

AMERICAN STUDIES, PH.D.

American studies at Saint Louis University began as a Ph.D. program. Our M.A.-to-Ph.D. and Ph.D. students are still the largest component in a department that now includes a terminal M.A., graduate certificate, accelerated B.A.-M.A., and undergraduate majors and minors.

Our award-winning faculty are trained specifically in the discipline; most have earned their PhDs 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.

We do not claim to study and teach everything in our huge field. The 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. These specialties do not exhaust the range of faculty competence, but they give an idea of the unique character of this interdisciplinary field as practiced at Saint Louis University.

The Department of American Studies at Saint Louis University is committed to excellence and originality in research, teaching, and service. Our graduate programs combine the rigors of training in theory and methods with the development of skills in critical analysis, writing, and research design. At the same time, we provide flexibility in our curriculum for students to pursue their own focused interests, and to connect their work with scholarly communities and public institutions. Finally, we maintain a strong commitment to the sound, ethical, and broad professional development of every graduate student that comes through our department.

Faculty and graduate students work toward these goals by building strong mentoring relationships, by establishing dynamic and innovative classroom experiences, and by disseminating research through conferences, workshops, exhibits, and publications.

Curriculum Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy is the terminal research degree in American studies. A total of 45 credits of coursework beyond the B.A. degree, plus 12 credits of dissertation writing, is required. Students with M.A. degrees may be able to count up to 12 credits of their previous relevant coursework.

Fieldwork and Research Opportunities

American studies graduate students at SLU 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.

Careers

American studies graduates from Saint Louis University go on to a wide range of careers in academia, educational administration, museums,

libraries, archives, civic organizations, religious orders and ministry, journalism, and public agencies.

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. Students with relevant M.A. degrees may be granted advanced standing for some of that work, but all Ph.D. students will earn an M.A. as well.

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 (scheduled in January)

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

All students who indicate a need for financial assistance and submit a complete application by December 15 will be considered for a Graduate Assistantship. Follow the departmental link above for more information about our GAs' teaching, research, and program work.

American Studies Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed by the entire faculty. Qualifying applicants will be contacted for an online video interview by early January.

Scholarships, Assistantships and Financial Aid

For priority consideration for graduate assistantship, applicants should complete their applications 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 the student financial services office online at <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

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
ASTD 5000	Perspectives in American Studies	3
ASTD 5900	Practice of American Studies	3
ASTD 6100	Dissertation Colloquium	3
4000-level course in foreign language translation, literature or translation examination (credits not counted)		
Elective Courses		
<i>Select twelve of the following:</i>		36
ASTD 5010	African American Politics, Culture & Identity	
ASTD 5020	Frontiers & Borderlands: Contact & Conquest in the American Imagination	
ASTD 5030	Women's Lives	
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 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 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	
Dissertation Research		12

ASTD 6990 Dissertation Research

Total Credits

57

Non-Course Requirements

Portfolio Paper

During their second year, all PhD students will complete a portfolio paper, generally a revised and expanded version of a seminar paper, written as a publishable article. Portfolio requirements are the same as for students in the stand-alone MA program; there is no thesis option for MA-to-PhD students. The written paper is then defended before a committee. The portfolio paper and 30 credits qualify all students for an MA, but are also required for the PhD program.

Comprehensive Exams

Written Exam

After completing the portfolio paper, students create a three-person committee (one chair and two additional faculty readers). Working closely with the committee members, students develop three literature review papers, each based in intensive reading in a discrete field or subject area.

Oral Exam

After the three-person committee has accepted final drafts of the written exam, the student schedules a 90-minute oral exam. The accepted versions of the written exam materials must be supplied to all committee members at least two weeks before the oral exam. In general, full-time students aim to take their oral exams at the end of their third year. Funded students must complete the comprehensive exam within one calendar year of completing coursework or they may be deemed ineligible for further assistantship support from the department.

Candidacy

After students successfully complete the comprehensive exams and all other requirements, the Office of Graduate Education advances them to candidacy.

Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Presentation

Students must submit a dissertation proposal by the end of the second semester following the successful completion of their comprehensive exams, using the template provided by the department. After the three-person committee has accepted the final version of the proposal, the student schedules a one-hour oral presentation of the proposal before the student's committee and additional faculty. The accepted version of the proposal must be supplied to all department faculty members at least two weeks before the presentation. Proposal presentations are typically scheduled for one or two days per semester and are open to the public.

Dissertation and Defense

Students write their dissertations working closely with their committee. When the student and committee agree that the dissertation is satisfactory, the student schedules a public defense of the dissertation. Students must submit the final version of the dissertation to their committee at least two weeks before their defense date. In order to obtain a degree in the spring semester, dissertations should be submitted by February 15. For fall semester, dissertations should be submitted by October 15. Summer defenses are only scheduled under extenuating circumstances.

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.

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		
Three American Studies grad seminars		9
Qualifying Exam ²		
Credits		9
Year Two		
Fall		
Three American Studies grad seminars		9
Identify an MA advisor and project ³		
Credits		9
Spring		
ASTD 5900	Practice of American Studies ⁴	3
Two additional American Studies grad seminars		6
Complete Checklist for MA graduation		
Complete MA Portfolio Paper and Defense		
Credits		9
Year Three		
Fall		
2-3 American Studies grad seminars		6-9
Select Literature Review topics and advisors; Begin to put reading lists together		
Credits		6-9
Spring		
ASTD 5900 or ASTD 6100	Practice of American Studies ⁵ or Dissertation Colloquium	3
Prepare literature reviews for oral exams ⁶		
Credits		3
Year Four		
Fall		
Defend Literature reviews in Oral Exams		
ASTD 6990	Dissertation Research	6
Prepare Prospectus		
Credits		6
Spring		
ASTD 6100	Dissertation Colloquium (Required (if not taken semester six))	3

ASTD 6990	Dissertation Research	6
Credits		9
Summer		
Remaining semesters are dedicated to dissertation research and writing.		
Credits		0
Total Credits		60-63

- ¹ Over their coursework, students must take at least two 5000 level (reading) and two 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.
- ² Last week of classes or during Exam Week.
- ³ Department deadlines for spring are announced each fall.
- ⁴ Required (must take when offered in 2nd or 3rd year)
- ⁵ Required (must take 6100 in 3rd or 4th year).
These two required courses are generally offered in alternate spring semesters.
- ⁶ Oral Exams must be completed within two semesters of completing coursework, not including ASTD 6100 Dissertation Colloquium (3 cr) which is sometimes taken after orals.

Program Notes: Students can, but are not required to use the summers to take their foreign language requirement, taken an outside course or pursue an internship for credit, or work on their oral exams.