

TWO YEAR COURSE PROJECTIONS

Course Descriptions

M.A. in AMERICAN STUDIES

FALL 2023 OFFERINGS

AMST 6201 - History and Culture of the Americas
Instructor: Dr. Nathalia Jaramillo

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 across the Americas, as well as theoretical frameworks common in transnational study of the US and the Americas. Topics covered may include the Atlantic slave trade; culture and history of migrant labor; indigenous studies; and history and culture of transnational social movements in the Americas.

AMST 7100 - American Studies Methods
Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Hill

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 7510 - Passages to America
Instructor: Dr. Rudy Aguilar

Students enrolled in Passages to America examine forced and voluntary migration and immigration in the historical development of American culture. The varied experiences of these individuals and their families are discussed in the context of such topics as racial and ethnic group relations, nativism, and social class formation. We examine power relations between dominant and subordinate groups, along with debates over citizenship, Americanization policies, and legal/illegal immigration. Finally, students analyze the cultural concepts of assimilation, pluralism, and multiculturalism that frame these debates. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7700 - Practicum (Internship or Applied Research Project)
Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers

This course requires students to apply American Studies knowledge, concepts, and theory to practical issues, non-academic environments, or to new research questions. The practicum may be offered as an internship; applied research project; teaching practicum; or other applied experience as approved by the program director. This course may be repeated.

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

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**

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.

SPRING 2024 OFFERINGS

AMST 6401 - Literature and Culture of the Americas**Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers**

In this interdisciplinary course, students learn about major transnational literary movements in the Americas, with an emphasis on understanding literature in a global context. Course readings and assignments provide an overview of important questions, methods, and theoretical approaches in contemporary American Studies literary scholarship as well as an advanced introduction to important literary works.

AMST 7000 - American Studies Scholarship**Instructor: Dr. Kate Schaab**

This course explores a variety of themes, theoretical influences, and methodological approaches currently alive in American Studies and its related disciplinary fields. Particular emphasis is placed on the current controversies and scholarship focused on race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The course is organized around broad thematic concepts, with attention to global perspectives. The course introduces some basic conceptual building blocks in the field, and explores some of the historical development of American Studies.

AMST 7240 - Enterprise and Labor in American Culture**Instructor: Dr. Randy Patton**

This course will examine the history of enterprise and labor within their social and cultural contexts from an interdisciplinary perspective. The course will include an overview of the history of work and enterprise in the United States. Students will investigate business enterprise, work, production, and consumption as cultural phenomena. Topics may include: the emergence of the corporation; the labor movement and its cultural representations; enterprise and labor in film, television, literature, and popular culture; the work ethic as a cultural production; the history of corporate social responsibility; immigration and labor/enterprise; ethnic, racial, and gender diversity issues in American business and labor; exploration of labor and business concepts/issues through biography; the social/cultural impact of globalization; regional themes in labor and enterprise; American enterprise in the world. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7300 - American Cities, Suburbs, and Countryside**Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Hill**

Offers a thematic study of cultural, social, and economic patterns of the American metropolis using texts and methods from a variety of disciplines, such as history, literature, anthropology, and sociology. Students interrogate texts ranging from landmarks to literature, personal histories to government documents, advertising to architecture, to explore the shifting relationships between and ideas about American cities, suburbs, and countryside. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7700 - Practicum (Internship or Applied Research Project)**Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers**

This course requires students to apply American Studies knowledge, concepts, and theory to practical issues, non-academic environments, or to new research questions. The practicum may be offered as an internship; applied research project; teaching practicum; or other applied experience as approved by the program director. This course may be repeated.

AMST 7901 - Capstone Literature Review and Proposal

Instructor: Dr. Miriam Brown Spiers

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

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.

SUMMER 2024 OFFERINGS

AMST 7200 - American Social Movements

This course examines the history of and relationship between selected cultural movements through an interdisciplinary lens. The course analyzes the evolution and conduct of movements, as well as the evolution of academic inquiry and understanding of these movements. The course emphasizes the connections between American cultural movements and those in other parts of the world. Topics discussed may include, but are not limited to, the abolitionist, labor, civil rights, American Indian, environmentalist, women's, anti-war, reproductive rights, gay and lesbian, and anti-globalization movements among others. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7460 - Movements in American Culture

This course will explore artistic, literary, or other cultural movements in the broad context of American Culture. It may include courses in literary, film or art history, and discussions of broad cultural movements such as romanticism, realism, modernism and post-modernism as they appear in multiple cultural forms. Other examples of movements in American culture might include historically specific cultural movements such as the Black Arts Movement, historical surveys of cultural movements based in a particular ideology, community or social group, such as feminist cultural movements, or nationalism in American literature and the arts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

FALL 2024 OFFERINGS

AMST 6201 - History and 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 across the Americas, as well as theoretical frameworks common in transnational study of the US and the Americas. Topics covered may include the Atlantic slave trade; culture and history of migrant labor; indigenous studies; and history and culture of transnational social movements in the Americas.

AMST 7100 - American Studies Methods

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 7420 - American Popular Culture

This course examines the role of popular and mass culture in the Americas by beginning with the premise that popular culture is an important site of expression, social instruction, and cultural conflict, and thus deserves critical attention. Students may examine theoretical texts as well as primary sources, and the course may include a focus on global consumerism in America as well as Americanized sites. The course may survey a range of popular texts, such as mass culture events (e.g., sports), advertising, popular music, and theme parks, and place these expressions of mass culture in political, economic, and social contexts. Alternatively, an offering may focus on a particular popular culture product (e.g., bestsellers; popular music) in depth. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7520 - America in Transnational Context

Examines interactions between Americans and other international groups. The course may address several time periods and locations or focus on a single case study (e.g., the impact of cross-cultural contact in a specific region or era). Besides secondary research from diverse disciplines, students use primary texts from popular culture to interpret the influence of American culture in other parts of the world (e.g., American television as viewed in other lands) and the ways that immigration of new groups has shaped the social landscape in the U.S. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7901 - Capstone Literature Review and Proposal

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AMST 7902 - Capstone Experience

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.

SPRING 2025 OFFERINGS

AMST 6401 - Literature and Culture of the Americas

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AMST 7000 - American Studies Scholarship

This course explores a variety of themes, theoretical influences, and methodological approaches currently alive in American Studies and its related disciplinary fields. Particular emphasis is placed on the current controversies and scholarship focused on race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. The course is organized around broad thematic concepts, with attention to global perspectives. The course introduces some basic conceptual building blocks in the field, and explores some of the historical development of American Studies.

AMST 7230 - Public History and Culture

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 critique ways that the past is recorded and transmitted. Course content may include a rationale and debate about defining the parameters of the historical division, as well as an emphasis upon the significance of artifacts, lore, written and oral commentary of the period, and the language that both constructs and vivifies the meanings of past. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7330 - Identities and Social Groups

Examines the social construction of individual identities and social groups in American culture. Students survey and critique a range of texts expressing and representing the formation of identity constructions around such categories as race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, class, and sexuality. Students consider the various social forces that shape (and sometimes resist) various views of American identity both within and outside the U.S. and the Americas. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7901 - Capstone Literature Review and Proposal

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AMST 7902 - Capstone Experience

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SUMMER 2025 OFFERINGS

AMST 7210 - Historical Period

Studies a particular era in American culture by interpreting social events and practices, material culture, visual culture and print publications in a variety of forms. The course will invite students to examine individuals' impact on their historical moment as well as the influence important movements and social groups have exerted during specific periods, such as the Progressive Era, the 1960s, or the era of "discovery" of the New World. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

AMST 7410 - Literature and Performance in American Culture

Examines the history and cultural work of literary production and of performance as social practices that can be studied in regional, national, and international American contexts. This course draws its readings from both "literary" and "popular" culture publications. Students may explore both benchmark moments in American literary production (e.g., the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin) and performance history. They may also examine important longer-term movements in the field of American literature and dramatic performance (e.g., the formation of "American Literature" as a school discipline, developments in publishing, key moments in theater history); and/or approaches for linking history-making and cultural memory to performance texts. Course may be repeated for credit provided the content differs entirely from the previous offering.

This schedule is a projection; it may be revised as necessary.