



AMERICAN STUDIES

American Studies is a multi-disciplinary program that offers students the flexibility to work across disciplines to address major questions about American culture and society. Since its inception at Harvard in the 1920s, scholars in American Studies have recognized that no one discipline can adequately come to terms with American culture.

All majors take foundation courses that introduce them to the field of American Studies and its roots in literature, history, and, more recently, anthropology. In two requirements titled, respectively, “Social Structure and Institutions” and “Cultural Representations,” students are introduced to divergent methods for understanding and interpreting the American experience. In their three-course concentration and senior seminar, American Studies majors will have the opportunity to fashion their own unique program. Working closely with the Director of American Studies and American Studies faculty, students may focus their course work and senior research on a time period and study it from a number of disciplinary angles; or they may focus on a theme such as popular culture, ethnicity, gender, political culture, and so on.

The American Studies program also recognizes that to be an American is to be a member of a culture of cultures, both within the geographic boundaries of the United States and across borders. In addition to the foundation courses in historical diversity and cultural anthropology, which provide students with a framework for thinking about the tremendous diversity in American life and culture, American Studies offers a unique requirement titled “The Americas.” This requirement recognizes both the importance of internationalizing the study of the United States and the need for a deeper understanding of the complex relationships among African, European, and Native American cultures in the “New World.”

Like other liberal arts majors, American Studies leads students in many different directions. In addition to graduate school and law school, an American Studies major can provide a

solid base for work in public history, museum curatorship, historic preservation, journalism, creative consultant work, business, and so on. American Studies offers students interested in the culture of the United States a space for in-depth and broad-based study and analysis. It is also an excellent double major for students in any field.

MAJOR SEQUENCE:

A minimum of 11 course units, with no more than three courses taken in any one department and a minimum of four at the 300-400 level. Only one may be a May Term travel course.

I. (1 unit) American Studies 150:
Introduction to American Studies

II. (3 units) FOUNDATION COURSES:

Cultural Analysis

Anthropology 171: Cultural Anthropology or an alternative approved by the director for Anthropology majors and minors.

Historical Diversity

One 100- or 200-level course from the History Department that emphasizes diversity in the United States.

Literary Analysis

One 200-level course from the English Department that emphasizes American literature.

III. (3 units)

****At least one course from A, B, or C must be taken at the 300-level****

A. (1 unit) **Social Structure and Institutions**

American Studies students will be introduced to the material or institutional components of experiences in the United States through courses that either introduce theoretical models and/or explore concrete examples. Students may take a course that focuses on social institutions such as race, class, and/or gender. Or they may take a course that addresses political institutions and political processes.

Approved courses are offered by:

American Studies
Anthropology
Economics
Educational Studies
History
Political Science
Sociology

B. (1 unit) **Representations**

American Studies students must take one course that focuses on the construction and/or representation of cultural meanings. The course must focus on visual, aural, literary or other representational texts of the United States, either alone or in a comparative perspective. Approved courses are offered by:

Anthropology
Art
English
History
Music
Political Science
Religion
Sociology
Theatre
Women's Studies

C. (1 unit) **The Americas**

Students will take one course that introduces them to a culture or cultures of the Americas. The course may also be one that emphasizes the border relationship between the United States and Latin America, the Caribbean, or Canada. Approved courses are offered by:

English
Literature and Culture Studies
Music
Political Science
Religion
Spanish

IV. (3 units) **Thematic Concentration**

Courses for the thematic concentration will be chosen in close consultation with the Director of American Studies. The concentration will consist of at least three courses from A, B, or C (or approval of the director), no more than two in one department and no more than one at the lower level.

V. (1 unit) **American Studies 490: Senior Seminar: Methods in American Studies**

Students will work with the Director and a committee of American Studies faculty to produce a senior project that synthesizes their work in the major, particularly in the thematic concentration.

MINOR SEQUENCE :

The minor will consist of the following six courses.

I. (1 unit) **American Studies 150: Introduction to American Studies**

II. (3 units) **Thematic Concentration** (see above)

III. (1 unit) **One Course from A, B, or C** (see above)

IV. (1 unit) **American Studies 490: Senior Seminar**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the academic program and the faculty visit our website at:

<http://www2.iwu.edu/academics/departments>