

# AMERICAN STUDIES

## Degree Requirements

### Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

The student is required to take a minimum of 30 (non-thesis) - 33 (thesis) credits in American Studies, including at least 18 credits in the 500 series.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required Courses</b>		
AMST 500	Theory and Methods <sup>1</sup>	3
AMST 591	Seminar in American Studies <sup>2</sup>	3
<b>Culminating Experience</b>		
AMST 580 or AMST 600	Projects in American Studies <sup>3</sup> Thesis in American Studies	1-6

<sup>1</sup> AMST 500 should be taken within the first two semesters of study.

<sup>2</sup> AMST 591 should be taken in the last two semesters of study.

<sup>3</sup> Usually in the last semester of study, students are required to complete their program with a major paper by taking AMST 580 or thesis, in which case AMST 600 is taken. The choice of AMST 580 to fulfill graduation requirements is for an original scholarly master's paper or project. One to 6 credits in AMST 580 can be earned; the typical number of credits for the culminating project is 3. The choice of AMST 600 is for a thesis and is taken for 6 credits. The thesis must follow the Submission Requirements (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/>) of the Office of Theses and Dissertations in the Graduate School.

Advanced undergraduate courses (400-level) that have not counted toward a student's undergraduate degree may be considered for transfer into the graduate student's requirement of 30 credits of American Studies with permission of the program, subject to restrictions outlined in GCAC-309 Transfer Credit (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/transfer-credit/>). At least 20 of the 30 credits must be earned at the Harrisburg location where the program is offered. Courses not having an American Studies designation but which are relevant to American Studies may be considered for inclusion in the student's requirement of 30 credits of American Studies with permission of the program.

### Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.d.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Over some twelve-month period during the interval between admission to the Ph.D. program and completion of the Ph.D. program, the student must spend at least two semesters (summer sessions are not included) as a registered full-time student (9 credits per semester) engaged in academic work at Penn State Harrisburg. A doctoral student is required to complete the program, including defense and acceptance of the

doctoral dissertation, within eight years after successful completion of the qualifying examination.

Students progress through the following phases and take courses designated by their Ph.D. committee as part of their study for the Ph.D.

In the initial phase, the student must:

1. make up any deficiencies in graduate courses in American Studies noted in the letter of acceptance
2. complete with a grade of B or better the following courses: AMST 500, two sections of AMST 502 on different topics, and AMST 591
3. pass a qualifying examination

Admitted students who have met all course prerequisites begin the core courses with AMST 500. Students who have already taken AMST 500 within three years of admission may begin their program of study with AMST 502.

The qualifying examination is administered by a special committee appointed by the director of the doctoral program.

The comprehensive examination is taken after course work in subfields is completed. The written examination consists of three parts and is administered by the student's Ph.D. committee. One is in the area of Theory and Method and an additional two subfields of study from a list of five areas covered in the program. The five subfields of specialization are:

1. Public Heritage, Cultural Resource Management, and Museum Studies;
2. Folk and Popular Culture (material and visual culture, literature and media, language, performance, media, and music);
3. Interdisciplinary History and Politics (history of ideas, philosophy, and politics; biography and oral history; everyday life and socioeconomic studies; government, public policy, and diplomacy);
4. Society and Ethnography (race, ethnicity, class, gender, age; religion and belief; comparative culture and transnationalism);
5. Regional, Environmental, Urban, and Local Studies.

Additional subfields of study within American Studies may be selected with the approval of the student's Ph.D. committee. An oral defense of the comprehensive examination is scheduled after the written examination, at which time it is customary for the candidate to present the dissertation proposal.

Although the exact number of courses required in each subfield may vary among students, typically four per subfield are required. Ph.D. committees meet with students at least once each academic year. Written and oral comprehensive examinations in the three areas are given at the end of the study period.

Under guidance from the Ph.D. committee, the candidate prepares a detailed research proposal that serves as the basis for the written dissertation covering an aspect of American Studies. The dissertation should represent a significant contribution to knowledge, show familiarity with the intellectual heritage of American Studies, be presented in a scholarly manner, reveal an ability on the part of the candidate to do independent research of high quality, and indicate considerable experience in using a variety of research techniques and forms of primary evidence. The contents and conclusions of the dissertation must be defended at the time of the final oral examination. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate

program, and the Graduate School, and the student must pass the final oral examination (the dissertation defense).