

American Studies, BA

American studies majors develop broad training in cultural analysis and communication. Students take courses that make sense of the contemporary world, both nationally and internationally, using a variety of approaches to the study of culture, including film, the digital humanities, art, theater, and literature. Building on the strengths of the faculty, students use a variety of approaches to study culture, including racial and ethnic studies, gender studies, media studies, the digital humanities, history, art, theater, and literature.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the BA in American studies, students should have:

- a deepened knowledge and critical understanding of American history, cultures, and society;
- the ability to interpret a range of sources (literature, painting, maps, diaries, music, census data, material objects) and to integrate those sources into a persuasive argument about American culture; and
- the ability to explain one's own perspective on American identity and to place that identity in the diverse, global context of our time.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in American studies requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including 33 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They also must complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core. At least 24 s.h. for the major must be earned at the University of Iowa.

The major in American studies stresses broad training in cultural analysis and communication. American studies students may arrange internships (1–3 s.h.) for credit toward their major through the university's Pomerantz Career Center.

Shortly after declaring the major, students should meet with their advisor to explore the range of coursework available and to begin shaping a plan of study. By the second semester in the major, students and their advisor should have agreed upon a plan of study for completing the requirements for the major.

The BA with a major in American studies usually requires the following 11 courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:1010	Understanding American Cultures	3
AMST:2000	Introduction to American Studies	3
AMST:2025	Diversity in American Culture	3
AMST:3900	Seminar in American Cultural Studies	3
One additional American studies course numbered 2000 or above		3
One additional American studies course numbered 3000 or above		3
Five additional American studies courses		15
Total Hours		33

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in American studies may graduate with honors in the major. They must maintain a University of Iowa grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.33 and a GPA of at least 3.33 in the major.

The honors project is usually undertaken in a student's final semester. Students should identify a potential project topic and an advisor from the American studies faculty the semester before. Work for the honors project is done under the supervision of a faculty member with expertise in the topic the student is exploring. Projects typically take the form of traditional scholarly research. However, they also can be organized around public engagement, the digital humanities, or other formats decided on in consultation with the faculty advisor.

Students should enroll in AMST:4999 Honors Project for 3 s.h. The credit counts toward the 33 s.h. of work required for the American studies major.

Students who pursue honors projects in two departments may not submit the same project for both unless special permission is obtained from each department. Such an option would require more substance and depth than projects undertaken in one department. Students should check with honors advisors from both departments before they pursue such projects.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students may pursue honors study through the University of Iowa Honors Program. University honors students must maintain a 3.33 GPA, complete 12 s.h. of coursework designated as honors courses, and complete 12 s.h. of an experiential learning project. Visit Honors at Iowa for more details.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the American studies major.

Career Advancement

American studies provides preparation for careers in business, public relations, marketing, advertising, diversity outreach, tourism, education, politics and government, social service, media and journalism, museums, and the arts. It also provides a good foundation for graduate studies in the humanities, the social sciences, theology, business, or law.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the university's Four-Year Graduation Plan.

Before the fifth semester begins: declaration of the major and discussion of a plan of study with an American studies advisor.

Before the seventh semester begins: at least six courses from the plan of study and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: at least nine courses from the plan of study.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

American Studies, BA

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
GE CLAS Core: Sustainability ^a		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
AMST:1010	Understanding American Cultures ^b	3
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	2
Elective course ^d		1 - 3
Hours		13-17
Spring		
AMST:2025	Diversity in American Culture ^b	3
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		1 - 2
Hours		14-17
Second Year		
Fall		
AMST:2000	Introduction to American Studies	3
GE CLAS Core: Social Sciences ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		3
Hours		16-17
Spring		
Major: 2000-level or above course		3
Major: elective course ^f		3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab ^e		4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		3
Hours		17-18

Third Year

Fall

Major: 3000-level or above course	3
Major: elective course ^f	3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^e	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	15

Spring

Major: elective course ^f	3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues ^e	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	15

Fourth Year

Fall

Major: elective course ^f	3
Major: elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	15

Spring

AMST:3900	Seminar in American Cultural Studies	3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^e		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3

Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall) ^g

Hours	15
Total Hours	120-129

a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative and Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.

b Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.

c Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.

d Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.

- e GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
- f Students are required to complete 15 s.h. of additional American studies courses.
- g Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.