



AMERICAN STUDIES



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY

SUMMER & FALL 2024 COURSE CATALOG

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WHO ARE WE?

The only program of its kind in the University System of Georgia, Kennesaw State University's Master of Arts in American Studies program (MAST) boasts fourteen years of boundary-crossing excellence in creative – and innovative – scholarship and programming related to the Americas. Situated in KSU's Interdisciplinary Studies Department, our faculty affiliate from multiple colleges and departments – from the Departments of History, English, Art, and Theatre and Performance Studies, to interdisciplinary programs in Black Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, Latin American and Latinx Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and Peace Studies. Our students, likewise, come from multiple academic backgrounds to study and engage communities and issues from across the Americas.



This 30 credit hour program includes four required courses (History, Literature, Methods, and Scholarship) and is designed to be flexible so that students can devise pathways reflecting their individual research interests and career goals. Remaining courses are taken in three clusters: Cultural Production; Place and Identity; and Historical Studies. We encourage interdisciplinary approaches, traditional and public scholarship, and civic and community engagement. As part of the program requirements, students finish the degree by working with a faculty advisor to complete a Capstone thesis or project of their own design.



We produce informed and motivated citizens who often point to the openness of the field of American Studies and to our individualized approach to guiding students through the MAST program as highlights of their grad school experience.

Engage in intersectional research, receive one-on-one mentorship from interdisciplinary faculty – and make your intellectual curiosities a career.

CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM

Core Requirements (12 hours)

AMST 6201	History and Culture of the Americas
AMST 6401	Literature and Culture of the Americas
AMST 7000	American Studies Scholarship
AMST 7100	American Studies Methods

Disciplinary Electives (9 hours)

Any 7000-level AMST courses.

Related Studies (3 hours)

Any 7000-level AMST courses or other approved graduate-level courses.

Capstone Experience (6 hours)

AMST 7901	Capstone Literature Review and Proposal
AMST 7902	Capstone Experience

PROGRAM TOTAL: 30 CREDIT HOURS

American
Studies
Catalog:



AMST 7200: AMERICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This course examines the evolution of various women's and feminist movements around the world including their priorities, challenges, and successes. Drawing upon a range of sources and the work of activists and scholars, we will consider the formation, expansion, and intersections of select movements and how transnational feminism has reshaped feminist geopolitics. Further, we will discuss the role of women's and feminist movements in shaping political and cultural discourses on human rights around the world.



Summer 2024
Online Asynchronous



DR. KATE SCHAAB

Dr. Kate Schaab is an Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Studies degree program. She teaches in the American Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, and Interdisciplinary Studies programs. Dr. Schaab's teaching and research interests include dystopian literature, reproductive justice, and intersectional feminisms. Her recent work has appeared in *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *Women's Studies*, *Critical Studies in Television*, *Feminist Formations*, *The Journal of American Culture*, and *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies*.

AMST 6201: HISTORY & CULTURE OF THE AMERICAS

This interdisciplinary graduate course covers the history and cultural interaction of the United States and the Americas, with attention to relationships between policy, labor dynamics, and cultural expressions. Students will conduct an individual research project on the topic of their choice. Previous projects include: Operation Pedro Pan and the Evacuation of Cuba's Children; Blackness in Brazil; and Urbanization in the City of Angels. Students are exposed to a wide variety of readings and are encouraged to pursue their interests when applying an interdisciplinary lens to their research.



Fall 2024

Online Asynchronous



DR. NATHALIA JARAMILLO

Dr. Nathalia Jaramillo is a Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies. She is the author of *Immigration and the Challenge of Education: A Social Drama Analysis in South Central Los Angeles* (Palgrave, 2012) and the co-editor of *Epistemologies of Ignorance in Education* (Information Age Publishing, 2011) and *Decolonial Theories and Pedagogies of Liberation: Resistance and Re-existence* (Routledge, forthcoming). She is also the co-editor of Routledge's new book series, *Decolonial Entanglements*.

AMST 7000: AMERICAN STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

This course introduces major concepts, theories, debates, and thinkers that shape(d) American Studies scholarship. Through this course, we will investigate six major points of interest within American Studies scholarship (ranging from “Violent Projects” to “Centrality of Difference” and “Cultural Production & Consumption”) which will help guide our understanding of the field’s history and evolution. AMST 7000 is designed to help you consider how your scholarly interests fit into American Studies as you develop your ability to formulate questions, analyze arguments, make connections, and produce and share knowledge.



Fall 2024

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Tuesdays 6:00PM - 7:40PM



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AMST 7420: AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

This course examines the role popular music plays in the everyday lives of people across the globe. The ever-growing use of technology has made popular music readily available at rapid speeds to large masses. Yet, accessibility does not always guarantee equal participation of subordinate groups in some music genres. We will explore the contradictions often found in music and societies overall. The course will introduce graduate students to the pressing theories surrounding the politics of popular music to examine how this medium of popular culture simultaneously generates excitement and anxiety across local and national boundaries.



Fall 2024

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Thursdays 6:00PM - 7:40PM



DR. RODOLFO AGUILAR

Rodolfo Aguilar is Assistant Professor of Latin American/Latinx Studies & American Studies. Dr. Aguilar earned his B.A. in Latin American & Latino Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago and PhD in American Studies from the University of Minnesota. His scholarly interests include U.S. Latino Studies, popular music, American Studies, immigration, and Midwestern Latina/o communities. His scholarship on the baile economy and symbolic networking among Mexican Sonidos was published in *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*. Dr. Rudy has also penned several popular essays for online sites, including *The Society Pages* and *Contratiempo*. His "Everybody's Going Uptown" op-ed is featured in the edited collection *Sparked: George Floyd, Racism, and the Progressive Illusion*, published by the Minnesota Historical Society. Outside of KSU, Dr. Rudy enjoys running (aspiring marathon runner), collecting music on vinyl, and occasionally DJing for local venues and on social media.

AMST 7520: AMERICA IN TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

This course examines interactions between Americans and other international groups through the events of the 2007-2009 Great Recession and social movements of the 2010s-2020. Movements explored include the Arab Spring, Occupy, Extinction Rebellion, Indigenous sovereignty movements, and a variety of populist movements emerging on the left and right. Over the course of the semester, students will consider the extent to which current social movements can be considered transnational in scope, explore the role of social media and popular discourse in influencing policy-makers, and study international communication networks among social movement activists.



Fall 2024

Hybrid Online Synchronous
Tuesdays 7:00PM - 8:40PM



DR. REBECCA HILL

Dr. Rebecca Hill finished her PhD in American Studies with a minor in Gender Studies at the U. of Minnesota in 2000, and from 2000 to 2010 taught at the City University of New York before directing the MAST program at KSU from 2010 to 2020. Her research focuses on intersections between social movements, state power, and popular culture with particular attention to race and gender. Her early published work was about the history of the Communist Party of the United States. Later, she broadened her scope to anarchism and socialism and is currently writing a book on the culture and politics of Anti-Fascism in America from the 1930s-present. Her academic work has generally come from questions developed in the context of grassroots organizing and activism.

CAPSTONES & PRACTICUMS

Required capstones and optional practicums are the signature features that allow students to individualize their MAST degrees. Aside from focusing on a topic that relates to the broad field of American Studies, there is no limit to what you can do in these courses. Over the years, students have completed their capstones in a variety of ways, from creating documentary films to analyzing representations of race in pop culture to designing public history exhibits for local museums.



MAST alumna Mandy McGrew thought she wanted to study the Romani in her graduate career. But, after she met her mentor, Dr. Alan LeBaron, she became an integral part of his Maya Heritage Project. For her capstone, she created the Maya Healthcare Toolkit, which was shared with local hospitals that often treat Maya immigrants. Similarly, alumna Kimmy Rae Fisher engaged in public scholarship by researching arguments about transgender rights for Dr. Amy Donahue's Vada project, a collaborative debate platform designed for classroom use.



MAST graduate Ann Burkly fulfilled her Practicum by cleaning up and documenting the most famous, and arguably most gorgeous, section of Howard Finster's Paradise Gardens in Summerville, Georgia, in what's known as Mosaic Garden. Along similar lines, for her Capstone, Annie Moye created a digital archive for her partners at the Pasaquan Preservation Society, which later contributed towards a major restoration effort at the site, funded by the Kohler Foundation.



In graduate school, you never know what will grab your interest or inspire you. Through Practicums and Capstones, MAST students have the opportunity to get creative, using what they learn in the classroom to support local communities and organizations.

ALUMNI & CAREERS



Our graduates work in a variety of fields but are especially drawn towards jobs in education, museums, nonprofits, human relations, and diversity. Our students also go on to enter Ph.D programs at schools like University of Massachusetts Amherst (Afro-American Studies), Georgia State (Sociology), and University of South Florida (Anthropology). As part of her Capstone project, 2011 graduate Wende Ballew even established her own non-profit, which she still operates today. A few graduates have landed lucrative careers in marketing in the Atlanta area, and a few more have followed their passions into the art world. 2016 graduate Gabriel Greaves works as an Education Assistant at the Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center; alumna Paola Garcia leads diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the Southeast through her role at Year Up; and 2023 graduate Breighlynn Polk recently became the inaugural fellow for the HBCU Radio Preservation Project.

TESTIMONIALS

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"The MAST program at Kennesaw State was a great way to do in-depth graduate study on a variety of topics in American culture and history. The interdisciplinary nature allowed me to take classes toward both my professional goals and personal interests. Through MAST, I was also able to participate in a study abroad program in Oaxaca, Mexico for 2 weeks during the summer – it was an amazing opportunity I will never forget."

-Jacqueline Winters-Allen

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"The MA in American Studies opened doors for me. Before this program, I did not know what I wanted to do professionally other than find a way to earn a living writing. I especially did not envision a career in academia, because I wasn't a particularly involved undergraduate. I stayed quiet, completed my work, and hurried off campus as quickly as I could once class was over. My experience in graduate school was completely different. Though the program was rigorous, I learned I enjoyed the challenge. I learned that I liked unpacking difficult theoretical concepts and talking about them with others. I learned that I could do something with my passion for social justice. I loved the flexibility of the program. The students I took classes with all came from different academic backgrounds. I was an English undergrad, but I learned with students with degrees in Theatre and Performance Studies, History, Education, Sociology, Anthropology, and Business. The faculty I studied under are brilliant, dedicated, and passionate about helping students succeed. Since I have graduated, I continue to collaborate with some of my professors from American Studies for writing projects, conference presentations, scholarly service work, and activism."

-Ashley McFarland

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"The MAST program changed the way that I see the world; it opened my mind to the many varied perspectives of everyone around me and helped me take a critical view of everyday experiences. This practice has helped me to be successful in my career as an educational developer where I work with faculty and students from different backgrounds, motivations, and views of the world. The high expectations set by my professors and faculty mentors in the program showed me what I was capable of accomplishing."

-Mandy McGrew

HOW TO APPLY

MAST IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS NOW!

To be considered for admission to the program, applicants must complete the application process through [KSU's Graduate Admissions Office](#). The following application materials must be included for consideration:

- **Letter of Application:** The letter of application should be in the form of a narrative which describes your educational and/or professional background, your future goals, and how admission into the American Studies M.A. program at Kennesaw State University will help you accomplish these goals. The letter should be specific to the program and should be 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.
- **Writing Sample:** The writing sample should demonstrate the writing skills you have developed as a student and/or professional. The sample should be relevant to the field of American Studies broadly defined, and it should be refined and revised to fit within 5-7 double-spaced pages.
- **GPA:** The program minimum is 2.75 for all undergraduate courses from the degree-granting institution, but we expect the class will average above 3.0.
- **Two Letters of Recommendation:** Applicants should ask recommenders to submit letters of recommendation through the KSU Graduate College online admission system. At least one letter should be from a faculty member at the last school you attended (unless you have been out of school for more than five years). Substitutions for faculty recommendations may include work associates or others who can comment on your academic potential for graduate work.
- **C.V./Resume:** (Optional).
- **\$60 application processing fee:** The MAST program can offer application fee waivers as needed. Please contact the program director, Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers, to request a waiver.

We also offer Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships on a competitive basis. If you are interested in obtaining a graduate assistantship, you are encouraged to apply early for consideration. GAs come with a tuition waiver and a small stipend.

Deadlines for Applications:

Fall: July 1

Spring: November 1

Summer: April 1

For more information, visit us online or contact the Program Director

Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers
mspiers1@kennesaw.edu

