

AMERICAN STUDIES, M.A.

Saint Louis University's M.A. program in American studies combines the rigors of training in theory and methods with the development of skills in critical analysis, writing and research design.

SLU's graduate students in American studies have access to excellent library and computer facilities, the extensive audio and visual equipment of the University's Instructional Media Center, training and certification by the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence, and grant and scholarship assistance from the Office of Research Services.

SLU's American studies graduate students also benefit from the rich archival and institutional resources available in St. Louis itself, including relationships with sites such as the Missouri Historical Society, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, Circuit Court Records Project, Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, Sheldon Galleries, Contemporary Art Museum, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri Botanical Garden and Historic Landmarks Association.

Curriculum Overview

SLU's Master of Arts in American Studies requires 30 credits and offers two options for degree completion: portfolio and thesis. The portfolio option is primarily intended for students interested in pursuing additional degrees, such as a second professional master's or a doctorate. The thesis option is primarily intended for students interested in terminating their graduate work at the master's level.

Careers

SLU's American studies graduates have gone on to careers in libraries, museum administration and public humanities as well as in educational administration, university teaching or the study of the law.

Admission Requirements

Undergraduate degree or equivalent in a humanities or social science area; 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
- GRE scores
- Résumé
- Goal statement
- Writing sample
- Interview (strongly recommended)

Requirements for International Students

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

- Demonstrate English Language Proficiency (<http://catalog.slu.edu/academic-policies/office-admission/undergraduate/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

Students who want to be considered for an assistantship must submit their application by early February.

American Studies Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed by the entire faculty.

Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid

For priority consideration for graduate assistantships and tuition scholarships, applicants should complete their applications by the program admission deadlines listed. Fellowships and assistantships provide a stipend and health insurance for the duration of the award.

For more information, visit the student financial services office online at <http://www.slu.edu/financial-aid>.

Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates will have knowledge of historical development of American cultures and ideas.
2. Graduates will have knowledge of diversity of American cultures and experiences.
3. Graduates will have knowledge of relationships to global cultures.
4. Graduates will be able to use interdisciplinary research methods.
5. Graduates will be able to interpret a wide variety of American cultural texts: e.g. material, visual, literary.
6. Graduates will be able to employ knowledge in public life and broader contexts.
7. Graduates will be able to apply knowledge and methods to questions of social justice and solidarity.

Requirements

| Code | Title | Credits |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Required Courses | | |
| ASTD 5000 | Perspectives in American Studies | |
| ASTD 5xxx | Chosen from course listing below | |
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| Elective Courses | | |
| Select five of the following: | | 15 |
| ASTD 5100 | Early American Photography | |
| ASTD 5300 | Cultures of the American South | |
| ASTD 5400 | Tocqueville's America | |
| ASTD 5500 | American Autobiographies | |
| ASTD 5700 | Metropolitan America | |
| ASTD 5800 | Workshop in the American Metropolis | |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ASTD 5900 | Practice of American Studies |
| ASTD 5020 | Frontiers & Borderlands: Contact & Conquest in the American Imagination |
| ASTD 5030 | Women's Lives |
| ASTD 5010 | African American Politics, Culture & Identity |
| ASTD 6000 | Mythbusting and Mythmaking in Recent American Studies Scholarship |
| ASTD 6200 | Visual Culture Theory |
| ASTD 6300 | Jazz, Cities, and Social Movements |
| ASTD 6400 | Transnational America |
| ASTD 6500 | Visions of U.S. Empire |
| ASTD 6600 | Topics in American Urbanism |
| ASTD 6700 | From Satchmo to Strangelove: Cold War Cultural Politics and the 'American Century' |
| ASTD 6800 | Edibles are Fun to Think With: American Food & Culture |
| ASTD 6900 | Public Art & Memory |
| ASTD 6010 | American Studies Interdisciplinary Seminar |
| ASTD 6020 | American Political Thought |
| ASTD 6030 | Leadership & Culture |

Options

Select one of the following Options: 6

Thesis Option

ASTD 5990 Thesis Research

Portfolio Option

Chosen from course listing above.

Total Credits 21

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 questions about materials covered classes taken during the first-year semester when ASTD 5000 Perspectives in American Studies (3 cr) was not offered.

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 a one-hour oral examination before three faculty members. For the portfolio paper, this will be the two-person portfolio committee plus an additional faculty member with the exam principally covering the portfolio paper. For the thesis, this will be the three-person thesis committee and the exam will be principally defense of the thesis.

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 |
| Two additional American Studies grad seminars ¹ | | 6 |
| Credits | | 9 |
| Spring | | |
| 2-3 American Studies grad seminars | | 6-9 |
| Qualifying Exam ^{2,3} | | |
| Credits | | 6-9 |
| Year Two | | |
| Fall | | |
| ASTD 5990 | Thesis Research | 3 |
| 1-2 American Studies grad seminars | | 6-9 |
| Credits | | 9-12 |
| Spring | | |
| ASTD 5990 | Thesis Research | 3 |
| 1-2 American Studies grad seminars | | 3-6 |
| Complete Checklist for MA graduation | | |
| Complete MA Thesis and Defense | | |
| Credits | | 6-9 |
| Total Credits | | 30-39 |

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 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), or thesis credits.

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 |
| Two additional American Studies grad seminars ¹ | | 6 |
| Credits | | 9 |
| Spring | | |
| Two-Three American Studies grad seminars | | 6-9 |
| Qualifying Exam ² | | |
| Credits | | 6-9 |
| Year Two | | |
| Fall | | |
| Two-Three 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.