AMERICAN STUDIES, M.A.

Saint Louis University's M.A. program in American studies gives students a solid grounding in the origins, development, practices and theoretical framework of the field, as well as aiding them in the pursuit of independent research and academic writing.

Saint Louis University's award-winning American studies faculty are trained specifically in the discipline. Most have earned their Ph.D.s in American studies; all have worked extensively in the field as scholars and teachers. Our time and effort as teaching faculty are focused on American studies students. At the same time, we enjoy productive and cordial relations with our colleagues in other departments who teach and conduct research in related fields, and students may take carefully selected courses in those departments, as students in other departments do in American studies.

SLU's faculty is especially strong in several areas, including transnational American studies; cultural studies and visual culture; African American literature, history and culture; U.S. intellectual history; urban cultural studies; race, ethnicity and gender theories and studies; and twentieth-century U.S. society and culture.

Careers

SLU's M.A. in American studies is a stand-alone degree for work in arts and cultural institutions, libraries, museums, historical societies, public humanities, nonprofit agencies and other venues. Some students may also pursue the M.A. in American studies as a prelude to further degrees, such as a professional M.A. or doctorate.

Admission Requirements

An undergraduate degree or equivalent in a humanities or social science area is required; additional prerequisite work may be required at the discretion of the department.

Standardized test scores are considered as well as GPA and TOEFL (if applicable).

Application Requirements

- Application form and fee
- Transcript(s)
- Three letters of recommendation
- Résumé
- Goal statement
- Writing sample
- Interview (scheduled in January)

All written materials are due by Dec. 15 for admission the following fall.

Requirements for International Students

All admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students along with the following:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency
- Proof of financial support must include:
  - A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the time at Saint Louis University
  - A letter from the sponsor's bank verifying that the funds are available and will be so for the duration of study at the University

- Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include the courses taken and/or lectures attended, practical laboratory work, the maximum and minimum grades attainable, the grades earned or the results of all end-of-term examinations, and any honors or degrees received. WES and ECE transcripts are accepted.

Assistantship Application Deadline

All students who indicate a need for financial assistance and submit their complete application by Dec. 15 will be considered for financial support with admission.

American Studies Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed by a faculty committee. Qualifying applicants will be contacted for a video interview. Follow the department link above for more information about our graduate program, funding and activities.

Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid

For priority consideration for a graduate assistantship, apply by the program admission deadlines listed. Fellowships and assistantships provide a stipend and may include health insurance and a tuition scholarship for the duration of the award.

For more information, visit http://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/.

Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to

1. Apply the major practices, theories, or research methodologies in American studies.
2. Apply knowledge from the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts.
3. Articulate arguments or explanations to both a disciplinary or professional audience in both oral and written forms.
4. Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in three chosen fields within American studies.

Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>Required Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTD 5000</td>
<td>Perspectives in American Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTD 5xxx</td>
<td>Chosen from course listing below</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTD 5xxx</td>
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<td>African American Politics, Culture &amp; Identity</td>
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<td>ASTD 5020</td>
<td>Frontiers &amp; Borderlands: Contact &amp; Conquest in the American Imagination</td>
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<td>ASTD 5700</td>
<td>Metropolitan America</td>
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<td>Practice of American Studies</td>
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<td>Graduate Internship</td>
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<td>Special Topics</td>
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<td>ASTD 6020</td>
<td>American Political Thought</td>
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<td>ASTD 6200</td>
<td>Visual Culture Theory</td>
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Non-Course Requirements

Qualifying Exam
At the end of the second semester of coursework, students will take a three-hour qualifying exam to demonstrate their growing knowledge of the field. The exam consists of essay questions provided by American studies course instructors. Students must answer two of the questions: one covering material from ASTD 5000 Perspectives in American Studies (3 cr) and the other chosen from another qualifying class taken that academic year.

Portfolio or Thesis
After successful completion of the qualifying exam, students will pursue one of two capstone tracks: a portfolio paper or a thesis.

A portfolio paper is a 20 to 30 page article or literature review, typically a revised and expanded seminar paper meant to demonstrate the student’s extensive knowledge of their field. It is developed in conjunction with a two-person faculty committee (a chair and one additional reader) over the summer following the first year of the M.A. program and during the second year of the M.A. program.

A thesis is a more developed project with an original argument, typically 60 to 80 pages in length, based in extensive primary and secondary research. It is developed in conjunction with a three-person faculty committee (a chair and two additional readers) over the summer following the first year of the M.A. program and during the second year of the M.A. program.

Oral Examination
After the student’s committee has approved the final version of the portfolio paper or thesis, there will be an oral examination before three faculty members. For the portfolio paper, this will be the two-person portfolio committee plus an additional faculty member. For the thesis, this will be the three-person thesis committee.

Continuation Standards
Students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 in all graduate/professional courses.

Roadmap
Roadmaps are recommended semester-by-semester plans of study for programs and assume full-time enrollment unless otherwise noted.

Courses and milestones designated as critical (marked with !) must be completed in the semester listed to ensure a timely graduation. Transfer credit may change the roadmap.
Year Two

Fall
Two-American Studies grad seminars 6-9
Identify an MA advisor and project 3
Credits 6-9

Spring
Two additional American Studies grad seminars 6-9
Complete Checklist for MA graduation
Complete MA Portfolio Paper and Defense
Credits 6-9

Total Credits 27-36

1 Over their coursework, students must take at least one 5000 level (reading) and one 6000 level (research) seminars. Up to two courses outside of the department may be substituted for ASTD seminars, with the approval of the advisor and Grad Coordinator. MA Portfolio students should take 15-18 credits in their first year, and an additional 12-15 (for a total of 30) in their second year.

2 Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

3 Department deadlines for spring are announced each fall.

Contact Us

For additional information regarding admissions and graduate programs in American Studies, please contact amstdies@slu.edu.

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