

AMERICAN STUDIES, B.A. (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: Brandywine

Program Description

This interdisciplinary major is designed to provide students with an integrated and critical knowledge of American culture, drawing on courses in American Studies and in the traditional disciplines and culminating in two senior seminars. A number of interests may be pursued within the major, including popular culture, art, technology, business, law, archives, museology, and conservation. The major helps prepare students for careers in business, teaching, government, and a number of other areas, and for enrollment in law and other professional programs.

What is American Studies?

American Studies examines the country's history in a way that emphasizes culture – literature, art & architecture, film, folklore, music, and media. While discovering America's past, students learn to think critically – to analyze and evaluate information; to write and speak clearly and expressively; and to conduct research.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You enjoy pop culture and wonder what social and historical forces helped shape it.
- You like making connections between history, society, economics, literature, film, and art.
- You want to understand the American experience beyond just what is relayed in a history text.
- You want to explore the experiences of women, minorities, and different ethnic and religious groups.
- You want to pursue a career in education, law, government, museums, cultural agencies, archives, public policy, or communications.

Entrance to Major

For entrance into the major, the following must be met:

1. At the end of the sophomore year, any student in good standing may gain entrance into the major without having completed specific courses.
2. Any student seeking entrance during the fifth semester will be granted entrance at the discretion of the American Studies Committee and/or Director following evaluation of the student's record.
3. Any student seeking entrance during or after the sixth semester will be expected to have completed at least 12 credits, which may be counted toward the major in American Studies.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	21
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	33

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Knowledge Domains

- **Arts (GA):** 6 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 6 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 6 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 9 credits

Integrative Studies (may also complete a Knowledge Domain requirement)

- **Inter-Domain or Approved Linked Courses:** 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/#advisingandplanningadegreeprogramtext>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

3 of these 24 credits are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
AMST 491W	American Studies Perspectives	6
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
AMST 100 or AMST 100Y	Introduction to American Studies	3

Supporting Courses and Related Areas

Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better

Select 9 credits in each of two of the following areas and 6 credits in one other of the areas (include 12 credits at the 400 level distributed in at least two of the areas):

American literature

American history

American art, philosophy, and religion (humanities)

American social sciences

Integrated B.A./M.A. in American Studies

The American Studies Program offers an integrated B.A./M.A. program that is designed to allow academically superior baccalaureate students enrolled in the American Studies major to obtain both the B.A. and the M.A. degrees in American Studies within five years of study. The first two years of undergraduate coursework typically include the University General Education requirements and lower-level courses. In the third year, students typically take upper-division coursework in American Studies and define areas of interest. The fourth year involves graduate-level American Studies coursework including required courses in Theory and Methods (AMST 500). The fifth and final year of the program typically consists of graduate coursework in American Studies including Seminar (AMST 591) and identification of a research project that will culminate in the completion of a M.A. project (AMST 580) or thesis (AMST 600).

By encouraging greater depth and focus in the course of study beginning in the third undergraduate year, this program will help the student more clearly define his/her area of interest and expertise in the broad field of American Studies. As a result, long-range academic planning for exceptional students pursuing doctoral degrees or other professional goals after leaving Penn State will be greatly enhanced. For most students, the total time required to reach completion of the higher degree will be shortened by about a year. The student will have earlier contact with the rigors of graduate study and with graduate faculty. The resources of the Graduate School are accessible to students accepted into the IUG program. Students in their third and fourth year of study with IUG status benefit from their association with graduate students whose level of work parallel their own.

For the IUG American Studies B.A./M.A. degree, a minimum of 123 credits are required for the B.A. and a minimum of 30–33 credits for the M.A. (30 for non-thesis; 33 for thesis). Twelve credits at the 400 level or higher, in consultation with the adviser, can apply to both the B.A. and M.A. degrees; at least 6 of these 12 credits must be at the 500 level.

If for any reason a student admitted to the B.A./M.A. program is unable to complete the requirement for the Master of Arts degree program in American Studies, the student will be permitted to receive the B.A. degree assuming all degree requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

Admission Requirements

The number of openings in the integrated B.A./M.A. program is limited. Admission will be selective based on specific criteria and the unqualified recommendation of faculty. Applicants to the integrated program:

1. Must be enrolled in the American Studies B.A. program and meet the admission requirements of the American Studies M.A. program.
2. Must apply and be admitted to the Graduate School.
3. Shall be admitted no earlier than the beginning of the third semester of undergraduate study at Penn State (regardless of transfer or AP credits accumulated prior to enrollment) and no later than the end of

the second week of the semester preceding the semester of expected conferral of the undergraduate degree, as specified in the proposed IUG plan of study.

4. Must have completed at least one 400-level American Studies course (AMST prefix) with a grade of A.
5. Must submit transcript(s) of previous undergraduate work, recommendations from two faculty members, writing sample, and statement of goals.
6. Must have an overall GPA at or above 3.3 (on a 4.0 scale) in undergraduate coursework and a GPA at or above 3.5 in all coursework completed for the American Studies major.
7. Must present a plan of study approved by the student's adviser in the application process.

Course Load

As many as 12 of the credits required for the master's degree may be applied to both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The courses to be double counted are:

Code	Title	Credits
AMST 491	American Themes, American Eras (two seminars on different topics during the student's fourth (senior) year)	6
AMST 500	Theory and Methods (during the student's fourth (senior) year)	3
AMST 591	Seminar in American Studies (during the student's fifth year)	3

With the approval of the student's adviser, students may take American Studies courses from the 100 to 400 levels at Penn State campuses other than Harrisburg, but 500-level courses must be taken at the Harrisburg campus.

Sample Sequence of Coursework

A typical sequence of coursework for the integrated program would appear as follows (AMST 491W, AMST 500, and AMST 591 are applied to both undergraduate and graduate degree programs):

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
AMST 100	3	AMST supporting course	3
AMST supporting course	3	400-level AMST course	3
BA Requirement: Other Cultures	3	400-level AMST course	3
BA Requirement: Knowledge Domain	3	Elective	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
		15	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
AMST 491W ¹	3	AMST 491W ¹	3
400-level AMST course	3	400 level AMST course	3
400-level AMST supporting course	3	AMST 500 ¹	3
Elective	3	500 level AMST course	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
		15	15

Fifth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
500-level AMST course	3	500-level AMST course	3
500-level AMST course	3	AMST 580 or 600	3-6
500-level AMST course	3	AMST 591 ¹	3
		9	9-12

Total Credits 78-81

¹ Satisfies requirements for both the undergraduate and graduate program for a total of 12 credits.

As stated in the Graduate Bulletin, a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at the University is required for graduation and to maintain good academic standing. See http://bulletins.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/degree_requirements.cfm?section=masters.

Program Learning Objectives

1. Gain knowledge of American culture and politics, past and present, including multiple representations of national identity.
2. Employ and inter-relate disciplines of history, literature, social sciences, humanities, and the arts, within both individual courses and the major as a whole.
3. Draw upon the social and historical resources of students' immediate worlds, in their homes and in the Delaware Valley.
4. Gain awareness of difference and commonality of race, class, and gender.
5. Position United States experience within the wider hemisphere and world.
6. Develop skills of critical observation, research, analysis, and writing.
7. Bridge the gap between academic and larger worlds by through community engagement, internships, and job-market preparedness.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information need to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy>)

Brandywine

Julie Gallagher

Associate Professor of History and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

25 Yearsley Mill Road

Media, PA 19063

610-892-1464

jag63@psu.edu

Abington

Sharon Holt

Program Chair, American Studies
1600 Woodland Road
Abington, PA 19001
215-881-7807
sxh73@psu.edu

Harrisburg

John Haddad, Ph.D.

Program Coordinator
Olmsted Building, W356
Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-6196
jrh36@psu.edu

Suggested Academic Plan

Brandywine Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
American Focused Course 1-199 level*	3 American Focused Course 1-299 level*	3
AMST 100*	3 CAS 100, 100A, 100B, or 100C [‡]	3
ENGL 15, 30, or ESL 15 [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
	General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
	15	16.5

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
World Language level 1	4-6 American Focused Course 1-299 level*	3
General Education Course	3 World Language level 2	4-6
General Education Course	3 ENGL 202A or 202B [‡]	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course (GHW)	1.5	
	14.5-16.5	13-15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
American Focused Course 400 level*	3 American Focused Course 400 level or Major Related Internship*	3
American Focused Course 1-299 level*	3 American Focused Course 400 level*	3
World Language level 3 or General Education Course	3-4 BA Fields Course	3

General Education Course	3 BA Fields Course	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	15-16	15
Fourth Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
AMST 491W* ¹	3 AMST 491W* ¹	3
American Focused Course 400 level or Major Related Internship*	3 BA Other Cultures Course	3
BA Fields Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	15	15

Total Credits 119-124

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy University Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

GWS, GQ, GHW, GN, GA, GH, and GS are abbreviations used to identify General Education program courses. General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ) and Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS, and Integrative Studies). Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Integrative Studies courses are required for the General Education program. N is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate an Inter-Domain course and Z is the suffix at the end of a course number used to designate a Linked course.

¹ AMST 491W, the capstone course of the major, is taken twice with different topics; it also satisfies Penn State's Writing Across the Curriculum (W) requirement. Offered every semester, it may ordinarily be taken from the junior year on depending on student's choice of topics.

Career Paths

The American Studies program benefits from Penn State Harrisburg's location in a capital region in close proximity to internationally known heritage sites such as the Gettysburg Battlefield, National Civil War Museum, and U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center. Harrisburg is also home to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the State Archives, and the State Museum.

Careers

American Studies majors at Penn State Harrisburg have opportunities to gain a core set of skills in writing, presentation, exhibition, website development, digital documentation, fieldwork and ethnography, and

records and cultural resource management in addition to contextual knowledge of American culture, society, arts, and history that can be applied to a number of occupations, particularly in heritage, communications, education, and government sectors. At Penn State Harrisburg, certificates (heritage and museum practice, folklore and ethnography), internships, assistantships, professional workshops, career services, alumni interaction, social media, and online job postings serve to enhance the marketability of majors at various levels.

MORE INFORMATION (<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/american-studies/career-opportunities>)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The American Studies major at Penn State Harrisburg prepares students for a variety of professions and to participate in the world as critical thinkers, clear communicators, and global citizens, including Penn State's Master of Arts in American Studies and the Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies programs.

MORE INFORMATION (<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/american-studies>)

Professional Resources

- American Studies Association (<https://www.theasa.net>)
- Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (<https://pcaaca.org>)
- American Folklore Society (<http://www.afsnet.org>)
- Eastern American Studies Association (<https://harrisburg.psu.edu/eastern-american-studies-association>)
- Pennsylvania Historical Association (<https://pa-history.org>)
- Pennsylvania German Society (<http://www.pgs.org>)
- Pennsylvania Heritage Society (<https://paheritage.org>)
- Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations (<http://pamuseums.org>)

Contact

Brandywine

25 Yearsley Mill Road
Media, PA 19063
610-892-1464
jag63@psu.edu

<http://brandywine.psu.edu/american-studies>

Abington

DIVISION OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
1600 Woodland Road
Abington, PA 19001
215-881-7300
sxh73@psu.edu

<http://abington.psu.edu/american-studies>

Harrisburg

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
Olmsted Building, W356
Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-6201
hbm5103@psu.edu

<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/humanities/american-studies/bachelor-arts-american-studies>