

American Studies, PhD

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in American studies requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must maintain a program grade-point average of at least 3.00. They may focus on American studies or choose the sport studies subprogram.

Students work with their faculty advisor to map out a coherent plan of study that reflects their particular interests. Students are permitted considerable flexibility in constructing their study plan, but they must meet certain basic requirements, which include foundation courses, area foundation courses, two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, a research skills course, elective coursework, and a dissertation.

The two fields of concentration may be defined to correspond with a student's strongest intellectual interests, but they must be interdisciplinary in concept and multidisciplinary in scope. Each must include coursework from more than one of the university's departments and programs. The two concentration areas may, and usually should, have an intellectual relationship with each other.

Students are expected to address the cultural diversity of American life in their coursework and reading.

The PhD in American studies requires the following work. Some course requirements are different for American studies and sports studies.

Coursework

Required Foundation Course

All students complete the required foundation course and should take it as early as possible.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:5000	Interdisciplinary Research in American Cultures (taken twice in consecutive years for 3 s.h. each)	6

Area Foundation Courses

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
Two American studies graduate seminars		6
Sport Studies Students		
SPST:5002	Critical Theories and Cultural Studies	3
SPST:6074	Seminar in Sport History	3

First Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
Courses in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee		18
Sport Studies Students		

Courses on sport in cultural and historical contexts selected with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee 18

Second Field of Concentration

Course #	Title	Hours
American Studies Students		
Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee		18
Sport Studies Students		
Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's Plan of Study Committee; may be a second field in sport studies or a field outside sport studies		18

Research Skills

All students take the following course.

Course #	Title	Hours
AMST:7085	Dissertation Writing Workshop (taken two or three times for 1 s.h. each)	2-3

Additional Requirements

All students take the following courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these (to meet semester hours requirement to graduate):		
AMST:7090	PhD Thesis	arr.
Electives		

Admission to PhD Candidacy

Admission to PhD candidacy signifies that the department judges a doctoral student qualified to take the comprehensive examination. Doctoral students advance to PhD candidacy based on a review conducted during their second year in the PhD program (typically during fall semester); the review assesses a student's readiness to complete studies through the comprehensive examination and the dissertation, which is an original work of scholarship. In addition to judging a student's readiness for PhD candidacy, the review provides a progress report on the student's work and a tentative prognosis for future prospects in the field.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination comprises three written exams and one oral exam.

The first exam is taken under the supervision of an American studies faculty member, who also chairs the comprehensive examination. The candidate takes a timed, take-home written exam of no less than four hours and no longer than two days. The exam details the candidate's approach to American studies (methods and models), including the student's position and critical engagement with models of American studies scholarship.

The remaining two written exams explore the candidate's major fields; these are at least four hours long and may be given on a take-home basis at the examiner's discretion.

The oral exam covers material from the written exams.

Dissertation

The final requirement for the PhD is the dissertation. A dissertation in American studies is a substantive work of scholarship that involves interdisciplinary research and analysis, and represents an original contribution to knowledge. In most cases, the dissertation takes the form of a book-length manuscript. However, students may propose alternatives to the traditional form, provided they have the dissertation committee's approval and complete a memorandum of understanding with the director of graduate studies in American studies. All dissertations must be approved by a committee of four faculty members, including at least two from the Department of American Studies.

Internships

Qualified graduate students in American studies can arrange internships with a number of local agencies, including the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Division of Historic Preservation, the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, the Iowa Humanities Board, Bruce More, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, the Englert Theatre, and the Putnam Museum and Science Center. With special permission, candidates conducting research during on-the-job training may receive academic credit through AMST:7994 Independent Study. Other internships with social agencies, government, or businesses may also be arranged.