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The American Studies Major

Students in the American Studies (AMST) major analyze the society, culture, and politics of the United States from an interdisciplinary perspective that draws on history, cultural analysis, art and architecture, public policy, and folklore studies, among others. Students may choose to major or minor in American Studies. In either case, they are introduced to key concepts in the analysis of culture and society through a set of five core courses and five American Studies upper-level courses. The program culminates with a Senior research seminar, in which students write a paper based on original research.

Advising

Students must make an appointment with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) in order to declare their major. Simply filing your Declaration of Major form with the Columbian School will not be adequate. When you meet with the DUS, s/he will help you fill out the Declaration of Major form.

Once you have declared your major, you will be assigned a member of the faculty as your permanent undergraduate advisor. After your initial meeting, this is the person you should see to answer questions about requirements or to get course approvals.

Outline of Requirements for the Major

The outline below is designed to be only a quick reference summary of the requirements for the AMST major. You must read the following pages in order to fully understand the details of these requirements. In fall 2010, The George Washington University started using a four-digit course numbering system; the new four-digit course numbers are listed here with the old three-digit course numbers listed in parentheses.

Starting in Fall 2013, there are new requirements for majors. This only applies to new majors who sign up for the major in Fall 2013 or later.

Old majors who signed up before Fall 2013 will continue to follow the old system with focus areas. Old majors may NOT switch to the new requirements.

Required Courses (for NEW MAJORS ONLY – signed up Fall 2013 or later)

6 hours:  AMST 2010 & 2011 – American Studies survey sequence
3 hours:  AMST 3900 – Critiquing Culture
3 hours:  AMST 3901 – Examining America
15 hours: Five upper level American Studies courses (AMST 2000-3000 level)
6 hours:  Two semesters of foreign language or placement into a Level Three foreign language by examination.
3 hours:  One course about a foreign culture (non-US)
3 hours:  AMST 4500 – Senior Seminar (*This course is offered ONLY in the Fall Semester*)**

**Beginning Fall 2013, majors will not be allowed to register for AMST 4500 until they have completed at least 2 of the following 4 courses required for the major: AMST 2010, 2011, 3900 & 3901.

Required Courses for OLD MAJORS (signed up before Fall 2013)
6 hours: AMST 2010 & 2011 – American Studies survey sequence
3 hours: AMST 3900 – Critiquing Culture
3 hours: AMST 3901 – Examining America
15 hours: Five courses in a single area of focus, three in the American Studies department
6 hours: Two semesters of a foreign language or waived if tested as Level 3 placement
3 hours: One course about a foreign culture (non-US)
3 hours: AMST 4500 – Senior Seminar (*This course is offered ONLY in the Fall Semester*)**
Course of Study

A. Required Core Courses

**Required Core Courses for Majors**

**AMST 2010 and AMST 2011 – American Studies Survey Sequence.** These courses provide students with a strong grounding in the cultural history of the United States and an introduction to scholars’ debates about that history. AMST 2010 covers the period up to the Civil War; AMST 2011 covers the period since the Civil War.

**AMST 3900 – Critiquing Culture.** An intense study of modes of cultural analysis, including ethnography and cultural studies methods, and their application to the examination of the complex ways that cultural texts and practices interact with structures of power. Of various theories and themes central to American Studies, emphasis is on scholarly debates about mass culture, ideology, visuality, discourse, and affect. One course of the two-semester junior-level core sequence for majors. Minors admitted with permission of instructor.

**AMST 3901 – Examining America.** Examination of modes of power and forms of identification within and across U.S. national borders. Focus on social constructions of the nation; forms of diversity and identity, such as race, gender, and sexuality; and the transnational flow of people, ideas, culture, and religion. One course of the two-semester junior-level core sequence for majors. Minors admitted with permission of instructor.

**AMST 4500 – Research Seminar.** In the fall of their senior year, majors undertake a capstone project based on original research in primary sources and analysis of scholarly literature. These courses have changing themes, and students are required to write their paper on a topic relevant to the course overall. Students will usually have two or more courses to choose from.

B. Foreign/Comparative Cultures Courses

- Two semesters of foreign language or placement into a Level Three foreign language by examination.
- One course about a foreign culture selected from the CCAS list of foreign cultures or approved by the Department.

C. Five Additional Courses

1. For **NEW** majors only (signed up Fall 2013 or later)

   **Five upper-level American Studies courses**

   Students take five upper-level courses in the American Studies department. Courses must be listed as AMST and be 2000 level or higher.

2. For **OLD** majors only (signed up before Fall 2013)

   **Five courses in a “Focus Area”**
Students must choose one of the following focus areas and take FIVE courses in that area. The list of approved focus courses appears later in the handbook. Please keep in mind, however, that we cannot list all courses that count in the focus, due to the changing nature of specific topics courses. Faculty advisors may approve focus courses not listed. At least THREE of the focus courses must be offered by the American Studies department; qualifying American Studies courses are marked with an asterisk (*) on the list that follows.

Note: AMST 2490 and AMST 3950 are “special topics” numbers that are assigned to many different courses. Courses with these numbers will count for your focus only if they are on the list in the handbook or are approved by your American Studies advisor.

Cultural Politics. The study of power relations, broadly constructed, and the ways in which different groups have taken shape within particular frameworks of power; how power has been maintained and disseminated through social and cultural forms.

Global Connections. The study of the ways in which people, ideas, and cultural forms of expression circulate around the world and take shape in the United States; how the United States is experienced in other countries; and how the United States is part of the Americas, broadly conceived.

Space, Place, and Society. The study of the ways in which place shapes social development and vice versa, with particular emphasis on the importance of the built environment, material culture, and forms of representation in social organization.

1. Additional Information
   - You may use courses that count for the American Studies focus areas to fulfill GCRs or requirements for other majors. However, you may not count any course twice within the major; for example, you may not count a single course to fulfill both the cultural history requirement and a focus requirement.
   - Some courses taught by Prof. James Miller (AMST/ENGL) are not cross-listed as American Studies, but any course taught by him can fulfill the 3-of-5 requirement.

The American Studies Minor

Students interested in selecting an American Studies minor take 18 hours of course work, as follows:

-- American Studies Survey Sequence. 6 hours: AMST 2010 and AMST 2011.
-- Any Four Additional upper-level American Studies Courses (2000-3000 level). 12 credit hours
Focus Courses

Many GW courses are variable topics or offered on an occasional basis; thus, courses other than these may be appropriate for the area of focus; the American Studies Undergraduate advisors can approve other selected courses. All focus courses must be at the 2000, 3000, or 5000 level. The core courses may not be double-counted to fill the focus requirements. Courses offered by the American Studies department are marked with an asterisk (*).

Cultural Politics

*AMST/PSC 2120  Freedom in US Thought & Popular Culture
(AMST/PSC 2120 was formerly offered as AMST 2490/PSC 2990)
*AMST/WSTU 2125  Varieties of Feminist Theory
*AMST/HIST 2320  US Media & Cultural History
*AMST 2350  US Religion and Politics
*AMST/HIST/WSTU 2380  Sexuality in US History
*AMST 2490  Performance and Culture in America
*AMST 2490  The African American Experience
*AMST 2490  Interracial America
*AMST 2490W/Hist 3001W  Science, Politics, and Society in Modern America
*AMST 2495  Special Topics in African American History
*AMST 2580/AH 2156  Folk Arts in America
*AMST 2532/ANTH 2532  Introduction to Folklore
*AMST 2533/ANTH 2533  Material Culture in America
*AMST/HIST/WSTU 3352  Women in the United States (first half)
*AMST/HIST/WSTU 3353  Women in the United States (second half)
*AMST 3950  Cultural History of New Deal Era
*AMST 3950  American Slavery & Its Legacy
*AMST 3950  The Postwar American Consumer
*AMST 3950  Monuments, Movements and Management
*AMST 3950  The Civil War and American Popular Culture
*AMST 3950  America in the 1990s
*AMST 3950  Black Consumer Culture & Politics
*AMST 3950  The Long Civil Rights Movement
*AMST 3950W  U.S. Black Feminism 1830-1990
*AMST 5771/HIST 3356  Epidemics in American History
*AMST/HIST/HONR 5772  Race, Medicine, and Public Health

AH 2151  American Art in the Age of Revolution
AH 2152  American Art in the Age of National Expansion
AH 2153  American Art of the 20th Century
AH 2161  History of Decorative Art: American Heritage

ENGL 3490  Early American Literature and Culture
ENGL 3520  American Romanticism
ENGL 3560  American Realism
ENGL 3620-3621  American Poetry
ENGL 3630-3631  American Drama
ENGL 3640-3644  The American Novel
ENGL 3720-3721  Contemporary American Literature
ENGL 3730W/AMST 3950W  Love and Longing in Asian/Pacific/American Cultures
ENGL 3850  Ethnicity and Place in American Literature
ENGL 3950  Cultural Theory and Black Studies
ENGL 3960          Asian American Literature
ENGL 3965/AMST 3950: Asian American Cultural Studies
ENGL 3970          Jewish American Literature

HIST 3001/AMST 2490 Jewish Lives in 19th & 20th Century America
HIST 3001/AMST 2490 Jews in American Popular Culture
HIST 3001          Freedom and Slavery in America
HIST/AMST 3350-3351 U.S. Social History
HIST/AMST 3360      African American History
HIST/WSTU/AMST 3362 Black Women in U.S. History
HIST 3367          History of the Jewish People in America

Global Connections
*AMST 2410          20th Century US Immigration
*AMST 2490          Nation-Building on US-Mexico Border
*AMST 2490          Performance and Culture in the Americas
*AMST 2490          US-Middle East Cultural Encounters
*AMST 2490          Frontiers and Borderlands
*AMST 2490          Making the US-Mexico Border
*AMST 2530/AH 2156   Folk Arts in America
*AMST/HIST 2710      U.S. in a Global Context, 1898-Present
*AMST/HIST 2730      World War II in History and Memory
(Also offered as AMST 2490/HIST 3001W)
*AMST/ANTH 2750      Latinos in the United States
(Also offered as AMST 2490W/ANTH 2991W)
*AMST 3950          Americans Abroad: Fiction and Film
*AMST 3950          Field Methods in Latino Culture

ANTH 3513          Human Rights and Ethics

ENGL 3810          Holocaust in Literature and Film
ENGL 3810          Latino Literature
ENGL 3850          Ethnicity and Place in American Literature
ENGL 3950          Cultural Theory and Black Studies
ENGL 3960          Asian American Literature
ENGL 3970          Jewish American Literature

HIST 3001          Freedom and Slavery in America
HIST 3001          History of US Counter Intelligence
HIST 3302          America Before 1764
HIST 3303          Revolutionary America
HIST 3033          War and the Military in American Society
HIST 3035          The United States and the Wars in Indochina
HIST 3045          International History of the Cold War
HIST 3313          History of the American West
HIST 3332-3333      History of American Foreign Policy Since WW II
HIST 3366          Immigration, Ethnicity, and the American Experience
HIST 3367          History of the Jewish People in America
HIST 3520          Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World

PSC 2367          Human Rights
### Space, Place, and Society

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<td>*AMST 2490</td>
<td>Weather in American History and Culture</td>
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<td>*AMST 2490</td>
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