American Studies

American Studies:
Department website: https://americanstudies.columbia.edu/
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Director: Prof. Hilary Hallett, 319 Hamilton; 212-854-6698; hah2117@columbia.edu
Assistant Director: Michael Gately, 319 Hamilton; 212-854-6544; mg3898@columbia.edu
Associate Director: Robert Amdur, 311 Hamilton; 212-854-4049; rla2@columbia.edu
Administrative Assistant: Arelis Herrera, 319 Hamilton; 212-854-6698; ah3115@columbia.edu

American Studies

The Center for American Studies offers students the opportunity to explore the experiences and values of the people of the United States as embodied in their history, literature, politics, art, and other enduring forms of cultural expression. The Center views civic education as its primary mission, sponsoring seminars and public programs that enhance students’ understanding of the fundamental ideas and vocabulary of public discourse in American culture, history, and politics. The Center is the institutional home of the American Studies program, which offers an interdisciplinary, seminar-based curriculum designed to be open and flexible while preparing students for a life of active citizenship.

Student Advising

Each American Studies major or concentrator chooses an academic adviser who monitors their progress through graduation. Students work with advisors to develop programs tailored to their particular interests. Advisors approve Plan of Study forms and provide general guidance regarding the major and concentration. Each student is expected to meet with an advisor at least once a semester.

Undergraduate Research and Senior Thesis

Senior Research Project

The final requirement for the major in American Studies is completion of a senior essay, to be submitted in the spring of senior year.

Alternatively, students may fulfill this requirement by taking an additional seminar in which a major paper is required or by writing an independent essay under the supervision of a faculty member. Seniors who wish to do a senior research project are required to take the Senior Project Colloquium the fall of the senior year.

Department Honors and Prizes

Department Honors

Students with a 3.6 minimum GPA in the major and an outstanding senior project are considered for honors. Normally no more than 10% of graduating majors receive departmental honors in a given year.

Academic Prizes

• Best Senior Thesis in American Studies
• Shenton Award; Outstanding Community Service

Seminar Faculty

• Hilary A. Hallett
• Roosevelt Montás
• Casey N. Blake
• Lynne Breslin
• Ryan Carr
• Jeremy A. Dauber
• Andrew Delbanco
• Michael Hindus
• Roger Lehecka
• Paul Levitz
• Mark Lilla
• Thai S. Jones
• John H. McWhorter
• Valerie Paley
• Robert Pollack
• Ross Posnock
• Cathleen Price
• Benjamin Rosenberg
• James Shapiro
• Maura Spiegel

Affiliated Faculty

• Rachel Adams (English and Comparative Literature)
• Robert Amdur (Political Science)
• Courtney Bender (Religion)
• George A. Chauncey (History)
• Racquel Gates (Film and Media Studies)
• Farah Jasmine Griffin (English and Comparative Literature)
• Frank A. Guridy (History)
• Richard R. John (Journalism)
• Ira I. Katznelson (Political Science and History)
• Rebecca A. Korn (History)
• Michele M. Moody-Adams (Philosophy)
• Mae Ngai (Asian American Studies and History)
• Ross Posnock (English and Comparative Literature; American Studies)
• Shana L. Redmond (English and Comparative Literature)
• James Shapiro (English and Comparative Literature)
• Michael J. Witgen (History)

Guidance for Undergraduate Students in the Department

Program Planning for all Students

Students may choose American Studies as an undergraduate major or a concentration. A minimum of 9 courses is required to complete the major,
7 courses to complete the concentration. Coursework for both consists of a combination of required courses (see degree requirements below) and an individualized program of study.

Although students generally declare their major or concentration in the spring of their sophomore year, you may want to take electives early on in areas that interest you but that will later connect with the American Studies major.

**Undergraduate Programs of Study**

**Major in American Studies**

A minimum of nine courses is required to complete the major. Please note that as of January 2018 Major requirements have changed.

**Before the 2023-24 academic year**

For students who entered Columbia in or before the 2023-24 academic year

A minimum of 7 courses is required to complete the concentration. Please consult with the department if there are any questions.

Two American Studies Core courses.

The following two courses are ordinarily required:

- **AMST UN1010** INTRO TO AMERICAN STUDIES
- **HIST UN2478** US INTELLECTUAL HIST 1865-PRES
  
  or **AMST UN3930** Topics in American Studies

Please note, the AMST UN3930 section MUST be Freedom and Citizenship in the U.S. to count towards the core course requirement.

Two seminars in American Studies

- **AMST UN3930** Topics in American Studies
- **AMST UN3931** Topics in American Studies

Additional Courses

Four courses drawn from at least two departments, one of which must be in History and one of which must deal primarily with some aspect of American experience before 1900. (A course in U.S. History before 1900 would fulfill both requirements.)

Senior Research Project

The final requirement for the major in American Studies is completion of a senior essay, to be submitted in the spring of senior year. Alternatively, students may fulfill this requirement by taking an additional seminar in which a major paper is required or by writing an independent essay under the supervision of a faculty member. Seniors who wish to do a senior research project are required to take the Senior Project Colloquium AMST UN3920 in the fall of the senior year.

For students who entered Columbia in or before the 2023-24 academic year

Concentration in American Studies

A minimum of 7 courses is required to complete the concentration. Please consult with the department if there are any questions.

Two American Studies Core courses.

The following are ordinarily required:

- **AMST UN1010** INTRO TO AMERICAN STUDIES
- **HIST UN2478** US INTELLECTUAL HIST 1865-PRES
  
  or **AMST UN3930** Topics in American Studies

Please note, the AMST UN3930 section MUST be Freedom and Citizenship in the U.S. to count towards the core course requirement.

Additional Courses

Select five additional courses drawn from at least two departments, one of which must be in History, and one of which must deal with the period before 1900.

**AMST UN3920 SENIOR PROJECT COLLOQUIUM. 1.00 point.**

Required for American studies students who intend to do a senior research project

This course is for American studies majors planning to complete senior projects in the spring. The course is designed to help students clarify their research agenda, sharpen their questions, and locate their primary and secondary sources. Through class discussions and a workshop peer review process, each member of the course will enter spring semester with a completed bibliography that will provide an excellent foundation for the work of actually writing the senior essay. The colloquium will meet every other week and is required for everyone planning to do a senior research project. Application due June 15. See American Studies website

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**AMST UN3930 Topics in American Studies. 4 points.**

Please refer to the Center for American Studies website for course descriptions for each section. [americanstudies.columbia.edu](http://americanstudies.columbia.edu)

**AMST UN3937 JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY: THE 2024 ELECTION. 4.00 points.**

The 2024 presidential election poses a dramatic test of both our political system and the media that covers it. The campaign offers us an opportunity to examine, in real time, the critical role the press plays in our democracy and how it has been disrupted in an era dominated by social media and hyper-partisanship. We’ll look back at some iconic pieces of political reporting and compare them to the landscape journalists face today. How are groups that were underrepresented (or misrepresented) in political reporting and compare them to the landscape journalists face today. How are groups that were underrepresented (or misrepresented) in legacy media changing the discourse? Is objectivity obsolete? And what happens to the decisions voters make when disinformation is rampant, and the fact base is under assault? Join waitlist and attend first class for instructor’s permission.

**Course descriptions for each section. [americanstudies.columbia.edu](http://americanstudies.columbia.edu)**

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**AMST UN3920 Course Number**

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**AMST UN3930 Course Number**

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<td>Caroline Miller</td>
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AMST UN3931 Topics in American Studies. 4 points.
Please refer to the Center for American Studies for section descriptions

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<td>317 Hamilton Hall</td>
<td>Andrew Delbanco</td>
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