



# AMERICAN STUDIES



KENNESAW STATE  
UNIVERSITY

## SUMMER & FALL 2025 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 Electives (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:



# ELECTIVES



## Historical Studies

- AMST 7200 American Social Movements
- AMST 7210 Historical Period
- AMST 7230 Public History and Culture
- AMST 7240 Enterprise & Labor in American Culture

## Cultural Production

- AMST 7410 Literature and Performance in American Culture
- AMST 7420 American Popular Culture
- AMST 7430 American Popular Music
- AMST 7450 American Visual Culture
- AMST 7460 Movements in American Culture

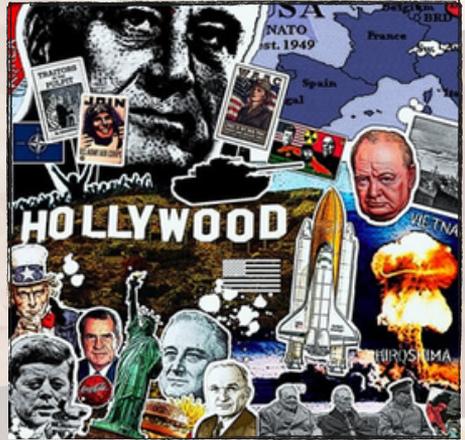
## Place and Identity

- AMST 7300 American Cities, Suburbs, and Countryside
- AMST 7330 Identities and Social Groups
- AMST 7510 Passages to America
- AMST 7520 America in Transnational Context

# AMST 7210: HISTORICAL PERIOD

(THE UNITED STATES IN THE ERA OF THE COLD WAR, 1945-1989)

This course examines US politics, culture, economic development, and social change in the post-World War II period, with a special emphasis on the home front of this undeclared conflict. Topics will include the evolution of US political parties, the Civil Rights Movement, the labor movement and the Cold War economy. American popular culture, particularly cinema and television, will also receive special attention. The course will examine the ways in which the Cold War shaped postwar America and the ways that the US state/economy and US culture influenced the world.



**Summer 2025**  
Online Asynchronous



DR. RANDY PATTON

Dr. Patton is a Professor of History at Kennesaw State University. He is coauthor, with David B. Parker, of *Carpet Capital: The Rise of a New South Industry*, author of *Shaw Industries: A History*, and editor of *Working for Equality: The Narrative of Harry Hudson*.

# AMST 7410: LITERATURE AND PERFORMANCE IN AMERICAN CULTURE

This course will focus on depictions of race, gender, and Otherness in American science fiction. Theorist Darko Suvin has proposed that the aliens in science fiction “are a mirror to man just as the differing country is a mirror for his world. But the mirror is not only a reflecting one, it is also a transforming one. Drawing on Suvin’s idea that science fiction has the capacity to transform its readers, we will explore texts that both reflect and challenge American cultural norms. The course will focus on modern and contemporary works in multiple forms, including novels, short stories, film, and television. We will place these primary texts in conversation with relevant discussions in American studies, ethnic studies, gender studies, and Indigenous studies. Authors may include Octavia Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin, Philip K. Dick, Nalo Hopkinson, and Louise Erdrich.



*My Great Great Grandmother was a Hopi Indian Princess*, by Steven Paul Judd  
(Kiowa/Choctaw)

**Summer 2025**  
Online Synchronous



DR. MIRIAM BROWN SPIERS

Miriam Brown Spiers is an Associate Professor of English and American Studies, as well as the Director of the M.A. in American Studies program. She is the author of *Encountering the Sovereign Other: Indigenous Science Fiction* (Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2021), and her work has appeared in such journals as *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, *Native South*, and *Studies in Comics*.

# AMST 6201: HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE AMERICAS

In the contemporary age of globalization, nations reify their sovereignty on the world stage. American Studies scholars, on the contrary, theorize convergences across the Americas due to migration, empire, economic integration, and cross-flow cultural processes. This course will study the “Americas” rather than simply the United States of America with the help of hemispheric American Studies scholarship. We will borrow from history, literary studies, political economy, personal memoirs, cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. Assigned readings will include scholars from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States to better grasp a broader context of our hemisphere.



**Fall 2025**  
Online Synchronous  
Tuesdays 6:00PM - 7:20PM



DR. RODOLFO AGUILAR

Rodolfo Aguilar is Associate 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 7000: AMERICAN STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP

AMST 7000 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 2025**

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



DR. KATHARINE SCHAAB

Dr. Schaab’s work is situated in American Studies, Women’s & Gender Studies, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. 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 7450: AMERICAN VISUAL CULTURE

What about “America” can we understand through its visual culture? What makes American visual culture distinct from other visual cultures? Undoubtedly, there are diverse visual cultures across the Americas, and none that could possibly serve as a monolith of a single American visual culture or a narrative that could be considered “grand.” The aim of this graduate seminar, then, will be to prepare students with methods for studying, analyzing, critiquing, and creating visual artifacts. We will do so through the lens of visual rhetoric, the instructor’s primary area of expertise, and the methodologies that have been developed within that disciplinary focus.



Kerry James Marshall, *Past Times*, 1997.

**Fall 2025**  
Online Asynchronous



DR. SERGIO FIGUEIREDO

Sergio C. Figueiredo is Professor in the Department of English at Kennesaw State University. His current research focuses on the early-nineteenth century literary, artistic, and rhetorical avant-garde and explores how histories of rhetoric influenced the role of early socialist thinkers. He is the translator of *Inventing Comics: A New Translation of Rodolphe Töpffer's Essays on Graphic Storytelling, Media Rhetorics, and Aesthetic Practice* (Parlor Press, 2017) and co-editor of the collection, *Immigrant Scholars in Rhetoric, Composition, and Communication: Memoirs of a First Generation* (NCTE, 2019).

# AMST 7510: PASSAGES TO AMERICA

The course examines the history of immigration in the U.S. and the central ideas and issues that frame immigration debates in the past and present. Students will analyze historical and fictional texts that describe the immigrant experience in the U.S. Topics such as nativism, borderlands, and immigration policy will be covered in course readings. Special consideration will be given to U.S.-Mexico and Central American immigration debates.



Firelei Báez, *Untitled*, 2020.

**Fall 2025**

Online Synchronous  
Wednesdays 6:30PM - 7:25PM



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*.

# 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 Moyer 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 community engagement. 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

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to celebrate **Breighlynn Polk**, a KSU alumna and MAST program graduate, who has been selected as the Executive Director of the Iberia African American Historical Society (IAAHS). Founded in 2017 by Dr. Phebe A. Hayes, the IAAHS is dedicated to preserving and sharing the true and accurate history of African Americans in Iberia Parish, Louisiana.

In her new role, Breighlynn will lead the development and implementation of strategic initiatives that further the organization's mission. Her dedication to heritage work is also reflected in her past role as the 2024 inaugural fellow for the HBCU Radio Preservation Project, where she worked to document and preserve the cultural significance of Black radio at HBCUs through oral histories and archived audio materials.

Breighlynn was also featured in KSU's Professionals with Purpose series, where she shared insights about her journey as a heritage worker after graduating from the MAST program. Congratulations to Breighlynn on this well-deserved achievement!

We are thrilled to celebrate MAST Graduate **Meya Hemphill-Hodges**, who successfully defended her dissertation in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida in Fall 2024.

Her dissertation, "Beyond the Mask: Challenging the Strong Black Woman Trope in Their Journey to Heal in the South," explores the experiences of Black women Veterans, examining how identity, place, and culture intersect to challenge the singular narrative of Veteran identity.

In addition, Meya has also accepted a new position as a faculty member in the Humanities program at St. Petersburg College. We congratulate her on this well-earned success and look forward to the impact she will continue to make in academia and beyond!



BREIGHLYNN POLK



DR. MEYA HEMPHILL-HODGES

# 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

“

“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

“

“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](mailto:mspiers1@kennesaw.edu)**



# DOUBLE OWL PATHWAYS



## Double Owl Pathway Information:



Double Owl Pathways afford undergraduate students the opportunity to obtain their undergraduate and graduate degrees faster and at a significantly lower cost than if they pursued each degree independently. By bundling both degrees into Pathways, highly motivated and committed students will graduate sooner than their peers and with a head start on their careers. KSU has a variety of Pathways to choose from.

The American Studies program offers **3** pathways:

- Anthropology BA
- History BA
- Interdisciplinary Studies BS

