

SPRING 2025

Undergraduate Course Descriptions

AMERICAN STUDIES

AMST 1102 - American Identities
Instructor: Various

**Available Face-to-Face, Hybrid
and Asynchronous Online**

This course explores what it means to be “American.” Examining “American Identities” from local and global perspectives, and through a variety of disciplinary frameworks, this course focuses on the diverse forms of “American Identity,” as well as the social and cultural histories that have shaped these identities. Students examine their own and others’ identities. Students gain knowledge and skills related to intercultural relations through various methods that include research, reading, writing, performance, and class activities.

AMST 3700 - American Studies: Principles & Methods
Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Hill

Asynchronous Online

What is American Studies? And what does it mean to study America? To answer these questions, this reading, writing and discussion based course introduces students to the field of American Studies: the interdisciplinary study of American cultures. The course explores central trends in the field from the myth and symbol approach of the 1950s to the more recent growth in transnational approaches that remap the terrain of study. Using a wide variety of readings and activities from multiple academic disciplines and popular culture, students will practice different methods on their own research projects on topics including long-standing popular myths and contemporary social media influencers.

AMST 3740 - American Popular Culture
Instructor: Dr. Kate Schaab

Hybrid
Tuesdays 9:30 -10:45AM

We will examine contemporary dystopias—with texts ranging from popular novels and television series to music and visual arts. Drawing upon historical and theoretical readings, we will analyze major characteristics of dystopic texts such as destruction, power, conformity, and survival. We will also consider how these texts can help us make sense of (and even address) social, environmental, and political issues.

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Graduate Course Descriptions

AMERICAN STUDIES

AMST 6401 - Literature and Culture of the Americas
Instructor: Dr. Griselda Thomas

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Tuesdays 5:55 -7:45PM

This graduate seminar explores the current discourse concerning the role of the media in enabling, facilitating, or challenging the social constructions of the Black female body. With a focus on the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality, the course will examine historical and contemporary representations of Black women in the various mediums that serve to construct what is known as “popular culture.” Through the lens of Black Feminist Studies, Cultural Studies, and Literary Studies, the course looks at the historical relationship of African American women to mainstream culture through a critical examination of “popular” representations of Black women; analyzes the production and consumption of such representations; and explores the ways these processes influence basic assumptions about social roles of Black women, past and present.

AMST 7100 - American Studies Methods
Instructor: Dr. Rodolfo Aguilar

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Wednesdays 6:30 -8:20PM

This course introduces students to current methods in American Studies research and public practice. The course focuses on core concepts, objects of analysis, and evolving research practices used for working in American Studies. While critiquing notable examples from the field, students consider various dynamic professional contexts for “doing” American Studies, such as professional organizations and journals, classrooms, the workplace, public settings, and other diverse communities outside the university.

AMST 7230 - Public History and Culture
Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Hill

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Mondays 7:00 -8:50PM

Public History and Culture examines the popular uses and presentations of the American past. Exploring historical memory’s role in American culture, the course draws on a range of methods (e.g., site visits, research in popular publications, study of historical documentaries) to understand and critique ways that the past is recorded and transmitted. This course will apply historical theory and scholarly works to the analysis of imaginative, alternative, and immersive historical reconstructions including historical novels and feature films as well as living history museums and reenactments. Students will conduct their own independent research projects on important events, sites, or individuals with an emphasis on understanding the relationship between historical narrative and the construction and contestation of national identity.

AMST 7330 - Identities and Social Groups
Instructor: Dr. Seneca Vaught

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Thursdays 6:00 -7:20PM

Take a journey in someone else's shoes! In this class, you’ll learn the art of biographical storytelling and historical biographical writing. This course is designed for learning about biographical research and would be a great class for aspiring biographers, memoirists, or anyone passionate about capturing the essence of individual lives. There will be a strong emphasis on biographies documenting the Black experience but we will also stray from that central theme to explore other important autobiographical and biographical accounts that demonstrate the art of biographical research at its best! You’ll learn to conduct in-depth historical research and how to interview subjects to craft a narrative that resonates with readers and viewers. With a blend of lectures, hands-on exercises, and peer feedback, this class will equip you with the skills to write biographies that inform and inspire. By the end of the course, you’ll have the confidence to embark on your own written or documentary film projects.

AMST 7901 - Capstone Literature Review and Proposal
Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Tuesdays 6:00 -7:20PM

In the first part of the American Studies capstone experience, students work with faculty advisors to review scholarly literature and write a research or project proposal. The research reviewed will consist of interdisciplinary scholarship from American Studies and related fields that investigates questions consistent with the program's mission and the student's professional goals. Students work with faculty advisors to review literature and develop a proposal related to their topic or project aims.

AMST 7902 - Capstone Experience
Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Tuesdays 6:00 -7:20PM

A major research project or a project using interdisciplinary methods from American Studies to investigate questions consistent with the program's mission and the student's professional goals. Students work with faculty advisors to carry out research related to their topic or project aims, and complete a product drawing on the content of program courses and integrating it with new, individualized study.