AMERICAN STUDIES

Program Director: Heather E. Fryer
Program Office: Humanities Center, Room 227

The American Studies Program seeks to prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills to bring critical insights to the study of the American experience in all its diversity, past and present. Faculty members aim to stimulate critical and creative thinking through interdisciplinary and comparative study with attention to transnational issues and current theoretical frameworks.

Major in American Studies
Specific Requirements for Admission to the American Studies Major
Successful completion of AMS 307 Introduction to American Studies with a grade of "C" or better.

- B.A., Major in American Studies (http://catalog.creighton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/american-studies/american-studies-ba)

Minor in American Studies

- American Studies (http://catalog.creighton.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/american-studies/american-studies-minor)

Teacher Certification

Students who think they may teach Social Science or History in secondary schools must consult with the Education Department, with the Director of the American Studies Program, and with the appropriate agency in the state in which they intend to teach.

Courses

AMS 121. American Government And Politics. 3 credits. FA, SP, SU
(Same as PLS 121)
A course that provides a critical overview of American political institutions, processes, and policies. It shows how these institutions and processes are shaped by the Constitution, historical events and elections as well as by politicians, the media, interest groups, and public opinion.

AMS 275. The Twentieth Century as "The American Century. 3 credits.
(Same as HIS 275)
In 1941, publisher Henry R. Luce declared the twentieth century to be "The American Century." This course examines the degree to which Luce's label squares with a global-historical analysis of the major events, movements, and figures of the century that just passed, where the roots of many of today's most challenging issues are to be found. P: One Critical Issues in Human Inquiry course or HRS 100 or HRS 101.

AMS 301. Social and Cultural Theory. 3 credits. FA, SP
(Same as ANT 301, SOC 301)
An exploration of the ideas central to sociology and anthropology from the perspective of their historical and contemporary theories. Special attention is given to the implications of these ideas for understanding human social values. P: So. stdg.

AMS 307. Introduction to American Studies. 3 credits. (Same as HIS 307, ENG 307)
This course provides an introduction to the field of American Studies, which seeks to understand the complex reality of 'the American experience' in all its variety. Topics include the history of American Studies as a discipline as well as its methodologies, central concepts, and emerging questions. Students will examine a broad topic from multiple disciplinary perspectives, with an emphasis on developing and employing the methodological tools common to contemporary American Studies scholarship. The topic/content areas will be selected by the instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise. P: So. stdg.

AMS 308. Theories and Methods in American Studies. 3 credits. (Same as HIS 308)
This course introduces students to prevailing theories and methodologies in American Studies. Students will examine in a critical fashion interdisciplinary studies of the meaning and significance of 'Americanness' in historical, cross-cultural, and even trans-national contexts. The complex relationships between ethnic, religious, racial, and ideological groups in American society will receive critical attention. P: So. stdg.

AMS 310. Religion And Contemporary American Society. 3 credits. ENY, SP
(Same as SOC 310)
An examination of religious beliefs, behaviors, and structures as they relate to contemporary America. In addition to studying established religious forms, attention is also given to the public controversies connected with religion and to new religious movements and trends. P: So. stdg.

AMS 312. Mass Media And Modern Culture. 3 credits. FA, SP
(Same as COM 312, ENG 312)
Examination of the role of film, television, and print media in American life. P: ENG 120, 121, 150; Jr. stdg.

AMS 316. Qualitative Methods In The Social Sciences. 3 credits. SP
(Same as ANT 316, SOC 316, NAS 316)
Introduction to qualitative research methods within the social sciences. Includes research design, strategies for collecting ethnographic data with a particular focus on participant observation and field work, comparative research, theory building, and ethical issues involved with human research.

AMS 318. Gender in American Society. 3 credits. FA
(Same as SOC 318, WGS 318)
Comprehensive examination of the forces shaping the position and behavior of women and men in modern American society. How and why do these positions and behavior differ? What are the consequences of these differences? Emphasis on gender as enacted across the spectrum of multicultural diversity in American society, with some comparison to other societies. P: Jr. stdg.

AMS 323. Crime, Victimization and Urban Environments. 3 credits.
This course will take a look at how crime and victimization are perceived within society, how they are measured through quantitative and qualitative lenses, and the particularities of urban environments that intersect with high concentrations of crime and victimization. P: Understanding Social Science or Instructor Consent.

AMS 325. American States And Regions. 3 credits. OD
(Same as PLS 325)
Description and evaluation of American state governments and regional organizations. Examination of the theory of federalism and its current status; comparative analysis of state-level political actors and institutions. Special attention given to Nebraska and Iowa state politics. P: So. stdg.
AMS 327. Minority Politics in America. 3 credits. OD (Same as PLS 327)
Explores the political experience of American racial and ethnic minorities with particular attention to the experience of black Americans. Includes review of roots and patterns of unequal treatment of minorities, tactics and strategies used to attack these patterns, and contemporary situation. Particular attention will be paid to the tension between integrationist and self-determination strategies. P: So. stdg.

AMS 328. Mass Media in American Politics. 3 credits. AY (Same as PLS 328)
Examination of the inter-relationships among the media, the mass public and government. The role of the media as a channel between citizens and government is considered both in political campaign settings and in day-to-day government. P: So. stdg.

AMS 329. American Literature/American Identity. 3 credits. SP (Same as ENG 329)
Analysis of the treatment of the American identity as it is represented in American literature of the colonial period to the present. P: ENG 150.

AMS 331. Indians of the Great Plains. 3 credits. ONY, SP (Same as ANT 331, NAS 331)
This course provides a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to the study of Native cultures on the Great Plains. We will examine ecology, geography, geology, natural resources, archaeology, history, art, linguistics, cultures, as well as the human habitation of the area from first records (which are both archaeological and oral historical) to the present. The course will be run seminar style. Each student (or group depending on the size of the class) will choose a specific cultural group for study. If a student is a member of a Plains Indian group the student is required to study a linguistically and culturally different group. The professor will act as a resource for methodology and research strategies. Each student will bring to the seminar a summary of relevant data for the group she/he is studying and present it to the class. Students will also build a portfolio of short papers on each seminar topic that will be assembled into a major paper at the end of the semester. P: So. stdg.

AMS 335. Federal Indian Policy And Law. 3 credits. OD (Same as NAS 335, PLS 335, SWK 335)
This course investigates the relationships between Native Americans and the Euro-American in terms of how the Natives were perceived and the impact this has had on Colonial and Federal policies relating to Native populations. The course's emphasis is on the historical, political and cultural aspects of the relationship. P: So. stdg.

AMS 339. Public Policy And Poverty In The United States. 3 credits. AY (Same as PLS 339)
Government policies and programs affecting the poor in the United States. Issues include various elements of welfare programs and policies, entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security, problems of intergovernmental activity in administrating social welfare. Examination of various critiques of social welfare policy and a review of reform proposals. Role of organized interests and public support relative to programs affecting the poor. Skill development includes policy formulation and analysis. P: So. stdg.

AMS 340. Native American Cultures and Health. 3 credits. FA (Same as ANT 340, NAS 340)
This course allows students to learn first hand about the culture and health care practices of Native Americans by participating in seminars offered by Native tribal and spiritual leaders, healers, and others who work with Native populations in promoting wellness and pride in culture. Students will participate in the course with SPAHP students enrolled in the elective course "Learning through Reflective Service: Native American Experience." (PHA 341). Enrolled undergraduate students will engage with Omaha-based health agencies and attend group reflection sessions. This course will be graded on a SA/UN basis.

AMS 341. American Cultural Minorities. 3 credits. FA (Same as ANT 341, BKS 341, SOC 341)
Determinants and consequences of prejudice and discrimination; race, ethnocentrism, religious conflict, class structure. Consideration also given to proposed strategies for reducing inter-group tension. P: So. stdg.

AMS 343. Peoples and Cultures of Native North America. 3 credits. ENY, FA (Same as ANT 343, NAS 343)
Historic and ethnographic survey of the Native cultures of North America. Includes an analysis of the ecological, social, and ideological adaptations and cultural changes brought by contact with Euro-American populations. P: So. stdg.

AMS 345. Sport in American Culture. 3 credits. OD (Same as ANT 345)
A look at how American cultural norms, values, and beliefs are reflected in and are influenced by sport. Included will be issues of basic cultural values and ideology, racial and ethnic groups, gender, and the role sport plays in American culture. P: Jr. stdg.

AMS 350. American Literature I: Beginnings To Civil War. 3 credits. SP (Same as ENG 350)
An historical survey of American Literature from its beginning to 1860. P: ENG 120, 121, 150.

AMS 353. Jazz in American Culture. 3 credits. OD (Same as BKS 353, MUS 353)
Examines the relationship between American society and the development of jazz in the course of the 20th century and beyond. Special attention will be given to those cultural, economic, and political factors which could influence jazz trends on a regional or national level.

AMS 355. Environment and Society: Sociological Perspectives. 3 credits. SP (Same as ANT 355, EVS 355, SOC 355)
Human societies interact with the natural environments in which they are embedded. An examination of the driving economic, political, cultural, and demographic forces that cause human modification of the natural world, the resulting social and environmental problems and public controversies. A focus on movements and policies related to environmental issues, and the prospects for the emergence of more environmentally "sustainable" societies. P: So. stdg.

AMS 358. Critical Issues in the Study of North American Religions. 3 credits. ONY, SP (Same as ANT 358, NAS 358, THL 358)
This course utilizes anthropological perspectives in the study of Native American religion. The focus of the course is non-Western, non-proselytizing religions which are coterminous with local political or kinship based social groups. The course looks at the history of the study of Native religions, the nature of Native religions as understood by a variety of disciplines, and the contemporary critique of colonialism by Native peoples specifically in regard to intellectual colonialism of Native knowledge and the practical colonialism inherent in the imitation of Native religions by non-tribal members.
AMS 359. The City In United States History. 3 credits. OD (Same as HIS 359)
This course examines the development of urban areas in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Of particular concern are the elements of urban architecture, economics, politics, demographics, and violence. To go beyond the generalizations of the assigned readings, the city of Omaha will be used as a laboratory for investigating these themes in a specific setting. P: So. stdg.

AMS 360. Gender, Society and Culture. 3 credits. SP, SU (Same as ANT 360, SOC 360, WGS 360)
Examines gender from a holistic perspective, including language, biology, cultural history, and socio-cultural variables. The course will examine gender in a wide variety of cultures. P: So. stdg.

AMS 365. Issues Of The Native American Experience. 3 credits. FA, SU (Same as NAS 365, SWK 365)
Examination of Native American culture and values, social institutions and social systems. Presentation of issues emanating from being Native American. Consideration given to understanding the Native American experience from an historical perspective as well as the contemporary viewpoint. P: So. stdg.

AMS 367. American Philosophy. 3 credits. OD (Same as PHL 367)
Surveys some of the works of significant figures in philosophy in America, both past and present. Includes classical American philosophy as well as important individuals outside that tradition. Focuses primarily on metaphysical and epistemological themes. P: One Magis Core Philosophical ideas course, and one of the following: PHL 201, PHL 250, PHL 270, PHL 271, PHL 272, PHL 275, PHL 300, PHL 320, or PHL 399.

AMS 369. American Popular Music. 3 credits. OD (Same as MUS 369)
This is a lecture/demonstration course that will trace the birth and evolution of popular music in America from its roots in the nineteenth century, jazz, blues, country and rock music through the artists and songs that define the genre.

AMS 372. Equality, Minorities, And Public Policy. 3 credits. AY, SP (Same as BKS 372, HIS 372, PLS 372)
Incorporates continuing discourses between a historian and a political scientist. Exploration of the political processes whereby minorities have influenced the formulation and implementation of policy and governmental responses to demands for equal treatment. P: So. stdg.

AMS 384. History Of American Architecture. 3 credits. SP (Same as ARH 384)
A survey of the most important works of major architects from the Colonial period to the present. P: So. stdg.

AMS 385. Survey of American Art. 3 credits. AY (Same as ARH 385)
Survey of American painting, sculpture, and architecture from pre-Revolutionary days to the present with focus on the historical forces that shape the American artist.

AMS 387. Modern Hispanic Art History. 3 credits. (Same as ARH 387, NAS 387)
Modern Hispanic Art History will survey the painting, sculpture and architecture of Latin America along with some of its Spanish influences, from 1820 to the present. Native American and African influences on Latin American art will be surveyed. Key figures to be studies are: Rivera, Torres-Garcia, Lam, Matta, Kahlo, Varo, Chambi, Salgado, Barragan, Botero, Bravo, Jimenez, etc.

AMS 389. The Roaring Twenties. 3 credits. OD (Same as ENG 389)
Representative American authors and works from the 1920's. P: ENG 150 and Jr. stdg.

AMS 391. Film Music. 3 credits. (Same as MUS 391)
The course will survey the important and emerging art genre of film music. The course will include music scores and composers of the past and present combining historical, cultural and social themes in film as enhanced through the music. Some study will include the language of music, in particular, melody, harmony, rhythm, tone color and the composer's use of these elements in creation of music for the film. The course will deal primarily with American film but may include selected films of other countries as well.

AMS 392. Philosophy of Sport. 3 credits. (Same as PHL 392)
Philosophical examination of the nature, meaning, and significance of sport, with special emphasis on the relationships among sport, play, and game. Investigation of ethical issues in sport, including sportsmanship, cheating, drug-testing, sexual equality, competition, and winning. Treatment of the relation of sport to social-political and aesthetic issues. P: One Magis Core Philosophical Ideas course, and one of the following: PHL 201, PHL 250, PHL 270, PHL 271, PHL 272, PHL 275, PHL 300, PHL 320, or PHL 399.

AMS 393. African-American Literature. 3 credits. SP (Same as BKS 393, ENG 393)
A survey of representative African American literature from its inception to the present. The particular representative authors and genres and the historical focus of the course may differ each semester. P: ENG 150 or equivalent.

AMS 395. Selected Topics. 3 credits. OD
Course designed for the development of a relevant class of interest to the program and suited to the special-interest, one-time offering. An example of a topic is History of the American City. P: Jr. stdg.; AMS coordinator consent.

AMS 400. Topical Seminar in American Studies. 3 credits. OD
Seminars offered on special topics related to American Studies. Topics vary from semester to semester. May be repeated under different subtitles. P: Jr. stdg.

AMS 406. German Immigrant Culture in the United States. 3 credits.
This course, a survey of German-American culture from the 19th century to the present, takes an interdisciplinary approach to the German immigrant experience in the United States and to questions of ethnic and national identity. P: GER 317, 318.

AMS 411. Social Inequality and Stratification. 3 credits. ONY, SP (Same as ANT 411, SOC 411)
Nature, causes, and consequences of social inequality and stratification, with particular attention directed to the interaction among class, race and ethnicity, and gender. P: Jr. stdg.

AMS 415. Thoreau's Walden: Fiction, Poetry, Truth. 3 credits. (Same as PHL 415)
This course is a philosophical exploration of the relations among fiction, poetry and truth, in the context of reading one of the greatest classics of American literature, Henry David Thoreau's Walden. P: PHL 107 or So. stdg.

AMS 432. Democratic Theory. 3 credits. FA, OD (Same as PLS 432)
Major themes and thinkers on the role of government and the nature of a democratic political culture. Using both historical and contemporary materials, the course explores issues such as popular control, public participation, local autonomy, individualism, political liberty, and variations in American political ideology. P: Jr. stdg.
AMS 437. Religion And Public Life In The United States. 3 credits. OD
(Same as PLS 437)
This course transcends the designation "church and state" because it considers the non-institutional behavior of religious individuals in groups, and their impact on our public life far beyond that of government. P: So. stdg.

AMS 449. American Colonies. 3 credits. AY (Same as HIS 449)
Considers the Age of Exploration and the European discovery and America; the European colonization of North America; and the cultural, economic, political, and social development of the thirteen colonies which became the United States of America up to 1763. Emphasis on the transformation of Europeans into provincial Americans. P: So. stdg.

AMS 460. The History Of Women In The United States. 3 credits. OD
(Same as HIS 460, WGS 460)
The economic, social, and political status of women in the United States from colonial times to the present. Concentration on four major topics: the family, the work place, the community, and the feminists movements. An integral part is the examination of the traditional roles of women in society as well as changes in those roles. P: So. stdg.

AMS 465. American Pragmatism. 3 credits. OD (Same as PHL 465)
Examination and critical evaluation of the major works and themes of the American pragmatists: C. S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Includes an examination of their relation to other philosophers. P: PHL 107 and one of the following: (a) PHL 201, (b) PHL 250, (c) PHL 312, or (d) PHL 320.

AMS 467. History Of The Art Of Spain And Her Colonies. 3 credits. FA, SP
(Same as ARH 467)
A comprehensive survey of the major monuments of Spanish art from cave painting to the present, with emphasis on major artists (i.e., Montanes, El Greco, Zurbaran, Velasquez, Goya, Picasso, Rivera, and etc.).

AMS 468. Native American Art. 3 credits. FA (Same as ARH 468, NAS 468)
Survey of Native American art from the 16th century to the present with a concentration on the art of the continental United States. Includes Northwest, Southwest, and Plains cultures.

AMS 470. Introduction to Geographic Information Systems. 4 credits.
An introduction to the design, development, and application of geographic information systems (GIS) and related technologies to conduct spatial analysis in applied research settings that require the integration of data from diverse sources. Students will complete individual projects focusing on a topical area of their choice in order to develop an understanding of the basic technologies, and to demonstrate their skill in using these technologies to analyze a research topic. Research topics may be drawn from any subject field for which data sets with geographic variables are available. These may include anthropology, criminal justice, demography, economics, environmental science, health care, marketing, political science, sociology and social work. P: SOC 212 or IC.

AMS 471. Discourse of the American Family. 3 credits. (Same as COM 471)
With American culture, the concept of family has taken on "god term" status. Rather than studying communication within families, the course examines how the social construction of family (communication about family) has changed over time and examines the discourse, myths, problems/limitations, and power with how family has been culturally constructed.