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

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

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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
- GRE scores
- Résumé
- Goal statement
- Writing sample
- Interview

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)

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ASTD 5500 American Autobiographies
ASTD 5700 Metropolitan America
ASTD 5800 Workshop in the American Metropolis
ASTD 5900 Practice of American Studies
ASTD 5910 Graduate Internship
ASTD 5930 Special Topics
ASTD 6000 Myth Busting and Myth Making in Recent American Studies Scholarship
ASTD 6010 American Studies Interdisciplinary Seminar
ASTD 6020 American Political Thought
ASTD 6030 Leadership & Culture
ASTD 6040 Visual Culture Theory
ASTD 6050 Jazz, Cities, and Social Movements
ASTD 6060 Transnational America
ASTD 6070 Visions of U.S. Empire
ASTD 6080 Topics in American Urbanism
ASTD 6100 From Satchmo to Strangelove: Cold War Cultural Politics and the ‘American Century’
ASTD 6200 Edibles are Fun to Think With: American Food & Culture
ASTD 6300 Public Art & Memory
ASTD 6350 Special Topics

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

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.

Thesis Option

Year One
Fall
ASTD 5000 Perspectives in American Studies (Required) 3
Two additional American Studies grad seminars 6

Credits 6-9

Spring
2-3 American Studies grad seminars 6-9
Qualifying Exam 2

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.
Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

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

### Portfolio Option

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year One</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTD 5000</td>
<td>Perspectives in American Studies (Required)</td>
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<td>Two additional American Studies grad seminars</td>
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<td>Credits</td>
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<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
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<td>Two-Three American Studies grad seminars</td>
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<td>Qualifying Exam ²</td>
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<td>Credits</td>
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<td>Two-Three American Studies grad seminars</td>
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<td>Identify an MA advisor and project ³</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
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² Last week of classes or during Exam Week.

³ Department deadlines for spring are announced each fall.