

AMERICAN STUDIES (MA)

Faculty

Paul Atwood (Joiner Center), PhD, *Boston University* • War in American Culture
• History of US Wars in the Twentieth Century

Jonathan Chu (History Department), MSL, *Yale University*, PhD, *University of Washington* • Colonial America • American Revolution • American Legal History

Linda Dittmar (English Department), PhD, *Stanford University* • Narrative Theory
• Feminist Theory • Film • Women Writers

Reebee Garofalo (College of Public and Community Service), EdD, *Harvard University* • History of Popular Music
• Race and Popular Music

James Green (Labor Studies Program), PhD, *Yale University* • Post-Civil War US Social and Political History • Labor and Protest Movements • Popular Expressions of Consciousness • Public History

Jean Humez (Women's Studies Program), PhD, *Yale University* • Nineteenth Century US Women's History and Culture • Afro-American Women's Autobiography
• Shaker Women's History • Oral History

Peter Kiang (American Studies Program, Graduate College of Education), EdD, *Harvard University* • Education and Asian Minorities • Minority and Immigrant Community Development • Legacies of the Vietnam War

Rachel Rubin (American Studies Program), PhD, *Yale University* • American Popular Musics • Ethnic Literatures • American Literature and the Left

Lois Rudnick (American Studies Program, English Department), PhD, *Brown University* • Social and Cultural History • American and Ethnic Literatures • Literature and Arts of the Southwest

Judith E Smith (American Studies Program), PhD, *Brown University* • Ethnicity and Race • Cultural Studies • Twentieth Century US Social and Women's History

Shirley Suet-ling Tang (American Studies/Asian American Studies), PhD, *State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo*
• Comparative Race, Ethnicity, and Culture
• Southeast Asian American Community Studies • Ethnography • Transnational Feminism

Paul Watanabe (Institute for Asian American Studies, Political Science Department, Director of American Studies Summer Institute), PhD, *Harvard University*
• American Foreign Policy • Political Behavior • Ethnic Group Politics • Asian American Studies

Julie Winch (History Department), PhD, *Bryn Mawr College* • African-American History • Antebellum Free People of Color
• Maritime History

The Program

The Master of Arts Program in American Studies serves

- students interested in the study of historically contested meanings of culture, community, democracy, citizenship, politics, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in the United States;
- continuing and returning students seeking further grounding in American Studies and its interdisciplinary methods;
- professionals in education and government;
- journalists, community leaders, and organizers searching for a historical and cultural understanding of their own society.

The program provides the intellectual tools and theoretical background in historical and cultural analysis to enable students to reflect critically on historical and cultural changes and controversies in the US. The interdisciplinary core courses ask students to pay close attention to the interplay between political and social discourse and literary, artistic, and cultural expression; and to how public life and culture have been shaped by many groups with differing access to social and political power and cultural legitimacy.

Degree Requirements

Candidates for the MA degree in American Studies must satisfactorily complete 30 credits of graduate work, including a final project (AMST 688, 3 credits) based on original research. Students may choose to do a traditional MA thesis (6 credits) in lieu of a final project. This is a more substantial piece of original research, prepared under the guidance of an individual faculty advisor, and must be defended before a committee of three faculty members.

The curriculum is built around a core of six three-credit courses:

- AMST 601 (Introduction to American Studies)
- AMST 602 (Historical Sequence I: American Society and Political Culture: 1600-1865)
- AMST 603 (Historical Sequence II: Modern Political, Social, and Cultural History)
- AMST 604 (Gender and Sexuality in US History and Culture)
- AMST 605 (Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality)
- AMST 606 (Studies in Popular Culture and Technology)

Elective courses may be drawn from additional graduate and advanced undergraduate courses in American Studies, Anthropology, English, Women's Studies, Africana Studies, Politics, History, and Public Policy.

Admission Requirements

Please see the general statement of admission requirements for all graduate studies programs in the "Admissions" section of this publication, and the "Special Instructions for Applicants to Individual Programs" section at the back of this publication.

The American Studies Admissions Committee will recommend admission to the program of those applicants who present evidence of their ability and appropriate preparation to do graduate work in American Studies. Such evidence will include:

1. A distinguished undergraduate transcript with generally at least an average of B or 3.0 in appropriate courses, such as those in American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Africana Studies, US History, US Literature, and Women's Studies.
2. The submission of Graduate Record Examination aptitude scores (verbal and mathematical), which is highly recommended, though not required.
3. Substantive recommendations from former teachers familiar with the applicant's most recent academic work. An applicant who has been out of school for a number of years and for whom this kind of recommendation is impractical should speak with the program director about submitting other recommendations.

American Studies

4. A writing sample, demonstrating analytic ability in fields relevant to American studies (historical, literary, or social analysis). When possible, this writing sample should demonstrate independent research and the use of primary sources. An applicant who has been out of school for a number of years and for whom this kind of sample is not readily accessible should speak with the program director about a substitute for this writing sample. Please note that this writing sample is to be submitted in addition to the statement of intent described in the "Admissions" section of this publication.

Research Institutes

The William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, the Institute for Asian American Studies, and the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy all sponsor ongoing research which may offer special opportunities for graduate student research experience.

American Studies Summer Institute

A cooperative venture of the John F Kennedy Library and the American Studies Program with support from the Lowell Institute, this intensive two-week summer course is offered (as AMST 687, 3 credits) over a two-week period. Topics vary from year to year and the course can be taken more than once. It is designed to appeal to teachers and citizen activists outside the American Studies Program as well as to matriculated students within the program. The course serves as an elective for those seeking the MA degree, and either graduate standing or the permission of the instructor is required.

Courses

AMST L575 (ANTH L575) Cultural Theory in Anthropology

An historical survey of twentieth century socio-cultural theory, this course provides graduate students in historical archaeology and other disciplines with complementary background in cultural anthropology. Emphases are on American anthropologists, their theories of culture, the attention to history in these, and the discursive contexts within which various theoretical schools have emerged.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Mr Silliman and Staff

AMST 601 Introduction to American Studies

This course focuses on interdisciplinary methods by comparing the ways different disciplines approach the study of American culture. It introduces students to the history of American Studies as a field, to the questions explored in greater depth in the other core courses, and to contemporary intellectual debates within the field. Readings are chosen to enable students to compare the questions asked and the methods and evidence used by scholars in the fields of social and cultural history, literary criticism, the new historicism, and cultural studies.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Ms Smith

AMST L602 (HIST L602) Historical Sequence I: American Society and Political Culture: 1600-1865

This course concentrates on the individual's role in politics and society and traces the development of citizenship and national character (what it means to be an American) from the colonial period to 1860. Topics to be discussed include Puritan communalism, the relationship between American freedom and American slavery, contrasting assumptions regarding the individual in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and the tension created by presumptions about race, gender, morality, and citizenship.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Staff

AMST 603 Historical Sequence II: Modern Political, Social, and Cultural History

This course focuses on the emergence of modern American society, culture, and politics from the post-Civil War era through the Great Depression, with emphasis on the following topics: the ideologies of modernism, progressivism, and socialism, and the political, economic, and social forces that constitute modernity; innovations in politics, the arts, and the social sciences, and their relationship to new technologies and the labor practices of industrial capitalism; the labor movement's struggle for industrial democracy; the emergence of feminism and civil rights.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Ms Rudnick

AMST 604 Gender and Sexuality in US History and Culture

This course explores the historical construction of gender and sexuality in US social and political culture of different eras, through current historical scholarship, primary documents, and such cultural representations as literature or film. How are conceptions of manhood and womanhood, of heterosexuality and "deviant" sexualities, shaped and reshaped in response to historical forces, and linked to concepts of race and class? How are dominant definitions contested?

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Ms Humez

AMST 605 Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality

This course will explore the construction and maintenance of ethnic, racial, and national identities in the United States. Students will analyze various interdisciplinary texts which contain implicit and explicit expressions of gender, ethnic, racial, sexual, regional, and national identities. Various case studies will furnish material to train students in the methods and approaches used in American Studies.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits
Ms Tang

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AMST 606 **Studies in Popular Culture and Technology**

This course focuses on changing definitions of culture and methods of cultural studies; the changing meanings of "folk culture," "mass culture," and "popular culture"; and the changing dynamics among technology, the media, and culture. Topics for readings and discussion may include: the relations between changing technologies and the activity of audiences in shaping commercial popular culture; the social and economic context of technological innovation; the cultural imperatives of technological change.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits

Ms Rubin

AMST L650 (HIST L650) **Leadership in 19th-Century Antebellum America**

For a full description of this course, see the "History" section of this publication.

AMST 687 **Topics in American Studies**

An advanced course offering intensive study of selected topics in American studies, presented in conjunction with the John F Kennedy Library. Course content varies according to the topic and will be announced prior to registration. This course may be repeated. For more information, see "American Studies Summer Institute" on page 54 of this publication.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

3 Lect Hrs, 3 Credits

AMST 688 **Final Project**

A substantial research paper, drawing on systematic original research. The project may address a research topic in American studies or may construct a curriculum unit using primary sources and including a pedagogical and intellectual justification. The project will be determined in consultation with the student's advisor and must be approved by the advisor. A written proposal signed by student and advisor must be submitted to and approved by the director of the graduate program. Depending on faculty availability, students enrolled in AMST 688 during the spring semester can participate in a research and writing seminar to facilitate the completion of final projects.

3 Credits

AMST 691 **Seminar in American Studies**

An advanced course in interdisciplinary research on selected topics relating to American history and culture.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

3 Disc Hrs, 3 Credits

AMST 695-696 **Independent Study**

An advanced course of independent reading in some aspect of American history or culture with the approval of the instructor and the director of the graduate program.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

Hrs to be arranged, 3 Credits