American Studies, M.A.

Requirements

The Master of Arts program in American studies requires a minimum of 36 s.h. of graduate credit. The degree generally is offered without thesis; students must petition the director of graduate studies for permission to pursue the thesis option.

Each M.A. student designs an interdisciplinary field of concentration in consultation with the student’s American studies advisor.

The M.A. with a major in American studies requires the following work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMST:5000</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies (taken twice in consecutive years)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two graduate seminars in American studies</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five courses in the interdisciplinary field of concentration</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.A. portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
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Each student must complete an M.A. portfolio, which includes a research paper, faculty evaluations for all courses taken during the student's first full year of graduate study, and a self-evaluation essay.

The research paper is a graduate seminar paper that demonstrates a student's skills as a research scholar and writer and represents the student's strongest work. The paper should be 25-30 pages, including a bibliography.

The self-evaluation essay summarizes the American studies methods and materials that have shaped the student's interdisciplinary work in the field and states how the master's degree work in American studies has contributed to, challenged, or complicated the student's goals and ambitions beyond the degree.

Students assemble the M.A. portfolio under the guidance of their advisors and should submit it no later than December 1 of their third semester in residency. The portfolio is evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis by a three-person American studies faculty committee. Students whose portfolio receives a U may resubmit the portfolio during their fourth semester of residency.

For students who wish to continue their education with doctoral study, the M.A. portfolio serves as the application for admission to the Ph.D. program in American studies. The department informs applicants whether they have been accepted into the Ph.D. program by the end of the fall semester in which they submit their M.A. portfolio; admission is contingent upon successful completion of the M.A. during a student's fourth semester of residency.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College.

Career Advancement

American studies students’ career goals are as varied as the topics they study. Even though the major does not have an explicit vocational goal, graduates are well prepared for careers in a wide range of areas, such as business, education, arts and museum administration, government, journalism, and social services.

The program also provides a good foundation for graduate studies in the humanities, the social sciences, theology, and business as well as for professional studies in law or medicine.