American Studies

Program Director: Scott Hendrickson, PhD
Program Office:

The American Studies Program offers a rigorous interdisciplinary program of study that students can tailor to their interests in close consultation with their American Studies advisor. American Studies graduates are prepared to lead in the development of effective, evidence-based, theoretically grounded responses to the most challenging questions in the American experience. Through coursework in multiple disciplines, experiential learning, senior capstone research, and mentorship from faculty with expertise across the humanities and social sciences, the American Studies Program promotes critical and creative thinking, strong communication skills, publicly engaged scholarship, intercultural competency, and examination of the United States within its national and transnational contexts.

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., American Studies Requirements (30 credits)

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<td>AMS 307</td>
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<td>AMS 308</td>
<td>Theories and Methods in American Studies</td>
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<td>AMS 491</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
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Select two courses each from three of the following groups (for a total of 6 courses):

American Fine and Performing Arts

ART 380  History And Criticism Of Cinema
AMS 353  Jazz in American Culture
AMS 384  Building the American City
AMS 385  Survey of American Art
AMS 387  Modern Hispanic Art History
AMS 467  History Of The Art of Spain And Her Colonies
AMS 468  Native American Art
ARH 386  The History and Aesthetics of Latin American Photography
THR 461  American Theater History

American History

AMS 275  The Twentieth Century as "The American Century"
AMS 460  The History Of Women In The United States
AMS 482  Race In America: Idea And Reality
HIS 175  History of Protest in America
HIS 287  Global Perspectives in History: The Native American Experience
HIS 311  United States History To 1877
HIS 312  United States History Since 1877
HIS 355  Constitutional History of the United States Since 1877
HIS 357  Religion In American Society To 1865

HIS 358  Religion In American Society From 1865 To The Present
HIS 367  The African-American Experience
HIS 372  Equality, Minorities, And Public Policy
HIS 375  The United States And Latin America
HIS 384  Black History Through Literature
HIS 406  FLPA to Hawaii and the Philippines: Empire in the Pacific
HIS 449  American Colonies
HIS 450  Revolutionary America
HIS 451  The Early American Republic
HIS 452  Civil War and Reconstruction
HIS 458  The Sixties
HIS 565  The United States and Canada

American Literatures

AMS 312  Mass Media And Modern Culture
AMS 329  American Literature/American Identity
AMS 350  American Literature I: Beginnings To Civil War
AMS 393  African-American Literature
ENG 351  American Literature II: 1860-1914
ENG 352  English And American Literature: 1914 To The Present
ENG 353  Special Topics in Native American Literature
ENG 371  American Literature: Vision And Reality
ENG 381  Literature and the Environment
ENG 389  The Roaring Twenties
ENG 405  The Thirties
ENG 426  Canadian Literature
ENG 469  Modern American Poetry
ENG 470  Seminar in Film Studies
ENG 471  Modern American Drama
ENG 473  19th-Century American Novel
ENG 474  Modern American Novel
ENG 475  Contemporary American Literature
ENG 480  History Of Literary Criticism
ENG 482  Special Topics in American Literature

American Philosophy

AMS/PHL 367  American Philosophy
AMS 465  American Pragmatism
PHL 348  Philosophy of Feminism

American Politics

AMS 121  American Government And Politics
AMS 325  American States And Regions
AMS 327  Minority Politics in America
AMS 328  Mass Media In American Politics
AMS 335  Federal Indian Policy And Law
AMS 339  Public Policy And Poverty In The United States
AMS 372  Equality, Minorities, And Public Policy
AMS 432  Democratic Theory
AMS 437  Religion And Public Life In The United States
PLS 322  American Presidency
PLS 324  Congress And The Legislative Process

American Society and Culture
American Studies Minor

The American Studies minor complements single-disciplinary studies in American politics, society, and culture through interdisciplinary approaches that are comparative, theoretical, and transnational in scope.

American Studies Minor Requirements: 18 credits

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Total Credits 30
American Studies and Culture

AMS 301. Social and Cultural Theory. 3 credits. P: Jr. stdg.
AMS 310. Religion And Contemporary American Society. 3 credits. ENY, SP (Same as SOCI 310)
AMS 316. Qualitative Methods, Ethnography, and Engagement. 3 credits. (Same as ANT 316, CRJ 316, SOC 316)

Inquiries in American Studies

AMS 395. Selected Topics. 3 credits. P: Instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise.
AMS 400. Topical Seminar in American Studies. 3 credits. P: Instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise.
AMS 497. Directed Independent Research. 3 credits. P: Jr. stdg.
AMS 585. American Studies Internship. 3 credits. P: Instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise.
COM 442. Cultural Communication. 3 credits. P: Instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise.
COM 478. Perspectives on Work-Life Balance, Wellness and Justice. 3 credits. P: Instructor, based upon his/her area of scholarly expertise.

Total Credits: 18

* Kingfisher Concentration requirements: Choose any 9 credits from list above.

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 323. Crime, Victimization and Public Health. 3 credits. (Same as CRJ 323, SOC 323)
This course examines 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, as well as considering crime and victimization from a public health perspective. 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)
Analyzes the role of the media in contemporary American politics, focusing on its impact on public opinion, elections and day-to-day government. P: Sophomore standing.

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: Contemporary Composition course.

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. Race and Justice. 3 credits. FA (Same as ANT 341, BKS 341, CRJ 341, SOC 341)
This course focuses on racial and ethnic inequality in the U.S. criminal justice system. What are the determinants and consequences of prejudice and discrimination; of race and ethnicity; of ethnocentrism; sex/gender norms and class structure, as they relate to racial/ethnic minority groups/members affected by the criminal justice system? How is the society and culture we live in different from that of our parents and that of our grandparents or our great grandparents? What led to the changes we see today? Are there alternative social arrangements that may yield more equality, more efficiency, and more social justice? The goal of this course is to provide you with the basic concepts, theories, and historical context required to critically analyze and answer these questions with regard to racial/ethnic minority groups/members affected by the criminal justice system. 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, SOC 345)
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.

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 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 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)
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. Philosophical ideas course.

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, PL5 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. Building the American City. 3 credits. SP (Same as ARH 384)
A survey of the most important works of major architects from the Colonial period to the present.

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. Contemporary Composition course 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 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. Contemporary Composition course.

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 and Environmentalism. 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 419. Bible, Spirituality, & American Public Life. 3 credits. (Same as JPS 419, THL 419)
Exploration of the Biblical foundations of Christian Spirituality, followed by critical examination of the implications for contemporary American life; includes attention to intersection of race, gender, & economic realities. P. THL 110, THL 200.
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 455. Global Bollywood. 3 credits.
This course will use Bollywood, or global popular Indian cinema, as a cultural and political lens to understand the "uncomfortable realities of the world," including poverty, capitalism, gender hierarchies, and religious conflict. Drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks of social and cultural studies, film studies, postcolonial and diaspora theory, and gender and race studies, students will explore the politics of globalized production and reception of culture, global connections that bridge differences, and intersections between American racial formations and postcolonial hierarchies. P Critical Issues in Human Inquiry course, Contemporary Composition course, Sr. standing.

AMS 460. The History Of Women In The United States. 3 credits. OD (Same as HIS 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 Philosophical Ideas course.

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. Making Maps that Matter: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems. 4 credits. (Same as ANT/CRJ/EVS/SOC 470)
Geographic Information Systems-or GIS-refers to the technology used to store, edit, analyze, and present geographic data. This course will introduce students to both the technical and conceptual sides of making maps that matter. Weekly labs will teach the technical skills necessary for using geographic data to create maps. In addition to the technical skills, students will lead weekly book club and "mappy hour" discussions that will foster critical thinking about how GIS and maps are used in society. These readings will emphasize the importance of place and space to a range of contemporary social and environmental issues including poverty, pollution, crime, and racial injustice. Students will apply what they've learned in a semester-long mapping project to raise awareness about a social or environmental problem in a place of their choosing. P SOC 212.

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.

AMS 482. Race In America: Idea And Reality. 3 credits. OD (Same as BKS 482, HIS 482, PHL 482, PLS 482)
An examination of the idea and reality of race during key phases of U.S. history, with an emphasis on the contemporary situation. To understand the multiple meanings and experiences of race, the course draws on sources from science, literature, law, and philosophy. P Philosophical Ideas course.

AMS 491. Senior Seminar. 3 credits. SP
A research seminar required of all American Studies majors and co-majors. P Sr. AMS major.

AMS 493. Directed Independent Readings. 1-3 credits. OD
Course designed to allow an individual student with an interest in a particular area to pursue it under the direction of a willing faculty member. P AMS coordinator consent.

AMS 497. Directed Independent Research. 1-3 credits. OD
Course designed to allow an individual student with an interest in a particular area to pursue it under the direction of a willing faculty member. P AMS coordinator consent.

AMS 585. American Studies Internship. 1-3 credits. FA, SP, SU
A supervised on-the-job experience at governmental or private agencies in applying American Studies knowledge and skills to cultural resources management; museum, library, and/or archival work; historic preservation; and other areas. P AMS major; Jr. stdg.; DC.