

American Studies

Interdisciplinary

American studies provides a broad framework for the exploration of the people, places, society and culture of the United States. The field accomplishes this by appropriating ideas and methodologies from one discipline and applying them to another, and by transcending established boundaries among disciplines to create a new structure that combines traditional values and new visions. The program incorporates fieldwork research experiences, collaborative exploration, public presentation and peer evaluation.

American studies is a selective major requiring intellectual independence that includes developing a six-course plan detailing the trajectory of your course of study in the major.

Requirements for the Major

The major in American studies consists of 12 courses:

AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies

All majors will take an introductory course in American studies. This course is normally taken during the first or second year at Kenyon.

Four diversification courses

Two courses must be from history:

AMST 101D/HIST 101D U.S. History, 1492–1865*

AMST 102D/HIST 102D U.S. History, 1865 to Present*

HIST 120 Early Latin America*

HIST 121 Modern Latin America*

HIST 175 Early Black History*

HIST 176 Contemporary Black History*

HIST 205 Hard Times: The Great Depression*

HIST 208 U.S. Women's History*

HIST 209 History of North American Indians*

HIST 215 Reel or Real, History and Film*

HIST 218 History of Mexico*

HIST 242 Americans in Africa*

HIST 275 World War II*

HIST 307 Great African American Migration: 1900–1970

HIST 310 The Civil War*

HIST 311 Immigrant Experience in the United States*

HIST 312 Blacks in the Age of Jim Crow*

HIST 313 Black Intellectuals*

HIST 314 U.S. Foreign Policy, 1898 to the Present*

HIST 321 The Mexican Revolution: Origins, Struggles and Significance *

HIST 322 Human Rights in Latin America*

HIST 323 Borderland History*

HIST 325 History of North American Capitalism*

HIST 360 Corn, Farming and the Roots of American Cultures*

HIST 373 Women of the Atlantic World*

HIST 375 American Indian Activism and Red Power*

HIST 380 Black History through Fiction and Film*

HIST 400 American Revolution*

HIST 407 Manhood/Masculinity in U.S. History*
HIST 411 The Civil Rights Era*
HIST 412 Race, Politics and Public Policy*
HIST 426 Fight For The Great Lakes, 1492–1815*

AP U.S. history credit may be used to satisfy one course and must be paired with any American history course. Examples are marked by an asterisk.

Two courses must be from politics, culture and society:

AMST 109 American Art and Culture, 1900–1945
AMST 200D/PSCI 200D Liberal Democracy in America
AMST 227D/ARHS 227D American Art to 1865
AMST 302D/MUSC 302D The History of Jazz
AMST 314 The History of American College and University Architecture
AMST 330 Sankofa Project: Theory and Practice of Urban Education
AMST 331 Visions of "America" from Abroad
AMST 350 Religion in American Popular Culture
ARHS 231 Modern Art II: Art in The Area of The Cold War
ARHS 245 Contemporary Art and Society
ECON 343 Money and Financial Markets
ECON 347 Economics of the Public Sector
ECON 358 The Federal Reserve System
ECON 383 American Economic History
ENGL 270 American Fiction
ENGL 280 American Literary Modernism
FILM 253 American Film Comedy
FILM 254 The Western
FILM 256 African American Film
PSCI 300 Congress and Public Policymaking
PSCI 301 The American Presidency
PSCI 302 Public Opinion and Voting Behavior
PSCI 303 Campaigns and Elections
PSCI 312 American Constitutional Law
PSCI 313 Making U.S. Foreign Policy
PSCI 314 Constitutional Law II: Powers and Institutions
PSCI 347 Democracy and Development in Latin America
PSCI 355 Immigration, Citizenship and National Identity
PSCI 362 American and the World in the 21st Century
PSCI 364 American Environmental Politics and Policy
PSCI 404 News Media and American Politics
PSCI 441 Latin American Politics in Film and Fiction
PSCI 442 Contemporary Latin American Politics
PSYC 328 Latino Psychology
RLST 230 Religion and Society in America (U.S.)
RLST 332 African American Religions
SOCY 101 Powers, Energies and Peoples
SOCY 104 Identity in American Society
SOCY 106 Social Issues and Cultural Intersections
SOCY 226 Sociology of Law
SOCY 229 Social Movements
SOCY 236 Popular Culture: Window on Inequality

SOCY 238 Environmental Sociology
SOCY 240 Sociology of Crime and Deviance
SOCY 244 Race, Ethnicity and American Law
SOCY 255 Woman, Crime and Law
SOCY 277 Sociology of Sexualities
SOCY 422 Topics in Social Stratification
SOCY 424 Vigilantism and the Law

American studies at Kenyon views America in its broadest sense. Thus, it is recommended that students choose one course from a group of courses that examine America beyond the confines of the United States. For example, see Latino/a Studies.

Six courses of elective study

Six courses from a single area, discipline or set of disciplines that form a coherent program in American studies. Examples of such areas would be:

- writing and literature
- race and ethnicity
- history and society
- politics and economics
- African American studies
- women's studies
- law and society
- landscape and the environment
- America in a global context
- visual arts
- sex, gender and sexualities
- Latin American studies

Many other areas of focus are possible including a track in education studies. The American studies major highly recommends a course in advanced theory or methodology, feminist criticism, or intersection theory that could inform the student's major focus. The elective study program undertaken by the student requires approval of the director of the American Studies Program. At least two courses must be at the 300 or 400 level.

AMST 400 Senior Seminar in American Studies

A one-semester seminar taken either during the fall or spring of the senior year. The senior seminar will typically entail individual research and public presentation.

The Senior Capstone

The Senior Capstone in American studies may take several forms, but it must draw on the elective-study component of the major. Students must identify and then develop, through original research and creative presentation, a major theme central to their work in American studies. By the final Friday in September, majors in American studies will present their plans for the Senior Capstone to their advisors and to the program director.

The Senior Colloquium in American studies, AMST 401, is taught spring semester and all senior majors are required to take the course. In addition to promoting guided reflection on the students' journey through the major, the course is designed and intended to encourage students to workshop ideas and give feedback to one another on their final projects. The students' presentations given during the second half

of the semester will take place during the regular meeting time of the course. This course is a 0.25 credit/no credit offering.

The capstone itself will have three parts:

- a presentation (visual, oral, electronic) to the College public, including majors and faculty in American studies
- a 10-page written reflection paper that includes analysis, explanation and documentation of the work presented as well as its relationship to the student's American studies major
- an oral response to the audience's questions and comments following the presentation

The Senior Capstone will be presented no later than the last Friday in April of the spring semester. Any student who does not successfully complete the capstone must submit a research paper by the first day of exams.

Honors

Honors in American studies entails a two-semester, one-unit sequence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year (AMST 497Y–498Y). The program will result in an honors project that may take a variety of forms but shall include a written component, a public presentation or performance, and an oral interview with an external examiner. Students with an overall GPA of 3.33 and a GPA of 3.5 in the major become eligible for, but are not guaranteed on the basis of GPA alone, admission to the Honors Program during the second semester of their third year.

To enter the Honors Program, students must be nominated by an American studies faculty member. Following the recommendation, a formal proposal containing a statement of intent, a tentative bibliography and a project outline must be sent to the project advisor and the director of the American Studies Program for approval by April 1.

Requirements for the Concentration

The American Studies Concentration encompasses six courses of work, consisting of three components:

- One introductory course, AMST 108 Introduction to American Studies
- Four courses in curricular options
- Senior seminar or Senior Colloquium

Students may choose among several pathways that will fulfill the curricular options requirement. To obtain a list of specific courses that fall under these categories, students should consult the Director of the American Studies Program.

Courses required for a student's major cannot count toward completion of the American Studies Concentration requirements.

Students who are considering the concentration should consult with the director of American studies before enrolling in courses.

Courses in American Studies

United States History, 1100–1865

AMST 101D CREDITS: 0.5

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to United States history from the 12th century to the mid-19th century. Students will gain a more developed understanding of American history by examining

the interactions among diverse cultures and people; the formation and use of power structures and institutions throughout the Colonial, Revolutionary and Antebellum eras; and the processes behind the "Americanization" of the North American continent. Central to this course is a comparison between two interpretations of American history: a Whiggish, or great American history, and the more conflict-centered Progressive interpretation. Not only will students gain a general knowledge of this time period, they also will understand the ways in which the past can be contextualized. Students are expected to understand both the factual basis of American history as well as the general interpretive frameworks underlying historical arguments. This counts toward the history requirement for the major. This course is the same as HIST 101D. This course must be taken as HIST 101D to count for the social science requirement. No prerequisite.

United States History, 1865–Present

AMST 102D CREDITS: 0.5

This course is a thematic survey of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. Students will examine the transformation of the United States from a rural, largely Protestant society into a powerful and culturally diverse urban/industrial nation. Topics will include constitutional developments, the formation of a national economy, urbanization and immigration. The course also will discuss political changes, the secularization of public culture, the formation of the welfare state, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War as well as suburbanization, the civil rights movement, women's and gay rights, and the late 20th-century conservative politics movement and religious revival. This counts toward the history requirement for the major. This course is the same as HIST 102D. This course must be taken as HIST 102D to count towards the social science requirement. No prerequisite.

Introduction to American Studies

AMST 108 CREDITS: 0.5

This course introduces students to the principles of American studies through the exploration of American history and culture during the 1900's. We will explore the nature of American society in this critical period through the study of the race relations, women and gender, music and youth culture. Guest lectures, films and student presentations complement the course and students will be asked to engage actively in its development. Open only to first-year and sophomore students. Juniors need permission of instructor. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

August Wilson and Black Pittsburgh

AMST 110 CREDITS: 0.5

The great African American playwright August Wilson set his cycle of plays in Pittsburgh's once-dynamic neighborhood, the Hill. Students will read a series of Wilson's plays, including Joe Turner's "Come and Gone," "The Piano Lesson" and "Fences," and will locate them in time and place in African American history. This course is intended for first-year students with AP or KAP credit in American history or American studies and a critical aspect of the course will be a three-day fieldwork experience in the Hill district of Pittsburgh. Permission of instructor required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite.

Liberal Democracy in America

AMST 200D CREDITS: 0.5

The course explores the guiding principles, major institutions and national politics of the American political system. The Founders' view of liberal democracy and of the three branches of our government (presented in the "Federalist Papers") will provide the basis for consideration of the modern Supreme Court, presidency, bureaucracy, Congress, news media and political parties and elections. The course concludes with Tocqueville's broad overview of American democracy and its efforts to reconcile liberty

and equality. The themes of the course will be illustrated by references to current political issues, events and personalities. This course is the same as PSCI 200D. This course must be taken as PSCI 200D to count towards the social science requirement. This course counts toward the politics, culture and society requirement for the major. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or concurrent enrollment in PSCI 102Y. Offered every year.

American Visual Culture

AMST 209 CREDITS: 0.5

This course examines visual culture in the United States from the late nineteenth century to the present day. We will analyze a variety of cultural artifacts, including fine art, film, commercial design, advertising, and popular culture. Major topics considered include the relationship between high and low culture, the role of mass media in American society, and the persistence of folk traditions in everyday life. We will also address how museums and public monuments and memorials define national identity. Other major issues include the evolving representation of race, class, gender, and war. Finally, we will examine American visual culture in an international context. This course is cross-listed in the Department of Art History and counts as an intermediate course in the Art History major. No prerequisite.

American Art to 1900

AMST 227D CREDITS: 0.5

This course presents an overview of painting, sculpture and architecture from colonial times to 1900. It frames the development of American art and architecture within a broad sociohistorical context and addresses many of the issues pertinent to American studies. The following questions, among others, will be addressed in the course: Does American culture have a single, identifiable character? How have Americans reconciled their uneasy relationship with European culture? How have American political values, such as freedom, liberty and democracy, informed the cultural expression of the 18th and 19th centuries? This course is the same as ARHS 227D. This course must be taken as ARHS 227D to count towards the fine arts requirement. This counts as an intermediate-level course for the art history major and satisfies the modern art major requirement. Prerequisite: ARHS 111, AMST 109 or equivalent.

The History of Jazz

AMST 302D CREDITS: 0.5

The most fascinating thing about jazz is its vitality. Jazz remains today what it has been since its inception: an art form of intense personal expression in the context of collaborative improvisation. This course is a social and stylistic investigation of the history of jazz, from its African American origins up to the present. Progressing chronologically, students will use a variety of sources to investigate the development and influence of the main jazz styles and musicians upon the jazz scene. This course is the same as MUSC 302D. This course must be taken as MUSC 302D to count toward the fine arts requirement. Prerequisite: MUSC 101 or placement by exam. Offered every other year.

The History of American College and University Architecture and Planning

AMST 314 CREDITS: 0.5

College and university campuses, from picturesque Gothic and Georgian wonderlands to the starkly modern and utilitarian assemblages of more recent years, have long been a source of fascination for Americans. They play a large role in the romantic ideal of college life, they evoke images of privilege or openness and they increasingly are seen as a sales tool by marketers. If we look beyond the most superficial aspects of campuses though, their physical appearances can reveal a great deal about an institution's history, goals and philosophy, and even its relative place in the nation's higher-education hierarchy. This course will look at a variety of campuses and campus types — urban, suburban and rural; public and private; old and new — and end with a class project involving development of an ideal campus. Permission of instructor required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Offered every spring.

Race, Education, and Student Rebellion

AMST 321 CREDITS: 0.5

Why is education often at the center of struggles for racial justice? Do students of color on college and high school campuses face political obstacles today that are comparable to those of the 1960s? What does it mean when political leaders and public intellectuals say, “education is the civil rights issue of our generation?” In this seminar, we will examine the interplay of race and education in student protest traditions in the U.S. Students can expect to interrogate representations and expressions of youth culture, sites of student rebellion, and systems of power in educational institutions. Specific topics of study will include Critical Race Theory, civil rights and black power, anti-war protests, sexual assault on college campuses and issues of access to higher education for undocumented students. As a topic of inquiry in American Studies, students in this seminar will engage “in provocative thinking about the contradictions of U.S. ideals and lived realities” through interdisciplinary measures. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Sankofa Project: Theory and Practice of Urban Education

AMST 330 CREDITS: 0.75

This course will introduce students to the major theoretical writings about education—Dewey, Kozol, Ravitch and Freire. We will inquire about the "global achievement gap" and "cultural literacy" and interview teachers from a broad range of educational backgrounds — public, private, parochial and charter. The seminar will meet weekly and students will engage during the week in Moodle discussions about issues raised in the readings. Students also will have a participant-observer experience in a public high school, with an introductory day in early January break and a week-long residency the second week of spring break. Credits given only for attending all components of the course. Permission of instructor required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Prerequisite: junior standing.

Visions of "America" from Abroad

AMST 331 CREDITS: 0.5

America is the great, ongoing experiment of modernity, a nation thoroughly structured by all that is considered new in the Western world: liberal democracy, science, technology, industry and capitalism. The colonization of America by Europe led to the status of the United States as a laboratory for political, social and artistic theories which otherwise may never have been attempted. At the same time, the rest of the world has often looked at the United States from a critical, even adversarial perspective. As recent history has shown, America is not just a European obsession, but increasingly finds itself today in a multilateral geopolitical environment. The Sept. 11 attacks were a brutal awakening for many Americans to the hostility that exists in parts of the world against U.S. foreign policy, and against the identity of American citizens. Is such hostility related to the European ambivalence toward America, or is it an entirely new phenomenon, with separate historical and intellectual roots? What new insights do the critiques from non-European regions contribute to an understanding of America’s relationship to the rest of the world? Each week, we will examine texts that center on a particular theme of European-American intellectual relations, the emerging and complex relationship between Islam and America, the longstanding tension with Latin America, and critiques of American-style modernity from Japan. Among the European texts studied are works by Bartolomé de las Casas, Alexis de Tocqueville, Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean Baudrillard. Middle Eastern authors include Osama bin Laden, Jalal Al-i Ahmad, and Sayyid Qutb. Among the Latin American authors are Fidel Castro, Eduardo Galeano, and Che Guevara. From Japan, they include Keiji Nishitani and Shunya Yoshimi. We also will view and discuss several films by directors such as Godfrey Reggio and Adam Curtis. This counts toward the major in French ("track two" or "track three") under certain conditions, when arranged with Professor Guiney at the start of the semester. This also counts as an elective for the Political Science Major. No prerequisite.

Religion in American Popular Culture

AMST 350 CREDITS: 0.5

The relationship between religion and popular culture in America is multifaceted. Religious themes in popular culture, popular cultural portrayals of American religions, the use of popular cultural forms as vehicles for the expression of religious values, the celebration of religious emotions and the embrace of cultural expressions as forms of religious devotion all contribute to this relationship. This course will explore these facets, looking at a cross-section of Hollywood films, television shows and music videos, various subgenres of popular music, sports, news media and cyberculture. Our study will be guided by academic texts, videos, images and samples of music from several genres. Previous studies in American and/or religious studies is recommended. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

Topics in American Art

AMST 378D CREDITS: 0.5

This course will explore specific problems in American art and architecture. Topics include Modernism and the Great Depression, World War II and Abstract Expressionism and the relationship between art and politics. When possible, students will utilize regional museum collections. Assignments will include seminar reports, class discussion and a research paper. This counts as an advanced course for the Art History major. This course is the same as ARHS 378D. This course must be taken as ARHS 378D to count toward the fine arts requirement. Prerequisite: ARHS 111, 227D, AMST 109 or equivalent. Offered every other year.

Baseball and American Culture

AMST 382 CREDITS: 0.5

This course will look at the wide range of representations of the national game in American culture. The course will examine literature, poetry and drama as well as the visual arts as a way of understanding the power of baseball on our cultural imagination. The seminar will focus on group discussion, collaborative presentations and individual analysis. Permission of instructor required. No prerequisite.

Senior Seminar in American Studies

AMST 400 CREDITS: 0.5

The course will provide a setting for advanced guided student work in American studies. Students will work collaboratively to assist one another in the development of individual research projects that represent the synthesis of the six courses they have crafted for the major in American studies. The course is required of all American studies senior majors and concentrators. Permission of instructor required. No prerequisite. Offered every year.

Senior Colloquium in American Studies

AMST 401 CREDITS: 0.25

The colloquium will serve as a capstone, so-called professional seminar (“pro sem”), in which the students will engage in a guided reflection about the field of American studies, focusing upon both content (i.e. American culture and experience) and distinctive approaches to investigating those things considered “American.” During the first half of the semester, students will invite and arrange for American studies faculty, scholars in the field and alumni to visit (both physically and virtually) class meetings to discuss how exposure and training in the field has shaped their professional careers and perspectives. Students will participate in a series of mini-workshops involving research and interviewing strategies directed at their proposed final research projects as well as instruction regarding effective public presentation approaches. The latter half of the semester will involve the formal public presentations of their research projects as well as structured collaborative critiques of each of the presentations given by their classmates. The students will be responsible for writing detailed self-assessments of their work over the course of the colloquium. The colloquium will count toward the units of elective study. Offered every spring as the final

collaborative learning experience for American studies majors. Permission of instructor is required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.

Individual Study

AMST 493 CREDITS: 0.25 - 0.5

Individual study is an exceptional opportunity available to junior or senior majors who find that the ordinary course offerings at Kenyon do not meet their needs for the major. Individual study may be taken only for 0.5 units of credit. Students must have the approval of the department chair in order to apply to enroll in an individual study. Students must present a detailed reading list and syllabus, including a schedule of assignments/projects and due dates, to the American studies faculty member with whom they choose to work. The faculty member who agrees to supervise and direct the individual study will confirm the syllabus and schedule in writing to the director of the program. The student project must culminate in a public presentation. The overall evaluation is a combination of student self-evaluation and faculty assessment of the student's performance, both of which will be reported to the department chair along with the final grade assigned in the course. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the end of the seventh class day of each semester, they should begin discussion of the proposed individual study preferably the semester before, so that there is time to devise the proposal and seek departmental approval before the registrar's deadline. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.

Senior Honors Project

AMST 497Y CREDITS: 0.5

The Honors Program in American studies entails a two-semester sequence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year. Students enrolled in this course will be automatically added to AMST 498Y for the spring semester. Permission of instructor and department chair required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.

Senior Honors Project

AMST 498Y CREDITS: 0.5

The Honors Program in American studies entails a two-semester sequence of independent work integral to the elective-study program in the major, taken during the senior year. Permission of instructor and department chair required. This interdisciplinary course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.