear and concise reports

American Studies

- Predicting the impact of change on quality of life
- Supplying historical perspective with information on past experiences
- Recommending measures to address social problems
- Advising businesses/organizations on how to interact with bureaucratic systems
- Predicting how groups will react to new institutions or social changes/pressures
- Adapting approaches used in public relations, marketing, and politics to different populations
- Applying knowledge of human relationships to social services, such as crisis intervention

What percentage of graduates goes on to find related employment?

Approximately 50%

Graduates pursue the following careers:

- Administrator
- Affirmative action work
- Analyst
- Archivist
- Art critic
- Art historian
- Author
- Community organization director
- Consultant
- Counselor
- Ecologist
- Editor
- Educator
- Human service worker
- International affairs specialist
- Journalist
- Labor relations specialist
- Legal advisor
- Legal advocate
- Librarian
- Media worker
- Politician
- Project coordinator
- Public relations specialist
- Recruiter
- Social worker
- Travel industry worker
- Urban planner

Work Settings include:

- African American studies departments/programs
- Advocacy organizations
- Banks
- Business
- Colleges/universities
- Community organizations
- Consulting firms
- Government
- Human services
- Import/export firms
- Indigenous studies
- International agencies
- Large hospitals
- Law firms
- Legislative offices
- Public and private schools
- Public interest organizations
- Public relations
- Publishers
- Radio/TV/newspapers
- Schools, K-12
- Scouting organizations

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- Special libraries
- Travel agencies
- Unions
- Urban renewal
- Women's civic and political organizations
- Women's studies departments/programs

Career Hints

Employers are seeking candidates with experience and those who have developed their skills from that experience. Internships, part-time employment, summer employment, and/or further education can enhance a graduate's employability in their chosen career area.

Salary Information

Salaries range greatly from one occupation, position, and work setting to another. According to the October 2007 NACE national salary survey for bachelor's degree graduates, history graduates' salaries averaged \$35,261.

What percentage of graduates goes on to graduate school?

Approximately 50%

Degrees Offered

Undergraduate: BA

Graduate: MA, PhD

Links to Further Information About this Program

- [Undergraduate Catalog](#)
- [Undergraduate Admissions](#)
- [Graduate Admissions](#)
- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)

American Studies - B.A.

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum 2.0 GPA overall.
Minimum 2.5 GPA in prerequisite courses.

Advising Notes

See the director of undergraduate studies or the undergraduate advisor for advisement and suggestions on course selection.

Prerequisite Courses

[AMS 107](#) Introduction to American Studies
[AMS 113](#) American Lives and Environments (before 1900)
[AMS 114](#) American Lives and Environments (after 1900)

Required Courses

[AMS 364](#) Seminar for Majors
Eight elective American Studies courses; at least four of which must be at the 300/400 level. These electives must include:

- At least three courses focusing on gender, class, race, ethnicity, and/or indigenous studies
- At least two courses focusing on American culture(s) before 1900
- At least three courses focusing on cultures of the Atlantic World or the Americas beyond the United States

Any given course may fulfill more than one of the above categories. Related courses taken outside of the program may be applicable toward the major, when approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Summary

American Studies

Total required credit hours for the major: 36

See [Baccalaureate Degree Requirements](#) for general education and remaining university requirements.

American Studies - Joint Major

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum 2.0 GPA overall.
Minimum 2.5 GPA in prerequisite courses.

Advising Notes

See the director of undergraduate studies or the undergraduate advisor for advisement and suggestions on course selection.

Prerequisite Courses

[AMS 107](#) Introduction to American Studies
[AMS 113](#) American Lives and Environments (before 1900)
[AMS 114](#) American Lives and Environments (after 1900)

Required Courses

[AMS 364](#) Seminar for Majors
Four elective American Studies courses; at least four of which must be at the 300/400 level. These electives must include:

- At least two courses focusing on gender, class, race, ethnicity, and/or indigenous studies
- At least one course focusing on American culture(s) before 1900
- At least one course focusing on cultures of the Atlantic World or the Americas beyond the United States

Any given course may fulfill more than one of the above categories. Related courses taken outside of the program may be applicable toward the major, when approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Summary

Total required credit hours for the joint major...24

See [Baccalaureate Degree Requirements](#) for general education and remaining university requirements.

American Studies - Minor

Acceptance Criteria

Minimum GPA of 2.0 overall.

Advising Notes

Submit minor application to the Department of American Studies.

Required Courses

At least six AMS or other courses among those listed for the major (see above), including at least three at the 300-400 level. Further, the six courses must be distributed among at least three of the six groups in the major list.

American Studies

AMS 100: Indian Image on Film

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Discusses the fabricated image of Native Americans in American film history, the media process that perpetuates such images, and the resulting stereotypes; also covers the relationship to social movements and alternatives for overcoming stereotypes.

AMS 107: Introduction to American Studies

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces students to a variety of approaches that have been developed in American studies to assist understandings of how different people participate in this society and in the world. Also considers how experiences continue to shape present thinking and future possibilities.

AMS 111: Contemporary Popular Music

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Outlines historical developments that helped formulate today's jazz and rock movements; emphasizes roots and foundations of the forms.

AMS 113: American Lives and Environments: Folklore and Social Groups

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Examines patterned stories, sayings, designs, and ways of living that have been created and are continuously being recreated by groups of people; also investigates historical and social meanings of folklore.

AMS 114: American Lives and Environments: Folklore and Social Groups

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Examines patterned stories, sayings, designs, and ways of living that have been created and are continuously being recreated by groups of people; also investigates historical and social meanings of folklore.

AMS 128: Afro-Latin Musical Praxis

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Uses basic musical techniques derived from various Afro-Western traditions.

AMS 161: Natural World Perspective

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Speaks about ways of life of the North American continent's original peoples, including their history and contemporary issues. Provides a Native American perspective.

AMS 162: New World Imaginations

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Studies the connection with all forms of life in evolutionary development and ecological processes. Also examines ecstatic experiences; social life before the domestication of plants, animals, and each other; and utopian thinking.

AMS 167: Cross Cultural Topics

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Provides a special concentration in Native American, African / African American, and American history. Utilizes an interdisciplinary and cross cultural approach to better understand oppression and the creation/maintenance of hegemony in the Americas.

AMS 179: Introduction to Native American History

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Introduces the lives, histories, cultures, and characters of Native American peoples of North America. Focuses on cultural assumptions and native visions of the land, the environment, and the spirit life.

AMS 197: Seneca Language

Credits: 4
Type: SEM

Seneca is an unwritten language. The course presents the basic Seneca vocabulary for numerals, foods, geological features, the classification of society, and the classification of nature, and works up to reading myths and legends.

AMS 198: Language of the Seneca I

Credits: 4
Type: SEM

Introductory course; concentrates on the Seneca language by reciting some Iroquoian speeches.

AMS 209: Musics of the World

American Studies

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces ethnomusicology; studies musical styles in a variety of cultures.

AMS 210: Musics of the World

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Introduces ethnomusicology; studies musical styles in a variety of cultures.

AMS 231: Survey of Native American History

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Focuses on the spiritual side of the Native American; including substance, motivation, and character of the American Indian.

AMS 232: Survey of Native American History

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Focuses on the spiritual side of the Native American; including substance, motivation, and character of the American Indian.

AMS 272: Native American Literature

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Examines perspectives and philosophies of Native American writers. Provides insight into why the American Indian has a unique perspective on caring for what happens to the Earth.

AMS 279: Contemporary Problems of American Indians

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Introduces undergraduate students to some of the current difficulties facing Indigenous peoples in North America.

AMS 281: Native Americans and the Colonist

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Examines cultural interactions and values in collision during the major phase of the colonization of the Americas. Reviews contemporary texts in Native American history and culture in a seminar setting.

AMS 285: Natural World Vs. Legal World

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Examines conflict between the natural world perspective of Native American culture and the legal world perspective of U.S. culture.

AMS 301: Introduction to Indigenous Women

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Traces historical periods that affected Indigenous women's lives; emphasizes current laws and policies that have impacted their families and communities. SEM

AMS 306: Native American Aesthetics

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Examines traditional and contemporary art methods and techniques by various Indigenous groups in North and South America.

AMS 343: Human Ecology

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Studies social dimensions of space affecting human distribution and location of social activities; provides theoretical explanations.

AMS 364: Seminar for Majors

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Utilizes a common reading text and individually assigned textual readings plus occasional reports.

AMS 425: Native American Legal Situation

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Looks at the legal status of Native North Americans in relation to the United States and its governmental predecessors.

AMS 439: Contemporary American Fiction

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Considers problems in American fiction from a cultural, historical, thematic, and stylistic perspective.

AMS 440: Contemporary American Fiction

Credits: 3
Type: LEC

Considers problems in American fiction from a cultural, historical, thematic, and stylistic perspective.

AMS 457: Problems in American Urban History

American Studies

Credits: 3
Type: SEM

Studies urban development aspects in the local community and more generally.

AMS 488: Violence and Nonviolence

Credits: 1
Type: REC

Introduces the theory and practice of nonviolence.

AMS 499: Independent Study

Credits: 1-16
Type: TUT

Individually designed program of reading, research, or skills development in close association with an instructor.