

AMERICAN STUDIES, M.A.

Saint Louis University's Master of Arts 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.

SLU's award-winning American studies faculty are trained specifically in the discipline. Most have earned a Ph.D. 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.

Our faculty has particular strengths in cultural studies; the studies of cities, regions, and place; American religion; American musics; American education; and the study of U.S. empire. Current faculty research interests are in the intersection between American religion and the carceral state; interracial intimacy; St. Louis's civil rights history; literature and regional identity; environmental humanities and indigenous studies; and late 20th-century popular culture.

Graduate Handbook (<https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/american-studies/-pdf/american-studies-department-grad-handbook.pdf>)

Careers

SLU's M.A. in American studies is a stand-alone degree that is useful for work in arts and cultural institutions, libraries, museums, historical societies, public humanities, nonprofit agencies, and other venues. Some students may also pursue an 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.

Application Requirements

- Application form (no fee required)
- Transcript(s)
- Three letters of recommendation
- Résumé or cv
- Goal statement of 500-1000 words
- Writing sample of 3,500 to 7,500 words
- Interview (required only of finalists, scheduled in January)

All written materials are due by Dec. 15 for Fall admission of the next year. Applicants interested in funding are very strongly encouraged to apply for SLU's Diversity and/or Presidential Fellowships. For more information and to apply go to: <https://www.slu.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-scholarships-fellowships-assistantships-awards.php>

Requirements for International Students

All Saint Louis University admission policies and requirements for domestic students apply to international students. International students applying to SLU must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English language proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- Academic records must include an English translation. Unofficial copies may be accepted in some cases for initial admission review, however official copies must be received prior to enrollment. Course-by-course transcript evaluations are accepted.

Students must submit financial documents to be issued an I-20 for their F-1 visa application. Proof of financial support must include:

- A letter of financial support from the person(s) or sponsoring agency funding the student's 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 the student's study at the University

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

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

Tuition

Tuition	Cost Per Credit
Graduate Tuition	\$1,400

Additional charges may apply. Other resources are listed below:

Net Price Calculator (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/tuition-and-costs/calculator.php>)

Information on Tuition and Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition/>)

Miscellaneous Fees (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/fees/>)

Information on Summer Tuition (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/student-financial-services/tuition-summer/>)

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.

Explore Scholarships and Financial Aid Options (<https://www.slu.edu/financial-aid/types-of-aid/>)

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will explain the contexts — such as historical, political, geographic, literary, artistic, social or intellectual — that shape American cultural practices, expressions and ideas.

- 2. Students will assess how American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas shape or are shaped by axes of power, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, nation or ability.
- 3. Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions or ideas.
- 4. Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American studies audience.
- 5. Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American studies scholarship.

Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies	3
Elective Courses		
Select seven graduate elective courses, for example:		21
ASTD 5010	African American Politics, Culture & Identity	
ASTD 5020	Frontiers & Borderlands: Contact & Conquest in the American Imagination	
ASTD 5700	Metropolitan America	
ASTD 5900	Practice of American Studies	
ASTD 5910	Graduate Internship in American Studies	
ASTD 5930	Special Topics	
ASTD 5980	Graduate Independent Study in American Studies	
ASTD 6015	Many Midwests: Race and Citizenship in the Heartland	
ASTD 6020	American Political Thought	
ASTD 6200	Visual Culture Theory	
ASTD 6250	The Cultural Studies Movement: Origins and Contemporary Practice	
ASTD 6400	Transnational America	
ASTD 6500	Visions of U.S. Empire	
ASTD 6700	Cold War Cultural Politics and the "American Century"	
ASTD 6930	Special Topics	
ASTD 6980	Graduate Independent Study in American Studies	
Options		
Select one of the following Options:		6
Thesis Option		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	
Portfolio Option		
Choose two additional courses from list of electives.		
Total Credits		30

Non-Course Requirements

Portfolio or Thesis

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.

This roadmap should not be used in the place of regular academic advising appointments. All students are encouraged to meet with their advisor/mentor each semester. Requirements, course availability and sequencing are subject to change.

Thesis Option

Course	Title	Credits
Year One		
Fall		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies (Required)	3
2 additional American Studies grad seminars ¹		6
Credits		9
Spring		
3 American Studies grad seminars		9
Credits		9
Year Two		
Fall		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
Credits		6
Spring		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		

Complete MA Thesis and Defense	
Credits	6
Total Credits	30

¹ Up to two courses outside of the department may be substituted for ASTD seminars, with the approval of the advisor. MA Thesis students should take 15-18 credits in their first year, and an additional 12-15 (for a total of 30) in their second year. Six credits in their second year must be ASTD 5990 Thesis Research (0-6 cr).

² Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

³ Thesis students must have an advisor and an approved topic by April of their second semester.

Portfolio Option

Course	Title	Credits
Year One		
Fall		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies (Required)	3
2 additional American Studies grad seminars ¹		6
Credits		9
Spring		
3 American Studies grad seminars		9
Credits		9
Year Two		
Fall		
2 American Studies grad seminars		6
Identify an MA advisor and project		
Credits		6
Spring		
2 additional American Studies grad seminars		6
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		
Complete MA Portfolio Paper and Defense		
Credits		6
Total Credits		30

¹ 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.

Contact Us

For additional information regarding admissions and graduate programs in American studies, please email american.studies@slu.edu or call 314-977-2911 and ask to be directed to the graduate coordinator.