

# 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 American studies 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; religious studies; and twentieth-century U.S. society and culture.

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

## Careers

SLU's M.A. in American studies is a stand-alone degree useful 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.

### 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. International students must also meet the following additional requirements:

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (<https://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/english-language-proficiency/>)
- Financial documents are required to complete an application for admission and be reviewed for admission and merit scholarships.
- Proof of financial support that 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
- Academic records, in English translation, of students who have undertaken postsecondary studies outside the United States must include:
  - 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
  - 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.

## Tuition

Tuition	Cost Per Credit
Graduate Tuition	\$1,310

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/>)

## 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.

- 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.
- Students will synthesize two or more disciplinary approaches in analyses of American cultural practices, expressions, or ideas.
- Students will effectively articulate arguments and information for an American Studies audience.
- Students will identify how their research extends, diverges from, or speaks to prior American Studies scholarship.

## Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies	3
<b>Elective Courses</b>		
Select seven of the following:		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 Reading Course	
ASTD 6015	Many Midwesterns: 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 Reading Course	
<b>Options</b>		
Select one of the following Options:		6
<i>Thesis Option</i>		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	
<i>Portfolio Option</i>		
Choose two additional courses from list of electives.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

## 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.

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
<b>Year One</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies (Required)	3
2 additional American Studies grad seminars <sup>1</sup>		6
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
3 American Studies grad seminars		9
Qualifying Exam <sup>2,3</sup>		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>

**Spring**

ASTD 5990	Thesis Research	3
1 American Studies grad seminar		3
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		
Complete MA Thesis and Defense		
<b>Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

Administrative Assistant  
314-977-2911

<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

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

## Portfolio Option

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

## Contact Us

For additional information regarding admissions and graduate programs in American Studies, please contact [american.studies@slu.edu](mailto:american.studies@slu.edu).

Kate Moran  
Graduate Coordinator

Terri Foster